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POLITICAL CURRICULUM CONCEPTS

Introduction

Curriculum scholars study politics in a variety of ways. The aim of this chapter is to examine in broad strokes what it is that curriculum scholars are currently discussing in the context of politics. Such topics include the problematics of neoliberalism and the way in which neoliberalism has affected schooling practices as well as neoconservatism and the battles over whose knowledge is of most worth. Neoliberalism and neoconservatism are right-wing agendas that many curriculum studies scholars try to untangle so as to undo. Many argue that schools need to become places of democracy, but neoliberalism and neoconservatism do not lend themselves to democratic practices. Some curriculum scholars approach these problematics through poststructural politics mostly using the works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Others turn to critical theory to unpack the problematics of neoliberalism and the way that neoliberal policies have made schools undemocratic places. I will examine current curriculum debates around issues of fascism, authoritarianism and militarism in their relations to neoliberal politics. Toward the end of the chapter I explore the politics of postformalism, the problems of school shootings,

and what I call the politics of emotion. Throughout the chapter I will be discussing the problems of standardized testing (No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top).

Neoliberalism

Here I introduce students to curriculum scholars who define neoliberalism and the problematics of neoliberalism in the context of schooling. Michael Peters (2009) states

> Neoliberalism in the popular sense is a label for what is commonly understood as the doctrine of political and economic liberalism and set of policies originating in the 1970s that wielded together classical political theory as exemplified by the Mont Pelerin Society after WWII and neoclassical economic theories that became identified with the so-called Chicago school under Milton Friedman in the 1960s. (p. xxvii)

Neoliberal policies are right wing, in that all is reduced to the free market with little government intervention (like social programs). The market takes precedence over democratizing practices such as welfare programs that serve the poor. The neoliberal school of thought is not unlike the idea that people can lift themselves up by their own bootstraps, as it were, and do not need the help of government. Henry Giroux (2004) explains

> Neoliberalism has indeed become a broad-based political and cultural movement designed to obliterate public concerns and liquidate the welfare state, and make politics everywhere an exclusively market-driven project... . Its supporting political culture and pedagogical practices also put into play a social universe and cultural landscape that sustain a particularly barbaric notion of authoritarianism. (p. xxiii)

Giroux's critique of neoliberalism is also a critique of the Bush administration. Under Bush, as Giroux points out, many civil liberties were taken away, especially after 9/11. School policies like NCLB were hardly democratic since high-stakes testing and the close monitoring of teachers were more akin to authoritarianism than democracy. Ross Collin and Michael W. Apple (2010) comment:

> Many of the school reforms proposed and implemented by business friendly figures in the neoliberal state, includ[ed] high-stakes standardized testing, school choice programs, and slowed growth in governmental spending on K–12 public education.... [E]vidence suggests that the expansion of school choice programs and educational markets correlates with increased segregation of schools by race and class. (p. 39)

It becomes clear—especially as students move through this discussion—that neoliberal policies impact schools in negative ways. Standardized testing is a practice of the homogenization of knowledge. This is in no way a democratic practice. If anything, it shuts down conversation and discourages dissent. The resegregation of public schools is hardly democratic and is a result—as Collin and Apple point out—of school choice programs.

The Globalizing Effects of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism has had globalizing effects. David Harvey (2005) explains:

> Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been all too common. Almost all states, from those newly minted after the collapse of the Soviet Union to old-style social democracies and welfare states such as New Zealand and Sweden, have embraced...some version of neoliberal theory... . Post-apartheid South Africa quickly embraced neoliberalism. (p. 3)

The deregulation of the market is what led to what is now being called the Great Recession. The social policies that President Franklin D. Roosevelt put in place during the Depression began to unravel under the Reagan and Thatcher administrations. This unraveling caused great harm to the poor and underclass especially. But more than this, neoliberalism has been embraced globally, as Harvey points out, with detrimental effects to the poor. In fact, Marvin J. Berlowitz and Nathan A. Long (2003) tell us, "Neoliberal policies and legislations have dramatically impacted the most vulnerable of the world's children, impoverishing them and often leading to their violent conscription into sweatshops, the sex industry, and the armed forces" (p. 163). What is most insidious here is that neoliberal policies have hurt children. Not only have these policies hurt children in the ways described above but these policies have hurt children in their school settings. Many argue that standardized testing does violence to children by putting them in a situation where they are fearful all the time. Fear is not conducive to learning. The structure of children's knowledge base has become so narrow that when they get older they will not know how to maneuver in a complex world. On the globalizing effect of neoliberalism, Michael Apple (2010) suggests

> Neoliberal, neoconservative and managerial impulses can be found throughout the world cutting across both geographical boundaries and even economic systems. This points to the important "spatial" aspects of globalization. Policies are "borrowed"

> and "travel" across borders in such a way that these neoliberal, neoconservative, and managerial impulses are extended throughout the world. (p. 2)

The globalizing effect of neoliberalism is devastating for the poor, as I have pointed out. But these policies also affect people of color and women. Neoliberalism hurts mostly minorities and the underclass because it undermines social programs that are meant to help these constituencies.

Kenneth J. Saltman (2003) also examines the effects of the globalization of neoliberalism. He states

> Corporate globalization, which should be viewed as a doctrine rather than as an inevitable phenomenon, is driven by the philosophy of neoliberalism. The economic and political doctrine of neoliberalism insists upon the virtues of privatization and liberalization of trade and concomitantly places faith in the hard discipline of the market. (p. 3)

Neoliberals seek to privatize all social programs. Here in the United States that would have detrimental effects not only on the poor but also on the elderly and on public school students as well. During the Bush administration there was talk of privatizing social security; Bush suggested that people should put their monies in the stock market. Neoliberals would like to see public schools privatized and some already are. This defeats the whole purpose of public education. Shelia Landers Macrine (2003) suggests

> Ultimately, neoliberalism serves to justify an educational system that enhances the emerging American economy of service managers, franchise workers, entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists that sit on a huge underclass of burger wrappers and security guards, certainly not what the "promise of a literate" society intended. (p. 205)

Neoliberal policies, in other words, undermine chances that newly graduated students have of making a decent wage and having a meaningful livelihood. Too many students upon graduation find terrible employment or cannot find jobs at all. Without social programs young people do not have many options in a weakened economy.

Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism is an offshoot of neoliberalism but has more to do with questions of literacy than anything else. Neoconservatism is about whose knowledge is of most worth. Neoconservatives want children to have a conservative

education, which means studying the classics and leaving out multicultural literatures. Michael Apple (2006) explains

> Among the policies being proposed under this ideological position are mandatory national and statewide curricula, national and statewide testing, a "return" to higher standards, a revivification of the "Western tradition," patriotism, and conservative variants of character education... . Behind it as well—and this is essential—is a fear of the "Other." (p. 39)

Later on Apple tells us that William Bennett's (1996) *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories* is part and parcel of the neoconservative agenda. When scholars ask the question whose knowledge is of most worth, for conservatives that knowledge is of the Western traditional canon. Of course, there is nothing wrong with studying the classics, but there are many other literatures (multicultural literatures) that are worth studying as well. An integrated canon would be a more liberal approach to education where students study the classics alongside the multicultural literature.

Some other books in the neoconservative tradition would be Allan Bloom's (1988) *The Closing of the American Mind*, Diane Ravitch's (2001) *Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform*, and E. D. Hirsch's (1988) *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*.

Poststructuralism and Politics: Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida

Here I will touch on what it is curriculum scholars are commenting on when drawing on poststructuralists in the context of politics. Mainly I will be looking briefly at what curriculum scholars are discussing around the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, two poststructural scholars who write about politics. First, I begin with an examination of what it is that curriculum scholars are talking about in the context of Foucault and politics.

Michael Peters (1996) examines the problematics of neoliberalism in the context of Foucault's notion of governmentality. Peters explains

> Foucault's work provides resources for understanding what I am going to call the *paradox* of the neoliberal state: the paradox is that while neoliberalism can be regarded as a doctrine concerning the self-limiting state, under neoliberal market policies the state has become more powerful. The understanding of this paradox can be fruitfully approached through Foucault's notion of governmentality. (p. 81)

Schools have been dominated by neoliberal politics. Schools are tightly controlled by the use of high-stakes testing. School teachers are under strict supervision and constant surveillance. The school curriculum is a conservative one and the idea that schools and the market should be linked are neoliberal ideas. The schools, in other words, are highly governed (Foucault's notion of governmentality) by neoliberal politics. Peter's point above is that although neoliberal policy limits government, ironically schools are highly governed and highly controlled by neoliberal policies.

Foucault (1983) explains what he means by governmentality when he states

> This word [government] must be allowed the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century. "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick... . To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others. (p. 221)

High-stakes testing and the standardization of knowledge are ways to govern children. The strict supervision and surveillance that teachers are under are ways to govern them. Governmentality is a word that suggests control and power. As Foucault says, it concerns "the conduct of individuals" and "structure[s] the possible field of action of others" (p. 221). Neoliberal governmentality, as Peters puts it, is a form of control and a form of power.

Other curriculum scholars also comment on Foucault's notion of governmentality. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan (1998) suggest, "The notion of governmentality provides a way to consider the concept of power as deployment" (p. 20). Bernadette Baker (1998) puts it this way: "The art of governing required a kind of 'governmentality' related to the role of the state as a definer, watcher, and manager of difference" (p. 132). Thus governmentality is a form of control and power over the conduct of others. Related ideas are found in Foucault's (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault uses the terms "macro" and "micro-physics of power" (p. 160) in talking about "disciplining" others (especially prisoners, inmates of mental institutions, and school children). A way to punish and to control others and exercise power (because for Foucault power is exercised) over others and to govern others (hence governmentality) is to

> adjust the mechanisms of power that frame the everyday lives of individuals; an adaptation and a refinement of the machinery that assumes responsibility for and places

> under surveillance their everyday behaviour, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures. (p. 77)

Control and surveillance are ways to govern and control the conduct of others. A micro-physics of power is a way of controlling every movement of an individual including gestures. In the context of teaching, Foucault remarks,

> The same movement was to be found in the reorganization of elementary teaching: the details of surveillance were specified and it was integrated into the teaching relationship. The development of the parish schools, in the increase in the number of their pupils, the absence of methods for regulating simultaneously the activity of a whole class, and the disorder and confusion that followed from this made it necessary to work out a system of supervision. (p. 175)

Supervision and surveillance are ways of governing both children and their teachers. One effect of governmentality is that—in Foucault's words—it "normalizes" (1979, p. 183). For students who are interested in an in-depth treatment of Foucault's notion of governmentality I suggest that they consult a book co-edited by Michael Peters, A. C. Besley, Marc Olssen, Susanne Maurer, and Susanne Weber (2009) titled *Governmentality Studies in Education*. Governmentality is a highly complex idea that I have only touched on here. One can see how neoliberal governmentality plays out in our current school systems and the detrimental effects that governmentality has had not only on children but also on teachers.

Poststructuralism and Politics: Jacques Derrida

Derrida is known for his work on what has been called "deconstruction." Deconstruction is a way to read texts in exegetical fashion, providing a close reading of philosophers and literary writers. Traditional analytic philosophers have shunned Derrida and do not consider what he is doing real philosophy. Instead, Derrida's work has been mostly embraced by English and curriculum scholars. Although Derrida focuses much on the art of reading and writing, the art of deconstructing texts (analyzing them and making something of them), he is also known to be a highly political writer. Much of his work deals with the politics of the university. He also deals with the politics of the Other, of responsibility, of duty, of understanding difference and the politics of difference, the politics of hospitality, and more. Curriculum scholars comment on Derrida's work as it relates to politics and to education. Michael Peters and Girt Biesta (2009) tell us

> Derrida came to influence a range of radical educators, including Henry Giroux, Gregory Ulmer, Peter Trifonas, Denise Egea-Kuehne, Patti Lather, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Gert Biesta, Michael Peters and many others. His legacy in education and pedagogy will continue to grow as educators, teachers, and students continue to explore the complexity and fullness of his opus and its significance to politics and pedagogy. (pp. 9–10)

Some noteworthy books students might consult if they are interested in the connections among Derrida, politics, and education are these: Peter Pericles Trifonas's (2000) *The Ethics of Writing: Derrida, Deconstruction and Pedagogy*, Michael Peters and Gert Biesta's (2009) *Derrida, Deconstruction, and the Politics of Pedagogy*, Peter Trifonas and Michael Peters' (2005) co-edited book *Deconstructing Derrida: Tasks for the New Humanities*, and Gert Biesta and Denise Egea-Kuehne's (2001) co-edited book *Derrida and Education*.

Denise Egea-Kuehne and Gert Biesta point out that when educationists were first introduced to Derrida, most focused on his work on literary texts. Egea-Kuehne and Biesta state

> Although some scholars have acknowledged the possible political implications of deconstructive writing pedagogy (e.g., Knoper 1989), it is true that this first "wave" of the reception of deconstruction in education has been primarily "technical" in its narrow focus on literary analysis. (p. 4).

The books that are mentioned above, however, deal mostly with Derrida's concern with politics. So one might say that the second wave of scholars interested in Derrida's work are interested in the connections among curriculum studies, deconstruction, and politics.

When turning to Derrida's texts one can see just how interested in politics he was. One of Derrida's main concerns is the politics of the university. Derrida (1995) states

> My belonging to the institution of the university [has]...never been a comfortable relation of identification... . Yet it is true that the critique, let us call it the political critique, that I have on occasion undertaken of the institution remained either "private," empirical, more or less spontaneous. (p. 14).

Derrida's political critique of the university, however, does not seem to be spontaneous or private as he makes his claims public throughout much of his writing. He is highly critical of the nondemocratic nature of higher education and the institution of the university. He is highly critical of the problem of censorship within this institution as well as the little freedom that professors

have. He writes about the possibility of a "democracy to come" (1995, p. 338) in universities. What this signifies is that democracy in the university is not yet. It has not yet arrived. But the job of the professor is to work to undo undemocratic practices in the university so as to make this "democracy to come" possible. Michael Peters (2009) points out that Derrida also explores the notion of "democracy to come" in the realm of global politics. Peters explains

> Derrida maintains that since technics have obliterated "locality," the future of democracy must be thought of in global terms. It is no longer possible to be a democrat "at home" and wait to see what happens "abroad." In emphasizing a world democracy, Derrida suggests that the stakes of "democracy to come" can no longer be contained within frontiers. (p. 74)

For Derrida, the world is not yet a democratic place but people must work to make it so. Derrida's ideas on democracy dovetail the interests of postcolonial scholars and scholars who do work on cosmopolitanism.

Another political concept for Derrida is responsibility, which he talks about much throughout his work. Derrida (1995) remarks, "Each time a responsibility (ethical or political) has to be taken, one must pass by way of antinomic injunctions, which have an aporetic form, by way of a sort of experience of the impossible" (p. 359). The aporia of which Derrida speaks is like a conundrum without resolution. Ethical and political decisions must pass by way of this conundrum. Ethical and political decisions, in other words, are impossible because they are difficult. But at the end of the day one must come to a decision. Julian Edgoose (2001) says of this impossible responsibility:

> One *must* decide. Here the third aporia—the *aporia of urgency*—comes into play. Ethical decisions cannot wait—a decision *has* to be made.... One *has* to decide, but a just decision is impossible—this very mad impossibility makes justice possible. Derrida claims that justice, based upon a radical openness to alterity, can be persevered only as a result of the aporias of suspension, undecidability, and urgency. (p. 129)

What Edgoose drives home here is that for Derrida, politics—the politics of responsibility, justice, decision making, and so forth—only come by way of difficulty of the undecidable. But finally a decision must be made. If decisions come too easily they might have unfortunate consequences. A decision that passes through the motions of the aporia might have a chance to have better ethical consequences.

Derrida's concept of duty is connected with his notions of the Other and of hospitality. He states, "The *same duty* also dictates welcoming foreigners [the Other] in order not only to integrate them but to recognize and accept their alterity: two concepts of hospitality that today divide our European and national consciousness" (1992, p. 77). The Other must be welcomed, not shunned. There is no room for xenophobia in a place where people practice hospitality. It is a duty to be hospitable to the Other, Derrida says throughout his work. Gert Biesta (2009) comments that for Derrida "the ethicopolitical horizon of deconstruction can be described as a concern for the other... . Deconstruction is an affirmation of what is wholly other" (p. 15). The wholly Other is the foreigner about whom Derrida speaks. The absolute alterity of the Other is something that must be kept intact, not collapsing the Other onto the self. The self and the Other are different from each other. It is this difference that Derrida embraces, especially in his notion of hospitality. Hospitality is a political move. To be hospitable to the wholly Other is both political and ethical. However, Derrida knows how difficult it is for people to be hospitable to the wholly other because of the problems of racism and nationalism. Derrida (1992) comments, "There is *today* the same feeling of imminence, of hope and of danger, of anxiety before the possibility of other wars with unknown forms [terrorism], the return to old forms of religious fanaticism, nationalism, or racism" (p. 63). Racism is an ongoing problem in Europe as well as around the world. This too is why democracy is not yet. But people must work on "democracy to come"—this is Derrida's hope and his politic.

Patti Lather (2004) comments on the difficulty of doing deconstructive work and on the difficulty of working on Derrida. She states that "the practical politics of putting deconstruction to work entail a sort of getting lost as an ethical relationality of non-authoritarian authority to what we know and how we know it" (p. 7). Later on in this chapter I will tease out the complicated meanings of authoritarianism, fascism, and totalitarianism as they relate to thinking of curriculum politically. But for now let us ask whether authorities can be non-authoritarian in Derrida's eyes? This is yet another example of the impossibility of the aporia. At the end of the day authorities must work to be democratic (non-authoritarian) even though "democracy is to come." The many aporetic ethical situations in which people find themselves lend to "getting lost," as Lather (p. 7) puts it. But getting lost is part of the work of politics. Nothing is straightforward in a deconstructive reading of politics; rather everything is complex and highly difficult. The work at hand is hard but it must be done. In the context of education, Derrida would suggest that

all places of education must be made more democratic and more free. And yet, scholars work inside of institutions that are not yet democratic nor are they free.

Critical Theory, Politics, and Curriculum Studies

Here I turn to a discussion on critical theory and what it is that curriculum theorists are currently debating. Peter McLaren (2005) suggests that scholars who work in the area of critical theory need to carefully study the writings of Marx. McLaren tells us that "the Marxist tradition has been woefully absent from critical pedagogy" (p. 35). Scholars who work in critical theory must return to Marx in order to enrich their thought. It is the scholar's responsibility and obligation to study primary sources to better understand historically from whence ideas spring. McLaren points out, "Marxism is seen from this perspective as a failed experiment and the teaching of Marx is viewed as something that should be put to rest since the persistence of capital appears to have rendered the old bearded devil obsolete" (p. 34). McLaren's concern is that critical theory has been domesticated (p. 33). Intellectual laziness (Gramsci, 2000) might be what prevents scholars from going back to study primary sources. And as Antonio Gramsci teaches, the study of Marx is a cure for that intellectual laziness. Gramsci states, "Karl Marx is for us a master of spiritual and moral life, not a shepherd wielding a crook. He is the stimulator of mental laziness, the arouser of good energies which slumber and which must wake up for the good fight" (p. 39). One of the reasons Marx is the "stimulator of mental laziness" is that he is a difficult read: there is nothing easy about Marx. When speaking of Marxism, however, several problems emerge. It is to this point that Deb Hill (2007) speaks. She suggests that the problem of class has been superseded by other pressing concerns like race and gender. Moreover Hill states

> The latter [class] is now even branded by some as a "negative" form of struggle, allegedly representative of an "essentialist" and "totalizing" (totalitarian) political vision. Collective ascriptions such as "the masses" or "the bourgeoisie" are now regarded as outdated and ubiquitous terminology with little or no practical meaning. (p. 2)

When scholars examine terms such as "the masses"—as Hill points out—charges of essentialism are at hand because it is not clear what "the masses" means. Who are the masses? Class—as it gets separated out from race and

gender—also might be seen as problematic. Ideally all three signifiers—race, class, gender—should be examined together. But most scholars in the field of curriculum studies tend to focus on class or race or gender.

Class is a useful and important idea that continually needs unpacking. Peter McLaren (2005) tells us that "class struggle is now perilously viewed as an outdated issue" (p. 29). But class is not an outdated issue at all. In the United States there is a huge gap between the very wealthy and the very poor. When the economy turns bad, class becomes an important issue. Today many Americans are struggling to keep their jobs, to make ends meet, to survive. The majority of Americans are no longer middle class but working class. The terms "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie"—although coined in another era—are of use even today. These terms not only have practical meaning but they also have theoretical usefulness. Scholars who have never had to struggle to make ends meet might think that class struggle is a useless idea. However, there is a real struggle among working-class people to just get by. There is little time for leisure in a life that is consumed by the time clock. Losing a job means losing the means to take care of oneself. Homelessness is a real problem, not only in the United States but also globally. These issues go back to Marx. Taking care of the poor is a human right. If students study Marx carefully they will find these issues raised, albeit in another time and place (19th century Germany).

What must the scholar do to make Marx applicable to the present? How are writings from the 19th century of use to us today? In response, they are of use if scholars want to make them useful. It is an easy dismissal to say that notions of class struggle are useless today. It is an easy dismissal to launch the charges of essentialism when talking about the working class and the rest. Essentialism is a charge that can be launched against almost any idea.

Peter McLaren (2005) remarks that much of his academic work is devoted to "introduc[ing] Marxist scholarship into the field of critical pedagogy" (p. 35). More than any other curriculum scholar, McLaren has led us back to primary sources; as was mentioned earlier, he calls for a return to Marx, just as Jacques Lacan called for a return to Freud. And yet the majority of critical theorists do not cite Marx, according to McLaren.

For McLaren, like Marx, reform is not enough. Revolution is a must. During the Bush presidency, many were asking when the revolution would occur. No revolution occurred. One might argue, however, that the election of Barack Obama was a revolution of sorts. And yet many of Obama's policies—most particularly his educational policies—are the same as Bush's or perhaps even worse. Obama's Race to the Top is disheartening. This policy

calls for more standardized testing. McLaren (2005) warns that "there is also a movement to develop international standardized tests, creating pressures toward educational convergence and standardization among nations" (p. 28). In educational institutions—whether schools or universities—teachers and professors have little power. If scholars dare put up what Gramsci (2000) calls "the good fight" (p. 39), punishment, humiliation, or termination is at hand. So scholars march in lock-step out of fear. Henry Giroux (2007) talks about the "university in chains" (p. 2). But there is more to it than that. Working in an atmosphere that is akin to a totalitarian regime is a felt, visceral, and embodied experience. Scholars obey. And so many of us are complicit in what Gramsci called a "strong bourgeois society" (p. 30). Gramsci comments

> In one of the stories in *The Jungle Book* Rudyard Kipling shows discipline at work in a strong bourgeois society. Everyone obeys in the bourgeois state. The mules in the battery obey the battery Sergeant, the horses obey the soldiers who ride them. The soldiers obey the lieutenant, the lieutenants obey the regimental colonels. (p. 31)

One way to combat a totalizing administration is through scholarship. Paulo Freire (1996) states that writing "has also become a duty that I cannot reject, for it is a political project that must be met" (p. 2). It is our duty as scholars to write, to publish, to study. After all, it is the writing that matters, it is the writing that will outlive us and it is the writing that will hopefully change (at least something) about the world. The daily pettiness and confrontations with totalizing administrators must be documented, commented upon, and critiqued. Remember that Marx (1978) called for "a ruthless critique of everything existing" (p. 13). One of the reasons that education professors are so loathed—at least by some—is that we are the ones who critique the very institutions of which we are a part. But the only way to change institutions is to challenge the very structure upon which they are built. Marx states that "the criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, nor of conflict with the powers that be" (p. 13).

Peter McLaren (2005) calls for a "rematerialized critique" (p. 9). The question remains: What would that "rematerialized critique" look like through the eyes of Marx and how do scholars make use of that critique in our current sociopolitical situation? A few passages from Marx might be helpful here. A powerful passage by Marx (1978) is this:

> That men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history." But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of the material itself. (pp. 155–156)

Most middle-class people take it for granted that there is enough food to eat, that they have a place to sleep and clothes to wear. But when disaster strikes awakening occurs. After a disaster—like the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti in January of 2010 and killed some one hundred thousand people or more—people realize that nothing can be taken for granted. This complacency that many of us have—until something terrible happens to us—must be ruptured. *Organic* intellectuals—the kind of intellectuals about whom Gramsci (2005, p. 6) spoke—might know what it means to live in dire straits more than those of us who work comfortably in the academy.

Marx argues that "the formation of ideas [comes] from material practice" (p. 164). The materiality of a person's world shapes thought. The fact that Paulo Freire grew up knowing hunger in a real and painful way must have shaped the scholar that he became. Freire (1996) speaks of the "geography of my hunger" (p. 17). The term "geography" suggests that hunger is not only felt in the stomach but as a world, as a place, as a terrible psychic place. Fighting hunger is something that many of us will never know or experience. But there are many Americans today—and children too—who fight hunger. A rematerialized critique, about which McLaren speaks, must take account of hunger first and foremost.

A rematerialized critique must also deal with issues of working. More than any other topic, Marx spends most of his time on work, the work of the working class. Working is a material reality. And if working conditions are highly problematic, the worker suffers. Marx was most concerned with this kind of suffering. Marx puts it this way:

> Not only are they [the workers] slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly the despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is. (p. 479)

Today the minimum wage is the equivalent of slave labor. There must be a better way to work in the world. Minimum wage jobs can only pay for less than adequate rental apartments, or trailers. In these less than adequate abodes rodents, insects, and squalor prevail. Marx says

> Man returns to living in a cave, which is now, however, contaminated with the mephitic breath of plague given off by civilization and which he continues to occupy only *precariously*, it being for him an alien habitation, which can be withdrawn from him any day—a place from which, if he does not pay, he can be thrown out any day. For this mortuary he has to *pay*. (p. 94)

The landlord is the lord of the land while the tenant is at the whim and mercy of the landlord. This issue is not only about apartment dwellers. It is also about homeowners whose homes are under foreclosure. "Foreclosure" is the watchword of the decade. This is a word that was hardly ever uttered since the Great Depression but today foreclosures are common.

A rematerialized critique, as McLaren calls for, also concerns a myriad of problematics. Scholars might study matters of hunger, work, and home to advance the field. There are some curriculum scholars working in all three of these areas but still more needs to be done. McLaren's call for rematerialization concerns the basic staples of living. These should be pressing concerns especially for members of a privileged group—university professors—who might forget what it means to live without the basics.

And so I ask whither Marx? I use the word "whither" purposely here as Marx himself used the word in his piece "Ruthless Critique" as he states that "all the more confusion reigns about the 'whither'" (p. 13). During the Great Recession Marx's work and writings could have been of use. But still, many are unconvinced. Jacques Derrida (1994) says, "Perhaps people are no longer afraid of Marxists" (p. 50). To counter Derrida here, I would venture to say that people are, in fact, still afraid of Marxism. The fear is well founded when it is put in the context of the disasters of Communism and the catastrophes of Stalin and Mao. It is difficult for some to disentangle Communism and totalitarian states from Marx's own writing, which is hardly totalitarian.

Marx even warned against the problematic of dogma in "Ruthless Critique." The dialectic that Marx called for is one way to avoid dogmatism because there is always another thought to consider. Dogma cannot tolerate two opposing ideas that are thought together. Dogma is the way of religious fundamentalism. And ironically enough, Deb Hill (2007) points out that those unconvinced by Marxism worry about its tendency toward fundamentalism (p. 2). Clearly, Marx can be interpreted in a variety of ways. But a close reading of Marx hardly bespeaks fundamentalism. Indeed, any theory can become a sort of fundamentalism. Marxism will not go away. Jacques Derrida (1994) points out that the specter (p. 11) of Marx continues to haunt. Derrida suggests that Marx is not dead, nor is Marxism.

The Politics of Knowledge Production: Freire and Gramsci

For both Freire and Gramsci, reading and writing are political acts. One cannot be a scholar without writing. And the scholar cannot write if she does not read. Not only this. Knowledge production is political. The production of knowledge for both Freire and Gramsci means making new meaning out of old ideas, studying the past in order to create a future. Freire (2005) states that reading is a "composition between reader and writer in which the most profound significance of the text is also the creation of the reader" (p. 55). Reading and writing also have to do with the production of identity. Identity formation shifts with reading and writing. Identity formation is also political. How the reader sees the world and writes about the world can change it. Freire (1996) states

> FOR ME, WRITING HAS BECOME A DEEP PLEASURE, [caps in original] just as it has also become a duty that I cannot reject, for it is a political project that must be met. The joy of writing fills all my time. It fills my time when I write, when I read and reread what I have written, when I receive the first galleys to be corrected, and when I receive the first still-warm copy of the book from the publishing house. (p. 1)

For Freire there is joy in the process of writing. But more than this he feels that writing is a duty and a political act. Changing the world means writing about what is wrong with it. Reading is not enough.

Quintin Hoare (2005) describes Gramsci's struggles when he was imprisoned in Fascist Italy. Hoare states

> He was 35 years old. At his trial of 1928, the official prosecutor ended his peroration with the famous demand to the judge: "We must stop this brain from working for twenty years!" But, although Gramsci was to be dead long before those twenty years were up, released, his health broken only in time to die under guard in a clinic rather than in prison, yet for as long as his physique held out his jailers did not succeed in stopping his brain from working. The product of those years of slow death in prison were the 2,848 pages of handwritten notes. (p. xviii)

What astonishes is that despite the imprisonment—or maybe because of it—Gramsci wrote an enormous amount; luckily, it was smuggled out of the prison cell, and that is why today his *Prison Notebooks* are available. Perhaps it was this experience that drove Gramsci to write. Like Freire, Gramsci felt that writing was a political act, a duty, a responsibility. But writing must not be

what Freire (1996) terms "historically anesthetized" (p. 21). Writing must be historically situated and historically informed. The study of history, then, is paramount to the study of subject matter, no matter what that subject might be. It is not enough, for example, to talk about race if one only talks about attitudes and beliefs. One must treat the subject of race historically.

Gramsci (2000) goes one step further by calling for a study of "the history of research, the history of this immense epic of the human spirit." (p. 67). Scholars need to study the history of their own scholarship and periodically review and revise the ways in which ideas are formed and conclusions are made. Scholarship must continually be historically analyzed so as to make sure that ideas continue to push boundaries; the only way to push boundaries is to keep pushing backward (into one's own history and the history of the culture into which one is thrown) and forward into the future.

Like Gramsci, Freire was a victim of exile. Donaldo Macedo and Ana Maria Araujo Freire (2005) remind us:

> Paulo Freire was in exile for almost sixteen years precisely because he understood education this way and because he fought to give a large number of Brazilians access to an asset traditionally denied them: the act of reading the world by reading the word. (p. xv)

Literacy is political. Peoples can change their history only if they can read their worlds. Unpacking the world through reading, as Paulo Freire teaches, is an imperative. For both Freire and Gramsci reading and writing require much discipline. Both of these scholars make much of the notion of discipline. Good reading and writing practices come from dedication and discipline that are rather difficult to sustain. Reading and writing are not occasional things we do as scholars; reading and writing are our life's work. And this life work takes an incredible amount of discipline. In order to write anything at all, scholars must study. Freire (2005) says

> Studying is a demanding occupation, in the process of which we will encounter pain, pleasure, victory, defeat, doubt, and happiness. For this reason, studying requires the development of rigorous discipline, which we must consciously forge in ourselves. (p. 52)

Disciplined reading and writing practices are a must, as Freire points out. Road blocks will be present, says Freire. But if scholars work long and hard enough happiness is afoot. Freire considers the act of writing part of his occupation

and part and parcel of his being. As Freire (1996) says, writing is a duty (p. 1) and an obligation.

Like Freire, Gramsci too felt that intellectual work required a great amount of discipline. In fact, Peter Mayo (2004) points out that Gramsci had an "obsession with discipline and rigor" (p. 12). But for Gramsci (2000), this discipline is of a certain kind. Gramsci draws a distinction between what he calls "bourgeois discipline" and "socialist discipline" (p. 32). Doing the work of the state is a form of bourgeois discipline. Slaves of the state do others' bidding. The scholar with a socialist bent does her own work and that work is for the good of all. It is important to note that Gramsci points out, "Whoever is a socialist or wants to become one does not obey: he commands himself, he imposes a rule of life on his impulses" (p. 32). And this discipline and "rule of life" is a way to "free oneself from a state of chaos" (p. 59). Gramsci's ideas on discipline are radically different from those of Foucault. For Foucault discipline went hand in hand with punishment. For Foucault (1979) discipline might be akin to what Gramsci calls "bourgeois" (p. 32) discipline, which is punishment. Gramsci also refers to this kind of discipline as "authoritarian" (p. 32). Authoritarian institutions abound. The university might be seen as authoritarian. As I mentioned earlier, Jacques Derrida (1995) is highly critical of the university because it is not yet a democratic place. He criticizes censorship, especially in the university.

For Freire, Gramsci, and Derrida, it is the intellectual who must write and publish. But as Richard Hofstadter (1963) points out, "All academic men [and women] are not intellectuals; we often lament this fact" (p. 26). Many academics are simply functionaries. The abuse of power by administrators is rampant in academic institutions. Administrators operate under what Foucault (1979) calls a "micro-physics of power" (p. 26). And this power is not possessed but exercised (p. 26). But too for Foucault power can also be productive (p. 27). A good example of this is that "power produces knowledge" (p. 27). The person who writes produces knowledge and if this knowledge is political it can have an impact against the despotism of the institution at hand. For Foucault power is not a top-down affair, it is circular and everybody has a certain amount of power at certain times. Power is a shifting terrain. Power can be made use of if one writes through and about the issues and also situates those issues historically and contextually. What goes on inside of institutions reflects the larger historical and social landscape.

To "accredit" means to standardize. Institutions rely on, need, accreditation. But knowledge that is standardized is hardly productive. Gramsci (2000)

notes this fact as he states that "on the whole the average urban intellectuals are very standardized" (p. 308). Hence, standardization is hardly a new problem. Plus standardization is highly anti-intellectual and as Richard Hofstadter (1963) points out anti-intellectualism—especially in American culture—is not new either. Hofstadter tells us

> The American mind [if there is such a thing] was shaped in the mold of early modern Protestantism. Religion was the first arena for American intellectual life, and thus the first arena for an anti-intellectual impulse... . The feeling that ideas should above all be made to work, the disdain for doctrine and refinements in ideas, the subordination of men of ideas to men of emotional power or manipulative skill are hardly innovations of the twentieth century; they are inheritances from American Protestantism. (p. 55).

Now, to be fair, Hofstadter points out also that American Protestantism was not always anti-intellectual, and certainly today there are strands of Protestantism as well as Catholicism—in academic theology—that are not anti-intellectual. But the main problem Hofstadter sees in religion is its fundamentalist impulse (p. 55). He compares fundamentalism to "quasi-fascism" (p. 132).

For Freire (2001) intellectuals must develop what he calls "epistemological curiosity" (p. 32). Curiosity is hardly practical. Curiosity is a state of mind. This state of mind leads scholars to come to certain thoughts while disregarding others. The material that is thrown out is as important as the material that is kept. But coming to decisions about what to keep and what to throw away—in intellectual work—hardly concerns practicality. To be curious about something means to grope in the dark. It is in this groping that the work is done.

The ultimate point of intellectual work for Gramsci and for Freire is revolution. Our contemporary, Peter McLaren (2005), suggests, too, that critical theory should be revolutionary, not reformist. Revolution—according to Gramsci—cannot come about without intellectuals, Stanley Aronowitz (2002) reminds us. Aronowitz points out that for Gramsci:

> The intellectuals are not to be conceived of as the technicians of power but as its sinews. No class in modern society, he argues, can organize itself for power—for the war of maneuver, that is, revolutionary activity—without the participation of intellectuals whose ultimate task is to embody the unity of theory and organization. It is they who contest the institutions of civil society, the trade unions, as well as the universities. (p. 117).

To "contest the institutions of civil society" is our duty, as Freire might put it. Not only should we contest but scholars should also try to find new ways of being in the world; scholars should attempt to rebuild a better society. It is not enough to protest; something better must be built. This building comes about primarily through ideas. Scholars fight battles via ideas first. Gramsci knew that most battles are ideological. And it is in the schools where these ideological battles are fought. Stanley Aronowitz explains:

> Gramsci devotes considerable attention to education, among other institutions, because, even under fascism, schools are primary sites for achieving mass consent for social rule. The great Gramscian, Louis Althusser, argues that among the State's ideological apparatuses, as opposed to the repressive apparatuses (law, courts, police, army, and prisons), educational institutions are the most important. The school is the State institution *par excellence*. (p. 113)

Power, for Gramsci, comes about through the shaping of ideas. But school children get shaped the way the state wants them to be shaped. Today, this problem is made more pressing by what we see happening to children in terrorist organizations who are brainwashed to engage in suicide bombings in the name of religion. Children tend to believe what adults tell them. And if terrorists are telling children that they will go to heaven if they blow themselves up along with their enemies, they will want to do this.

Gramsci understood that wars are fought not only by fire power but also by ideas and their persuasiveness. This is what he termed "hegemony." Carmel Borg, Joseph A. Buttigieg, and Peter Mayo (2002) explain:

> Modern bourgeois civilization, in Gramsci's view, perpetuates itself through the operations of hegemony—i.e. through the operations of a vast network of cultural organizations, political movements, and educational institutions that instill its conception of the world and its values in every capillary of society. (p. 8)

In America, the underlying lesson of schooling is that students should become good consumers. The point of going to school is to get a job. The point of getting a job is to make money. The university calls its students customers and students expect to be treated as such. So if the customer is always right, faculty lose professional autonomy.

The children are not the problem, however. Scholars should be careful, as Henry Giroux (2003) points out, not to demonize (p. xvii) them. Adults in America have created this culture of consumerism and this needs to be undone. Children grow up, Giroux tells us, where

> Ardent consumers and disengaged citizens provide fodder for a growing cynicism and depoliticization of public life at a time when there is an increasing awareness not just of corporate corruption, financial mismanagement, and systemic greed, but also of the recognition that a democracy of critical citizens is being replaced quickly by a democracy of consumers. (p. xix).

Schooling in this country is about miseducating the young to think that consuming is what really matters. What matters, for Giroux, is that schooling should be about building democracy, building community, engaging citizens to live better lives.

Gramsci's War of Position

For Gramsci, Benedetto Fontana (2002) points out, the only way to fight oppressive powers is through a "war of position." Fontana explains:

> Thus, a war of position, that is, ideological, cultural, and intellectual struggle becomes necessary to overcome the established order. Radical social and political change in the West involves sociocultural and socioeconomic "trench warfare," whose purpose is to undermine the "ethico-political" and ideological structures of society. (p. 30)

What is striking about the war of position, as Gramsci calls it, is that it is a war not of brute force but of ideas. So people must understand the ideas of others before fighting a war of position because a war of position is, in essence, a war of ideas.

Curriculum Debates over Fascism(s)

Here I want to speak to issues around fascism(s) that are raised by political scholars. Generally speaking political scholars have returned to discussions on fascism in light of our current historical situation as a post-9/11 culture. The concerns that these scholars have reflect the larger problematics of neoliberal politics discussed earlier. A key term for both McLaren and Giroux is totalitarianism (which can be understood as a form of fascism). When the United States went to war in Iraq a new totalitarian era arrived, according to McLaren and Giroux. Henry Giroux (2007) comments

> State violence and totalitarian power, which historically have been deployed against marginalized populations—principally Black Americans—have now, at least in the

> United States, become the rule for the entire population, as life is more ruthlessly regulated and increasingly placed in the hands of military and state power. (p. 25)

If students are to understand the word "totalitarian," a historical study of the term becomes necessary. One of the most well-known books on totalitarianism is Hannah Arendt's (1979) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, upon which neither Giroux nor McLaren draws. Both Giroux and McLaren seem to use the terms "totalitarianism" and "fascism" in a broad sense. But these words have histories that need to be unpacked.

In my book on the Holocaust (2001), I point out that fascism is a word that has a very specific meaning for Germans. Former East Germans accused former West Germans of being fascist. East German Communists claimed that their major concern was for the working class and that they had nothing to do with the Holocaust. Nevertheless many East Germans were anti-Semitic and were complicit in the Holocaust, although they claimed that theirs was an anti-Fascist government. But even if they were anti-Fascist, they were also anti-Semitic and were complicit—as were former West Germans—in the annihilation of European Jews. For Germans, especially then, Fascism had a particular meaning that was directed at former West Germans by former East Germans.

Like the Germans, the Italians tend not to use the term "Fascism" in a broad or generic sense. As Roger Griffin (2008) points out, "With very few exceptions both Italian and German non-Marxist historians of fascism and Nazism, respectively, have avoided the generic term [fascism] altogether" (p. 186). Still, most political theorists in the field of curriculum studies use the term "fascism" in the generic, not historically specific, sense. Philip Morgan (2006) points out

> There are, of course, good and understandable reasons why it is largely the Anglo-Saxon "outsiders," lacking any direct involvement in these national "historians', controversies," who went for comparative and "generic" analysis of fascism. For Germany, Italy and France, countries with unpalatable "fascist" or "fascist collaborating" recent pasts, their historians have naturally been preoccupied with dealing with these pasts and explaining and understanding them in terms of national historical development. (p. 157).

For most readers unfamiliar with these so-called historians' debates some explanation is needed. During the 1980s especially, historians of Nazi Germany were caught up in what they called the *Historikerstreit* or the historian's

debate (Morris, 2001). Here, the main issue turned on comparability. The question is whether the Holocaust can be compared to other mass annihilations. In the 1980s many thought that comparing one tragedy with another leads down the slippery slope to revisionism. Revisionist historiography—for Holocaust historians—means to unwrite or whitewash history.

German historians who were complicit or sympathetic with the Nazi regime wrote their histories so as to unremember the past and justify their own complicity. In Vichy France, Nazi collaboration was widespread. Many French historians have had a difficult time coming to terms with Vichy, and so it took much longer for the French to write about their own complicity than, say, the former West Germans. So too, the Austrians. They claimed after the war that they were victims of the Nazi regime. But in fact the Austrians had an enormous role in the Holocaust as many of Hitler's henchmen were Austrian (Morris, 2001). Austria wasn't the only collaborating country. I comment, "Raul Hilberg (1992) reminds us that collaborating countries included Italy [especially the Fascists], Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Norway, France, and the Netherlands" (p. 153). Many of these countries had their own brand of fascism. Walter Laquer (1996) tells us that Romania's "Iron Guard [especially during the 1930s] under Corneliu Codreanu was the most radical of the European fascist movements" (p. 84). Laquer says that "Fascism in Hungary was surprisingly strong [again during the 1930s]" (p. 84). And then there were also the Croatian fascists (Laquer). Recently in France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's *National Front* is fascist, as pointed out by Tamir Bar-On (2006), Roger Griffin (2008), and Robert O. Paxton (2004).

The point being made here is that there seems to be a historical continuum of Fascism from the 1920s—with the advent of the Italian Fascists—on through World War II and even beyond that into the 1990s and still even today. Fascism seems to remain a continual problem and continual force with which to be reckoned, not only in Europe but also all over the world. Robert O. Paxton asks a good question about the earliest versions of Fascism. Interestingly enough, he suggests that the American Ku Klux Klan was one of the earliest Fascist organizations. Paxton says

> A debate has arisen about which country spawned the earliest Fascist movement. France is a frequent candidate. Russia has been proposed. Hardly anyone puts Germany first. It may be that the earliest phenomenon that can be functionally related to fascism is American: the Ku Klux Klan. (p. 49)

This is a surprising statement, especially for Americans who more than likely would have guessed that Germany and/or Italy would have been considered the first Fascists. Right here on our own soil, fascism(s) spreads.

Critical theorists like McLaren and Giroux seem to suggest that fascism equals neoliberalism. But Kevin Passmore (2006) warns that when Marxists speak of a "core of fascism" (p. 174)—such as neoliberalism—this produces theoretical problems. Is there really a core to fascism and can it be reduced to neoliberalism? No. It is much more complex than that as many historians of fascism seem to suggest. And this is the problem with much critical theory today. The discussions on fascism—in education—do not take into account the historicity of the term, nor do critical theorists cite historians who work in what is called fascist studies. Some of the key historians in this area, as Tamir Bar-On tells us, are "Ernst Nolte, Renzo De Felice, Zeev Sternhell, James Gregor and Stanley Payne...[and] Roger Griffin" (p. 87). There seems to be a gaping hole in the study of fascism in the field of curriculum studies. Most political theorists in education ignore the work being done in fascist studies, which has been ongoing since at least the 1960s.

Comparability and Fascism(s)

It is important to address the issue of comparability in relation to fascism(s). John Weaver (2001) warns that in the context of the Holocaust, Ernst Nolte's position—which is one of comparability—is highly problematic. Weaver states

> Nolte's references to the Gulag system, Pol Pot in Kamphuchea, or Armenians in Turkey were seen as ploys to lessen the contemporary significance of the Holocaust rather than to contextualize the Holocaust within a broader world history perspective. Indeed, by making these references and drawing inferences from these other genocidal events, Nolte constructed a crude hierarchy of genocides, in which the Holocaust, when compared to the killing fields of Kampuchea and the Gulag Archipelago, was neither unique nor very high on his scale of destruction. (p. 64)

The question here is this: Can historians compare one genocide with another without sliding down the slippery slope to revisionism? Can scholars put the Holocaust, as Weaver suggests, "in a broader world history perspective" (p. 64) without erasing the uniqueness and historical particularity of this horrific event? For those who do comparative studies, this is the key problematic.

If historians resort to the generic use of the term "fascism," they face this problem as well: a generic use of this term erases the historical particularity of the event. Robert O. Paxton suggests that if scholars use comparisons in the study of fascism(s) they might follow the lead of Marc Bloch who "reminded us [that comparison] is most useful for eliciting differences" (p. 20). The generic term "fascism," however, tends to—as Walter Laquer (1996) points out—obliterate differences. Laquer says

> The use of the term *fascism* with regard to Nazi Germany also obliterates the important differences between the two regimes [Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany] and the fact that leading authorities on the subject, such as K. D. Bracher and Renzo De Felice, were among the most outspoken opponents of the use of the generic term *fascism* provides, at the very least, food for thought. (p. 7)

The Generic Use of the Term "Fascism"

The case against the generic use of fascism is a convincing one, and yet many scholars who do fascist studies resort to the generic use and draw on comparisons without making enough of the historical specificity of events. Let us consider again the work of Ernst Nolte and also of Roger Griffin. The approach taken by both Nolte and Griffin toward fascism is highly problematic. It was Ernst Nolte who suggested that scholars search for the root of fascism. Roger Griffin (2008) explains that it was Nolte who "popularised" what he called "the fascist minimum" (p. 185). Now this quest for the so-called fascist minimum is taken up by Roger Griffin as he suggests that fascism can be reduced to a few descriptors that can apply to many historical cases. Griffin (2006) suggests that fascism(s) all have a "minimum core ideology of national rebirth (palingenesis) that [embraces] a vast range of highly diverse concrete historical permutations" (p. 29). This so-called fascist minimum is highly problematic because it seems to gloss over historical particularity, reducing or erasing highly complex phenomena.

This is not unlike Holocaust debates. The Holocaust was an extremely complicated historical catastrophe. When scholars ask why it happened, they do not really know. And scholars certainly should not reduce the causes of the Holocaust to one thing (like the fascist minimum). There were many factors that caused the Holocaust. In particular, I am reminded of the Goldhagen controversy (Morris, 2001) where Goldhagen tried to reduce the cause of the Holocaust to "eliminationist anti-Semitism" (p. 136). Goldhagen said

the reason the Germans did what they did is because they wanted to. For this simplistic explanation Goldhagen was roundly criticized by the historical community. There were many reasons that the Holocaust happened. Studying possible reasons historians give for the rise of Nazi Germany, scholars should not try to reduce the cause of this historical event to one thing. In my book on the Holocaust, I state:

> In Goldhagen's notes in his book, he takes to task every major Holocaust historian and argues that their ideas are completely misguided. He says that ordinary Germans did not kill because they were coerced, which is what Sarah Gordon argues (p. 490); they did not kill because they were "blind followers of order" (p. 490) which is what Friedlander, G. P. Gooch, Stanley Milgram, and Hannah Arendt argue; they did not murder because of "social psychological pressure" (p. 490) which Goldhagen suggests is Browning's contention; they did not kill because they were "petty bureaucrats" (p. 490) which is Heim and Aly's and Mommsen's position. (2001, p. 137)

Goldhagen's argument is that Germans killed because they wanted to. This simple explanation will not do. Reducing any historical event to one thing is counterintuitive.

Educational scholar Heinz Sunker (1997) makes a similar mistake when trying to explain the Holocaust, wanting to reduce the cause of the Holocaust to one thing. He suggests that the "folk community [was]...the foundation" of National Socialism (p. 7). He explains

> In relation to the development of what can be defined in a preliminary sense as political culture in this period, the ideology of the folk community constitutes the most important reference point. It connected the demands of nationalism, organic thinking, a fetishization of totalization, so that ultimately racism was bound up together with a repressive social order. Folk community as National Socialism's ideology of formation was the foundation of the fascist dictatorship. (p. 7)

What is troubling about this citation is that Sunker suggests that there is actually a foundation or root to National Socialism. However, there were many reasons the Holocaust occurred. Reducing the Holocaust to the rise of a "folk community" does not sufficiently explain the complexities of the Holocaust.

Sunker uses the phrase "fascist dictatorship." This is another problem. Recall that in the context of Germany, fascism means the former West Germany, not the East. Former East Germans considered themselves Communist and accused the West of fascism. So in Germany, the term "fascism" has a specific meaning. But remember too that the Communists were just as complicit in the Holocaust as the so-called fascists.

Against Generic Fascism

Robert O. Paxton (2004) writes that there is no essence to fascism (p. 21). As Roger Eatwell (2006) points out, although "Sir Ian Kershaw, who is willing to concede that there were major ideological affinities between Nazism and Fascism, [he] finds no place for discussion of generic fascism" (p. 105). When educational scholars use the term "fascism" it seems to be mostly used in its generic sense, and this is problematic. Peter McLaren (2006)—in the context of the abstract term "difference"—argues that this term is "unhinged from its historical embeddedness" (p. 31). The same argument can be made about the generic use of the term "fascism"—it too is ahistorical. And yet it seems that McLaren (2005) uses fascism in its generic sense in the context of neoliberalism and the "steady movement toward fascism" (p. 11) of the United States. Robert O. Paxton cautions that "war government under fascism is not the same as the democracies' willing and temporary suspension of liberties" (p. 157). The problem with using fascism in the context of the United States is that it is, as Robert O. Paxton points out, "sloppy usage" (p. 21) of a term that has a history. But the question remains: is neoliberalism fascism? No. Neoliberalism is a terrible thing because it makes the rich richer and exploits everyone else. But it is a global problem that cannot be reduced to the generic sense of the term "fascism." The Bush administration was not the same as fascist Italy under Mussolini. Walter Laquer (1996) is careful to qualify the use of the term "fascism" and points out that—in the context of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia—"not everyone who opposes further immigration is a fascist; not every anti-Semite is a fascist; and not every ultranationalist is a fascist" (p. 7). But on the other hand, a terrible person might be all of these things—xenophobic, anti-Semitic and nationalistic—and be a fascist too.

Alexander de Grand (2006) points out that Roger Griffin "frees himself from the lists of attributes that other historians use by limiting the linkage [to fascism] to one point in ideology" (p. 97). Fascism is a style of government that has, as Alexander de Grand points out, "lists of attributes" (p. 97). As opposed to Roger Griffin and Ernst Nolte—who argue that there is a core to fascism—Robert O. Paxton argues that fascism is made up of a network of things. Paxton explains, "Fascism in action looks much more like a network of relationships than a fixed essence" (p. 207). What is this network? What makes up the relationships of a fascist regime? These are the questions raised by scholars who look for multiple—not singular—causes for the rise of oppressive governments.

Nationalism as an Ingredient of Fascism

When educationists describe neoliberalism they often use terms that historians use to describe fascist regimes. Political theorists often do not contextualize historically the terms that they use. Here I discuss some of the ingredients that go into the making of fascism. One such ingredient is nationalism. Robert O. Paxton, Roger Griffin (2006; 2008), Walter Laquer (1996), Hannah Arendt (1979), Richard Hofstader (1963), and Stanley Payne (1995)—to name but a few—all agree that nationalism is an important facet of fascism. But Peter Fritzsche (2006) argues, "It is important to keep in mind that fascism in Italy and Germany succeeded precisely because it was different from traditional fascism" (p. 111). There are historic and geographic differences between Italian and German fascism(s). And certainly there have been more fascist governments than only Italy and Germany. In fact, various countries that have been oppressed by fascist regimes have had very different histories; those differences should be noted, not obfuscated through comparisons. Jeffrey Bale (2006) tells us that scholars like Roger Griffin point out that fascism is not just a European phenomenon. But most scholars of fascism focus on European fascism, Bale reports. Walter Laquer discusses fascist regimes in Italy, Germany, Spain, Romania, Croatia, and Hungary; Robert O. Paxton discusses fascism in France, Russia, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Romania, and the phenomenon of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States; Hannah Arendt focuses mostly on Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia; Roger Griffin (2008) talks about apartheid South Africa, Chile, Spain, Austria, and France. Griffin argues

> Fascism is a copious taxonomic pot into which Nazi Germany, Francisco Franco's Spain, Apartheid South Africa, Augusto Pinochet's Chile, Jean-Marie Le Pen's plans for the renewal of France, and Jorg Haider's ideal Austria can be thrown [in] without too much intellectual agonizing over definitional or taxonomical niceties. (p. 183)

But there should be intellectual agonizing over what these differing versions of fascism mean in these very different countries. Can scholars—with intellectual integrity—simply throw all of these fascism(s) into the same pot? Perhaps Griffin doesn't mean that all of these fascism(s) are literally the same, but by making such sweeping comparisons Griffin suggests that they basically are all alike, when clearly they are not. Each of these countries has a unique history of fascism. The uniqueness of each should be studied with care.

Militarism as a Facet of Fascism

Another facet of fascism that many scholars agree upon is that fascism is militaristic. The state becomes militarized in fascist governments. Stanley Payne (1995) tells us that militarization is a main feature of fascism:

> Together with the drive for mass mobilization went one of the most characteristic features of fascism, its attempt to militarize politics to an unprecedented degree. This was done by making militia groups central to the movement's organization and by using military insignia and terminology in reinforcing the sense of nationalism and constant struggle. (p. 12)

Giroux (2004) writes about the increasing militarization of the U.S. government in the context of the university and public education. For instance, Giroux says that teachers and scholars work in a "military-corporate-industrial-educational-complex" (p. 34). For Giroux, the university and the public school have both been militarized. To a certain extent this is true. Public school students are under surveillance by police and are scrutinized like never before. University professors too are under surveillance, especially—as Peter McLaren (2006) points out—those who are Marxist. McLaren puts this into historical perspective when he states

> Of course, Marxist analysis is being linked to "anti-Americanism." The Cold War basically drove Marxism out of mainstream intellectual life in the U.S. Some Marxist scholars inhabit the universities, but they are under close scrutiny, especially after September 11. (p. 62)

It is not only Marxist scholars who are under scrutiny after 9/11. All left-wing scholars had to worry under the Bush regime. Henry Giroux (2007) writes that under Bush "corporatist and military tendencies [emerged] within both the university and the wider society" (p. 1). What became increasingly alarming was the government's urging citizens to spy on each other to try to figure out if the enemy (after 9/11) was within. Homegrown terrorists seemed to be everywhere lurking, according to Bush. Both Giroux (2003) and McLaren (2005) comment on the advent of spying under the Bush regime. Alarmingly, McLaren reports that the

> Department of Homeland Security along with its secret police now has the right to wiretap anyone's phone it wants without a court order, to search any home without a warrant... to secretly monitor people's finances, purchases, library or internet use with sophisticated electronic and computer eavesdropping equipment. (p. 64)

Militarization means control and surveillance. McLaren, who comments on the increased militarization of the state under Bush, compares Bush to Hitler. Perhaps this comparison is farfetched. But still, the Bush administration was awful and what McLaren reports in the above citation certainly reminds one of Nazi Germany. However, certainly Nazi Germany and the United States—under the Bush regime—are not the same thing.

Alexander de Grand (2006) also points out that under Mussolini, the Italian State was also militarized as "the fascist motto was not 'think and judge for yourself', but rather 'believe, obey, fight'" (p. 96). This unquestioning obedience to the government is what the Bush regime wanted, and they too wanted an unquestioning fighting force to go into Iraq under the concocted evidence that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

Fundamentalism and Fascism

Fundamentalism is another facet of fascism. Bush wanted people to believe in him unthinkingly because, as McLaren (2005) points out, Bush thought that God spoke to him. Bush was a fundamentalist of sorts. McLaren says

> For most of us who would like to see foreign and domestic policy run by carefully considered deliberation based on sound intelligence and critical analysis, a faith-based presidency presents a crisis of inestimable proportions. You can't run the world on the supreme confidence that your views are right because they are guided by God. (p. 3)

Bush and Hitler are not the same, yet there are uncanny similarities between them, especially on the issue of prophecy. Hitler also said that God spoke to him (Morris, 2001). And interestingly enough Hannah Arendt (1979) points out that many dictators "have the habit of announcing their political intentions in the form of prophecy" (p. 349). I point out in my book on the Holocaust:

> Hitler (1923) says "Thus did I believe that I must act in the sense of the almighty Creator: by fighting against the Jews I am doing the Lord's work" (p. 25). Hitler really believed that he had been called, like a prophet, to carry out the will of God. He uses words like Providence over and over again [in *Mein Kampf*] to suggest that the Final Solution was fated by God. (2001, p. 214)

Here, Hitler sounds like a fundamentalist. And certainly many have commented on the links between religious fundamentalism and fascism (McLaren, 2005; Reynolds & Webber, 2009; Giroux, 2007; Payne, 1995; Laquer, 1996).

Today, Americans especially worry about Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist attacks. But not all Muslims are terrorists, and this is something that people on the right—especially Christian fundamentalists—do not understand. Anti-Muslim sentiment and xenophobia are on the rise in the United States since 9/11. Some might think that the link between fundamentalism and fascism is new, especially with the advent of Islamic terrorists. But Walter Laquer tells us otherwise. He states

> In the Middle East, Radical Islam is a rising force and has a striking overlap with fascism. But this *clerical fascism* is not a new phenomenon, as the term was used in Italy as far back as 1921 to describe those advocating a synthesis between Catholicism and the dynamic new political movement headed by Benito Mussolini. During World War II, clerical Fascist regimes ruled Slovakia and Croatia. (p. 5)

A few points here about the above citation. Most of us know little about clerical fascism during the 1920s either in the Middle East or in places like Slovakia and Croatia. Americans are so narrowly educated. Few of us have any knowledge of international affairs. American news tells us very little about what is really going on in the world. A second point I would like to make here is that it is a well-known fact for many European scholars that the Catholic Church supported Mussolini—and Hitler for that matter. Protestant churches also supported the Nazis (Morris, 2001). Probably not many Americans know this. Again, not all Catholics or Protestants are fundamentalists or fascists, but some are. The unbending, rigid, parochial, and militant attitude of fundamentalists leads to violence. History teaches us this.

What is worrisome today is Sarah Palin and her Tea Party followers. This Tea Party movement in the United States is yet another example of fundamentalism. These people are xenophobic, homophobic, racist, and the rest. The Tea Party movement has arisen at this time in history in direct reaction to the election of the first black president of the United States, Barack Obama. Since this movement is relatively new, it is hard to say what they are capable of doing.

Historically, many fundamentalist churches have supported hate speech. Stanley Payne (1995) points out the connection between Mussolini and the Vatican. Payne tells us

> For Mussolini, the final achievement in the creation of a political structure was to sign a concordat with the Church, which would in effect bring the blessing of Italy's most influential institution. Overt, often intense, hostility between church and state had existed since unification in 1860, but as early as 1922 the Vatican had indicated

> it would not oppose a Mussolini government and appreciated Fascism's role in the defeat of the left. Latern Pacts in 1929 completed the system. (p. 119)

When organized religions support dictatorships trouble abounds because organized religions bring with them millions of supporters. It is these millions of supporters who are worrisome.

Historians comment on the rise of fascism and the way in which the millions of people who support dictators are, in some ways, more frightening than the dictator. As historian Robert O. Paxton (2004) points out, "No dictator rules by himself" (p. 119). Robert Soucy (2006) remarks that Alexander de Grand emphasizes that what makes Italy's fascist regime frightening "were the large numbers of social conservatives and cultural traditionalists who poured into the movement after 1920" (p. 213). Paxton warns

> The image of the all-powerful dictator personalizes fascism, and creates the false impression that we can understand it fully by scrutinizing the leader alone. This image, whose power lingers today, is the last triumph of fascist propagandists. It offers an alibi to nations that approved or tolerated fascist leaders, and diverts attention from the persons, groups, and institutions who helped him. (p. 9)

I would like to point out that these examples from history show that religious fundamentalists in America—in many ways—mirror fundamentalism(s) in countries like fascist Italy. Still fundamentalism(s) are not the same. Peter McLaren (2005) and Henry Giroux (2009) try to elucidate these problems in the United States, but they do not give historical examples in much detail to buttress their points.

Violence and Fascism

Another key ingredient to fascism is violence. European fascism arose in Italy—as Robert O. Paxton (2004) discusses—with WWI. As Paxton says, after experiencing violence during WWI, people wanted to solve their problems through the use of more violence. Violence begets violence. William F. Pinar's (2001) work on lynching and prison rape suggests that there was something sexual about lynching. Is there a sexual component to violence? Perhaps sometimes there is. And, too, students learn from studying the history of Nazi Germany that there was something sexually sadistic about torturing people (Morris, 2001). Sadistic behavior is also sexual. War is sadism. Robert Paxton says that "fascism's deliberate replacement of reasoned debate with

immediate sensual experience transformed politics, as the exiled German critic Walter Benjamin was the first to point out, into aesthetics. And the ultimate fascist experience, Benjamin warned in 1936, was war" (p. 17). Hitler had a way of seducing people by pounding his fist on the podium, ranting and raving. There was a violent and sexual "aesthetic," if you will, to his political rants. Watching footage of him is always shocking because today that kind of behavior in the United States would never be acceptable. Americans like politicians to be calm, cool, and collected. Americans do not like drama in Congress, unlike the British, who in Parliament carry on so. Americans, recall, are of Puritan stock and this means that anger—at least being irate—is not an acceptable emotion. But Hitler raved on and on and the Germans obviously liked it. It seems that all of Europe liked it.

Why were there so many collaborating countries during the Holocaust? Walter Laquer (1996) suggests that today "the cult of the Fuhrer and the Duce has gone out of fashion" (p. 93). But who knows what tomorrow will bring? In dire economic times dogma wins elections. Hitler was the master of dogma. Nuance and ambivalence on the political stage are beside the point when people can't pay the rent or buy food. George Bush had little nuance and seemed certain of his principles. Dogmatic. Bush was never wrong—at least in his mind. And this reminds us of a comment made by Hannah Arendt (1979) about dictators. She says, "The chief qualification of a mass leader has become unending infallibility; he can never admit an error" (pp. 348–349). Bush never admitted error. Right-wing conservatives loved Bush because whatever he did he seemed sure about. The Iraq war was one of the biggest blunders in the history of the United States, but Bush never admitted that he was wrong. Hannah Arendt comments that in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, he "stated that to be successful, a lie must be enormous" (p. 439). The Bush administration told the American people—told the world—"an enormous lie" about Hussein's so-called weapons of mass destruction.

No Dissension in a Fascist Regime

Another key ingredient of fascist regimes is that they do not tolerate dissension. During times of war and during times of conservative administrations in the United States, dissension is also vilified. Dissension was not tolerated during the years of Woodrow Wilson and WWI. Dissension was not tolerated during the Iraq war and the Bush years. During the regimes of Stalin and Mao dissension could get you disappeared, tortured, or murdered. And this is

the meaning of a totalitarian regime: total power over everything, including dissenters.

During the Bush administration, Peter McLaren (2006) commented, "It is very likely that the Bush gang will make more concerted effort to root out dissension in the universities" (p. 36). Under conservative regimes, Henry Giroux (2007) remarks that "faculty are increasingly being stripped of their autonomy and critical capacities, silenced in the governance process" (p. 8). John Dewey and others founded the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to serve as a watchdog group to protect faculty. But the AAUP has little power. Left-leaning faculty are under watch and constantly under surveillance. But still a totalitarian regime is more than the stripping away of the right to dissent.

In Europe, many Jewish intellectuals were not only not allowed to dissent, but they also were murdered for doing so. In the place of Jewish professors who were fired or murdered during the Nazi regime, Max Weinreich (1999) tells us that "Hitler's professors" were hired. Weinreich explains that these professors wrote,

> A good many thousands of books, pamphlets, and documents [which] provide ample evidence that there was participation of German scholarship in every single phase of the crime... . Nazi policies were drawn into the work for more than a decade: physical anthropology and biology, all branches of the social sciences and the humanities. (p. 7).

During the Holocaust dissenters were fired, many killed, while those who were complicit were rewarded with academic positions. And what disturbs here is that Hitler's scholars justified theory to commit mass murder. John Weaver (2001) reminds us that the former East German historians (who were in cahoots with the Stasi police) were responsible for the arrest of students who questioned them. Robert O. Paxton (2004) points out that in Italy a similar scene took place among academics. Paxton reports

> When university professors [in Mussolini's Italy] were required to take an oath to the regime during the academic year 1931–32 only 11 out of 1,200 refused. Only after the racial legislation of 1938...did a significant number of intellectuals emigrate. (p. 140)

Did these professors take this oath out of fear or peer pressure or did they actually like Mussolini's policies? Alexander de Grand (2006) tells us that the Italian Fascists also "used racial criteria to purge both Jews and Jewish influences. In their purge of Jewish literature, the ban was extended back to

1850" (p. 96). How can a book written in 1850 be considered dangerous? This shows that paranoia and hate can drive people to do the most absurd things, like getting rid of books that were written more than a hundred years ago.

University professors weren't the only ones under surveillance during the Hitler years. School children, in Hitler's Germany, were also under surveillance and sent to "camps" to learn obedience and to learn the ways of the Nazis (Dudek, 1997; Schiedeck & Stahlmann, 1997; Harvey, 1997). Jürgen Schiedeck and Martin Stahlmann tell us

> Camps also had a lot in common when it came to the teaching topics, regardless of a camp's special orientation. For example, topics almost everywhere included the '*Fuhrer*', the 'movement', 'national Socialist philosophy' and the Versailles Treaty. Sports (of a paramilitary nature) also played a major role as a self-evident part of the daily routine... . Wearing a uniform and weapons practice were also obligatory. (p. 56)

In the United States the push for physical education and sports during the early 1900s was really about the crisis of masculinity. Boys are made more masculine by playing sports. Teddy Roosevelt had much to do with the masculinization of politics. Being a real man meant hunting, killing, being a sportsman (Haraway, 1989). Real men are not scholars, they are athletes and fighters.

At any rate, these so-called camps in Nazi Germany were meant to make men of boys and made certain that these boys were loyal to the Nazi cause. Taking children away from their parents was a way to control them. Peter Dudek (1997) claims, "A policy of nationalizing youth education [was] to counteract the traditional childrearing institutions of the school and the family, and thus enforce the national-socialist demands for total control over all youth and all phases and areas of life" (p. 41). The Nazis left no stone unturned. No child was left behind. Camp made sure that all children were indoctrinated fully into Nazi ideology.

And then there were the other camps for the "uneducable" (Sunker, 1997, p. 25). These were concentration camps. Unbelievable as it is, the Nazis murdered their own children if they were uneducable or disabled. Jürgen Schiedeck and Martin Stahlmann (1997) report, "Although officially called remand camps, both Moringen and Uckermark were actually concentration camps, with Moringen being responsible for the death of at least fifty-nine youths" (p. 61). This is a little known fact among most Americans. And it is an example of what can happen to people who are considered different. Difference was clearly not acceptable in any of these fascist/authoritarian regimes.

New Fascisms

Today many talk of new fascism(s). It seems that fascism—in whatever stripe—never seems to go away. One begins to wonder why this phenomenon continues. Many of these new fascists are right-wing extremists—and they come in many stripes. Some scholars suggest that it has become increasingly difficult to pinpoint who these people are because of the internet and cybercrime. For example, Roger Griffin (2008) suggests that the new face of fascism(s) is "predominantly rhizomatic (and hence largely faceless)" (p. 202). Griffin calls new fascism "slime mould" (p. 192) because it is like a "weather resistant organism" (p. 200) that keeps coming back in different hard-to-pin-down forms. Today radical Islamic terrorists—who behead and burn people alive—are emerging around the globe like a cancer. It seems that there is no stopping them. But it is not only Islamic terrorists that give us pause. Homegrown terrorists like neo-Nazis, skinheads, and the Aryan Brotherhood are right here on U.S. soil.

Roger Griffin tells us about other fascism(s). He states,

> One symptom of the extreme right's rhizomatic structure is an ecumenicalism unthinkable in the "fascist" era, expressed both in the way web-linkages exist in cross-currents of influence detectable between diffuse currents of fascism such as universal Nazism, Christian Identity, Third Positionism and the New Right. (p. 199)

Griffin points out that these groups are international and continue to spread because of the internet. And the facelessness of these new groups in some ways causes more uneasiness than the black shirts of Italy, for example. If these terrorists are indeed faceless, it is hard to know how to find them and what to do about them. During what scholars call the classical era of fascism the enemy was clear. A black shirt obviously was a fascist. Today, this is not the case. However, Martin Durham (2008) suggests that there are fascists who are identifiable. Clearly, Osama Bin Laden was not faceless. Durham points out that "America neo-Nazi...William Pierce...looks not toward leaderless resistance but to a centralized organisation" (p. 102). Durham argues that there are two kinds of fascism(s) today: one has a face and a structure; the other is faceless and amorphous. David Duke—former wizard of the Ku Klux Klan—has a well-known face, especially for people who live in Louisiana. But ISIS is faceless and indeed amorphous.

Walter Laquer (1996) points out that fascism(s) are not only in the United States but are everywhere. He states,

> In France, Russia, Italy, and Austria, the parties of the extreme right are among the strongest. By adopting certain aspects of contemporary youth culture (such as the skinheads), neofascist groups have been able to gain a foothold in Europe. (p. 5)

But not all youngsters are drawn to terrorist organizations. As Giroux (2003) points out, since Columbine "a whole generation of youth have been labeled as superpredators" (p. xiv). Not all young people shoot school children. However, Walter Laquer reminds us that "Nazism and Italian Fascism appeared as the movement of Youth; to wit, the Italian anthem was 'Giovinezza' (Youth)" (p. 29). Universities in Germany and Austria—during WWII—were hotbeds of anti-Semitism (Morris, 2001). Still sweeping generalizations are not accurate.

Today scholars talk about "postfascist" (Bar-On, 2006, p. 88), "micro-fascisms" (Roy, 2008, p. vii), "proto-fascism" (Giroux, 2004, p. 17), "neofascist" (Laquer, 1996, p. 5), or "creeping fascism" (Giroux, p. 11). Of these concepts, postfascism is the least helpful. Fascism is not "post." Post suggests that fascism is over; it's not over, it seems to stay with us and morph into a variety of forms as Griffin's (2008) metaphor of "slime mould" suggests (p. 192). Hatreds abound. Anti-Semitism continually emerges and so too does racism.

Political scholars in curriculum studies tend not to look at hate groups like the neo-Nazis or skinheads—but rather focus on neoliberalism as the main force of (what they consider to be a form of fascism)—as I pointed out earlier. Many critical theorists tend to argue that the U.S. government is fascist. What they tend not to examine are hate groups—especially if they are youth hate groups. Critical theorists are so worried about not demonizing youth, as Giroux (2003) puts it, that they have missed what is right before their eyes. There are youth militias, neo-Nazi youth, and youth skinheads here in the United States.

Critical theorists in the United States and Canada focus mostly on the problems of neoliberalism to the exclusion of youth hate groups. But neoliberalism is not the whole story. Moreover, neoliberalism is not new. Scholars trace neoliberal tendencies back to the Hoover administration. Adam Cohen (2009) reminds us that Herbert Hoover was all about the free market. There are striking similarities between the Hoover administration and the G. W. Bush administration. Cohen reminds us that during the Depression

> the nation was crying out for the government to respond, but President Herbert Hoover refused to acknowledge the seriousness of the crisis. "I am convinced," he said in the spring of 1930, "we have passed the worst." As the Great Depression held

> on for year after brutal year, Hoover began to concede that the crisis was real, but he still refused to provide the sort of relief that was needed. His free-market ideology taught him that private enterprise should be the source of all solutions, and his near-religious commitment to "rugged individualism" convinced him that giving aid to the Depression's victims would morally damage them. (p. 2)

Many neoliberals today continue to think in Hooveresque fashion. Neoliberals seem to think that the market will take care of itself without any government intervention. Again, neoliberalism is not the only problem at hand politically.

I argue that scholars of education must study youth groups who are fascist—like the neo-Nazis or skinheads—without demonizing youth. The fear of demonizing (p. xvii) youth—as Giroux (2003) puts it—blinds critical theorists to other kinds of fascism(s) with which young people are engaged. There are many kinds of problems that need to be studied. School shootings need to be studied more, for example. There are two notable books in education about school shootings such as Julie Webber's (2003) *Failure to Hold: The Politics of School Violence* and Douglas Kellner's (2008) *Guys and Guns Amok: Domestic Terrorism and School Shootings from the Oklahoma City Bombing to the Virginia Tech Massacre*. I encourage students to read these primary texts closely to get a better handle on violence in youth culture(s).

Totalitarianism(s), Militarism(s): Continued Patterns in Political Scholarship

Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux aren't the only education scholars talking about education against the backdrop of totalitarianism or fascism. Wayne Ross (2004), Kenneth Saltman (2003; 2007), David Gabbard (2003), Kaustuv Roy (2008), Stanley Aronowitz (2000), Julie Webber (2003), Douglas Kellner (2008), Enora Brown (2003; 2007), Pauline Lipman (2003; 2007), Joe Kincheloe (2008), Donaldo Macedo (2006), Sandy Grande (2004), Shirley Steinberg (2007), and Marvin Berlowitz and Nathan Long (2003)—for starters—all talk about education in the context of authoritarianism, militarism, and neoliberalism. Henry Giroux (2004) has written a book titled *The Terror of Neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy*. What is implied in this title is that neoliberalism is a form of terrorism and that neoliberalism is a form of authoritarianism. But this form of authoritarianism surely isn't the same as a true totalitarian government like Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia.

Again, terms like "totalitarianism" and "terror" are used generically by political scholars in curriculum studies.

An important book that many political theorists draw on—especially Kenneth Saltman (2007)—is Naomi Klein's (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Kenneth Saltman's edited collection is titled similarly *Schooling and the Politics of Disaster*. Saltman acknowledges Naomi Klein as the inspiration for his edited collection. For students who are interested in a hard-hitting look at the problematics of neoliberal policy and the problems of the ongoing privatization of public services, Naomi Klein's book is a must read and a real "shock" to use her term. Klein (2007) tells us that the Bush administration used disasters in order to, for example, privatize public schools. Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans is one such disaster upon which Klein draws. Klein tells us

> In sharp contrast to the glacial pace with which the levees were repaired and the electricity grid was brought back online, the auctioning off of New Orleans' school system took place with military speed and precision. Within nineteen months, most of the poor residents still in exile, New Orleans' public school system had been almost completely replaced by privately run charter schools. (p. 6)

In the media, news anchors turned Katrina—a catastrophe—into a good thing. They suggested that the New Orleans public school system actually benefited from Katrina. But what the news anchors did not tell us is that according to Naomi Klein "New Orleans teachers used to be represented by a strong union; now the union's contract had been shredded, and its forty-seven hundred members had all been fired" (p. 6). This is an example, Klein tells us of "disaster capitalism"; this is the way the Bush administration shamefully capitalized on disaster. Many of the political writers in curriculum studies I mention above comment on the ongoing concern of the privatization of public services, especially the privatization of public schools.

To make what is public private is a way to control the kinds of ideas that are taught to our children. A for-profit private school can do as it pleases. Neoliberals want total control over schools, over ideas, and over what gets taught to our children. Peter Taubman (2009), in his important book titled *Teaching by Numbers: Deconstructing the Discourse of Standards and Accountability in Education*, suggests that the hidden curriculum of No Child Left Behind is an economic one. NCLB is a for-profit institution. Taubman states

> Although corporate interests were clearly involved in the formation of No Child Left Behind, they were not explicit. At the state level, the business community is

> deeply and visibly involved in the formulation of policy, and its involvement is clear in the language used to articulate the policies. That involvement has been incredibly lucrative for corporations invested in educational resources, such as Pearson Education, Kaplan, and McGraw-Hill, and for individuals, like Sandy Kress, an architect of NCLB, who has made millions lobbying for some of those companies (Emery and Ohanlan). (p. 67)

Textbooks published by these companies whitewash and water down history. These kinds of textbooks are not meant to be serious intellectual contributions; they are meant to make money. Erudition has nothing to do with profit. But clearly, these textbook companies are out to make profits.

Not only is NCLB a for-profit institution, the entire standardized testing industry is out to make the profit as well. Standardized testing is big business. Pepi Leistyna (2007) concurs with Peter Taubman (2009) on the issue of the profitability of NCLB. Leistyna remarks

> Embracing what is in fact an old neoliberal approach dressed up as innovative reform, the political machinery behind NCLB has effectively disguised the motivations of a profit-driven industry. Schools now give nearly 50 million tests per year and the annual value of this market ranges from $400 million to $700 million. (p. 147)

These political scholars have done some important work unearthing the money-making aspect of NCLB. Imagine the human cost of test taking on millions of children every year. Standardized tests have nothing to do with teaching children to be caring, concerned, and informed citizens. On a related note, Antonia Darder (2002) points out that there is much money to be made in phonics textbooks. Phonics is hardly what Freire had in mind when he talked about literacy. At any rate, Darder says, "While Sacramento is busy setting up mandates for the implementation of a phonics curriculum in the schools, the marketing divisions of corporations that publish phonics texts...are revving their engines for multi-million-dollar sales" (pp. 11–12). Phonics is big business and is hardly intellectual. Stanley Aronowitz (2000), who is highly critical of standardized testing, suggests that real academic scholars are interested in erudition, not standardization. He asks:

> Why do some choose academic professions rather than more remunerative occupations in business or in technosciences such as molecular biology or computer science?...The answers, in these times, are culturally startling: some people abhor corporate life and don't care about making more money than they need to live in reasonable comfort, and they enjoy reading, writing, research, and teaching. (p. 13)

Corporations are dictating to education scholars, even in the universities, how they should teach and what textbooks to use (i.e., Pearson and edTPA). Aronowitz tells us in the corporatized university, college courses of most worth—"are useful to the corporate order" (p. 126). If college classes have no use value for the corporate order then they are cut. Philosophy departments disappear. The liberal arts are certainly viewed as the stepsister of the academy (Mary Doll, personal communication). In *Jewish Intellectuals and the University* (2006), I suggest that even the founders of colleges like Leland Stanford and Andrew Carnegie thought that the university was not a place for real intellectual work: the purpose of the university should be to serve corporate interests; the university should be practical and not theoretical. What use is theory? Carnegie and Stanford wondered. The only theory of any use for corporations is economic theory. The rest—at least for Stanford and Carnegie—was a waste of time. And yet today both of these institutions (Stanford and Carnegie Mellon) honor the liberal arts and certainly honor theoretical fields of study. Not only that, Carnegie Mellon is known for its fine arts program, especially its drama program. Ironically, Andrew Carnegie had little interest in the arts. Richard Hofstadter (1963)—in talking about these same tycoons—reports that Vanderbilt "is reported to have read one book in his life, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that at an advanced age" (p. 258). What is valued in the United States is not how erudite people are but how rich people are. And this is where Marxist scholarship becomes particularly important. Scholars have to have a way to unpack what is wrong with this corporate mentality, and Marxism helps us to understand these problems; this is one of the reasons why Peter McLaren's work is so important, for example. He is perhaps the only political scholar today in the field of education who suggests that critical theorists return to Marx. Likewise, I suggest that scholars return to the work of Hannah Arendt (1979). Her book titled *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is one of the most important books on the subject of totalitarianism in the 20th century, but it is often overlooked by political scholars in curriculum studies with a few exceptions. Kaustuv Roy (2008) is clearly indebted to Arendt in his work. I will discuss Roy's work later.

Defending Public Schools

Wayne Ross (2004) argues that scholars need to defend public schools. But the question here is what are educationists defending them from?—an encroaching totalitarianism (p. xvii). Kenneth Saltman (2007) says, "By reducing the

politics of education to its economic functions, [i.e., making schooling into a form of job training or corporatizing schooling] neoliberal educational thinking has deeply authoritarian tendencies" (p. 14). When schooling is built on the business model or becomes like a business or is thought of as business, Saltman claims authoritarianism is at hand. The idea that everything can be reduced to business is as old as industrialization. Richard Hofstadter (1963) reminds us of "the famous remark of Calvin Coolidge: 'The business of America is business'" (p. 237).The idea that schooling can be reduced to business is not new. But the idea that schooling as business is authoritarian—as Saltman claims—does not fit into the classic definitions of authoritarianism (Arendt, 1979). There is nothing in Arendt's description of authoritarian regimes that has to do with business practices. But what Saltman seems to be getting at is that when the total idea of schooling is reduced to business it is this totalizing mentality that becomes problematic. Totalizing and totalitarian, however, might not be the same thing. Saltman uses the word "totalitarianism" in its generic form.

Schooling is not business and should have nothing to do with business or making profits. Privatizing public schools in order to make profits is clearly wrong. But using the term "totalitarian" in the context of schooling in the United States' troubles. Perhaps totalitarianism in the context of neoliberal schooling needs more qualification.

Kaustuv Roy (2008) says that neoliberalism is a form of "neo-plantation[ism]" (p. xvii). Roy suggests that relations—under neoliberal government—are those of master and slave. Roy argues that this plantation (as a metaphor) has gone global in fact. The metaphor of the plantation (for neoliberal governments) is unusual for political theorists. It captures the problems of economic slavery that most people(s) of the world suffer because of free market ideology. Roy says

> On the neoplantation [read neoliberalism], market theology and the commodity as the measure of all things belong to a certain pathology within whose horizons the militarization of society becomes the inevitable deployment of desire, from [which] proceeds the war on the human. (p. xvii)

In his acknowledgements, Roy mentions Hannah Arendt. Roy's "war on the human" is akin to Arendt (1979), who states, "The totalitarian attempt at global [read Roy's global plantation] conquest and total domination has been the destructive way out of all impasses. Its victory may coincide with the destruction of humanity [read Roy's 'war on the human']" (p. viii).

Neoliberalism is, as Hobbes might put it, a war of all against all. This is the bigger point that both Roy and Arendt make. Both are pessimistic about our future. As long as market forces are "free" and regulations of banks are undone, as long as what is public becomes private, and as long as global inequities continue, there is little to celebrate. And this is why scholars like Wayne Ross (2004) talk about the need to defend public schools.

Neoliberalism, Totalitarianism, Militarism, and the Public Schools

One of the ongoing themes in the political sector of the field is the worry of militarization, as I mentioned earlier. Many political scholars comment on the ways in which neoliberalism, totalitarianism, and militarism go hand in hand with schooling. Think back to our earlier discussion of totalitarianism and fascism because militarization is part and parcel of these disastrous forms of governing. It is not only Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux who worry about militarization and schooling; many more can be added to the list—for example, see Douglas Kellner (2008), Kenneth Saltman and David Gabbard (2003), or Marvin Berlowitz and Nathan Long (2003). In fact, readers might consult Kenneth Saltman and David Gabbard's edited collection titled *Education as Enforcement: The Militarization and Corporatization of Schools*. Kenneth Saltman explains the title of his book here. He states

> What I am calling "Education as Enforcement" understands militarized public schooling as part of the militarization of civil society that in turn needs to be understood as part of the broader social, cultural, and economic movements for state-backed corporate globalization that seek to erode public democratic power and expand and enforce corporate power. (p. 3)

What is striking in this passage is the term "enforcement." This is a concept not used very much, if at all, in the political sector of the field. What is being enforced is free market ideology in its complicity with militarization. But what exactly is being militarized in the context of schooling? Saltman tells us

> Military generals running schools, students in uniforms, metal detectors, police presence, high-tech ID card dog tags, real time internet-based surveillance cameras, mobile hidden surveillance cameras, security consultants, chainlink fences, surprise searches—as U.S. public schools invest in record levels of school security. (p. 1)

The level at which the schools have been militarized, according to Saltman, is total. Totalization=militarization=corporatization=public schools. And this is exactly what schools should not be. Not only are schools becoming militarized, schoolchildren are, as Douglas Kellner (2008) suggests, "being preyed upon by the military that has returned thousands of dead soldiers in body bags from U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq" (p. 81). Marvin Berlowitz and Nathan Long (2003) tell us that working-class youth join the military because they feel that they have so few economic options in life. These youth see the military as a paycheck and a chance to see the world. They do not know what war means or what killing people or seeing people being killed really means, and many do not even think about it until it's too late. War is romanticized. Billboards abound with soldiers in crisp uniforms with the caption "courage" or "bravery" or "honor" or "duty." Be all that you can be, the army mantra goes. One would think that after the nightmares of the 20th century—that is, the horrors of the world wars, Vietnam, and the rest—that people wouldn't romanticize war. But they do. Youth are especially vulnerable. I am reminded of what Martin Berlowitz and Nathan Long tell us about JROTC. They state

> The advocates of JROTC, who are endeavoring to transform their schools into military academies, target these "urban underclass" schoolchildren for recruitment. Defense Department guidelines for JROTC specifically seek "the less affluent large urban schools" and populations who are "at-risk." These children are trapped by a form of economic conscription referred to as the "push-pull phenomenon," in which they are pushed by poverty and racism and pulled by the promise of military benefits. (p. 167)

Many of these youth think that nothing bad will happen to them and in fact they can't wait to dress up in their crisp new military uniforms. They want to carry guns because that image is glamorized on TV and in the movies. But they do not think through the consequences of actually shooting another human being. The bottom line is that these youth feel that they have no options once they are out of school. What jobs are to be had? Most of these youngsters can't afford college and so what real choices do they have? The military gives them a choice and a paycheck—and as Douglas Kellner (2008) points out—these kids are also given a body bag (p. 81).

Class, Control, and the Politics of Emotion

In this final section three issues are addressed that emerge in the recent literature: class, control, and what I call the politics of emotion. For political scholars class—as a category—is a key interest. This is not surprising. But what is surprising—as I mentioned earlier—is that many comment that the concept "class" tends to get ignored by educationists (Fine & Weis, 1998; Brantlinger, 2003; Weis, 2008, Howard, 2008; McLaren, 2000). For example, Peter McLaren claims

> Because capital has itself invaded almost every sphere of life in the United States, the focus of the educational left has been distracted from the great class struggles that have punctuated this century and now rests almost entirely on an understanding of asymmetrical gender and ethnic relations. Although this new focus is important, class struggle is now perilously viewed as an outdated issue. (p. 32)

The exploration of "gender and ethnic relations" is not, in fact, new. If students trace curriculum history back to at least the 1970s, they will learn that scholars have been working in these areas at least since then, if not before. There does, however, seem to be a trend among curriculum scholars that class, as McLaren points out, is beside the point. But there are other ways to get at class as well and feminists have known this for a long time. Although the primary category for feminist analysis has historically been gender, class can also be examined from a feminist perspective. Marxists historically have left out gender, and some complain that critical theory is, as Joe Kincheloe (2007b) points out, seen as a "White North American (and often European) 'thing'" (p. 11). Sandy Grande (2004) contends

> Critical theorists have failed to recognize and, more importantly, to theorize the relationship between American Indian tribes and the larger demographic imaginary. This failure has severely limited their ability to produce political strategies and educational interventions that account for the rights and needs of American Indian students. (p. 1)

Along with Grande, Kincheloe suggests that critical theorists have much to learn from "subjugated knowledges" and should make an effort to "engage

people of African, Asian, and indigenous backgrounds" (p. 11). Sandy Grande calls for a "red pedagogy" (as the title of her book suggests).

Adam Howard (2008) argues that class—as a category of study—is taboo (p. 16). Perhaps class is not taboo so much as something people take for granted and don't bother thinking about. Also it must be noted that the working class is not monolithic. Marxists are not all of a piece either. None of these categories is monolithic. I would suggest that students who are interested in issues of class consult the primary texts of Adam Howard (2008), Lois Weis (2008), Ellen Brantlinger (2003), Michelle Fine together with Lois Weis (1998), Peter McLaren (2000), Henry Giroux (1996), Joe Kincheloe (2007a), and Shirley Steinberg (2007).

Postformal Thinking: Undoing Control

Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, and Patricia Hinchey (1999) edited a collection of essays on what they call "postformal thought." Here, they critique the formalism of Piaget and developmental psychology. Developmental psychology has historically been—according to these scholars—a form of controlling children and "normalizing" them. This is another way that scholars are talking about control. (See also the work of Gaile Cannella [2008], Gaile Cannella & Radhika Viruru [2004], Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg [1999, Marianne Bloch and Thomas Popkewitz [2005], Lourdes Diaz Soto [2005] on their critiques of Piaget and what they call "formal" thinking.) Postformal thinking is political, as well as poststructural. But primarily postformalism is political.

The scholars mentioned above all write about the way in which developmental psychology via Piaget attempts to fit children into certain predisposed categories. If children don't fit in these categories they are considered abnormal. This stance can also be seen in what is called "ego psychology" in the work of Anna Freud and Heinz Hartmann. Ego psychology, like formalism, is a way to normalize and control peoples' eccentricities and to erase difference. Ego psychology and developmental psychology pathologize.

Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (1999) argue that developmental psychology via Piaget is classist and racist. These scholars tell us

> Metaphorical constructs and meaning-making frameworks brought to school by African American, Latino, or other children who do not come from white middle-class backgrounds are often dismissed as developmentally inappropriate. (p. 59)

Who is to say what is developmentally appropriate? Kincheloe and Steinberg point out that there are power issues at stake here. Many people do not like difference and whatever appears different—including children who are different (read not white and not middle class)—is pathologized. Pathologizing is political as well as psychological. Gaile Cannella (2008), interestingly, points out that developmental psychologists need to rethink the notion of development. Cannella states that an "assumption underlying child development is the conviction that all human beings grow and develop in a predetermined manner" (p. 47). These predetermined phases of development were invented by a white male scholar (Piaget) who saw the world through his white privilege and by his class privilege. Radhika Viruru (2001) says that many poor children in India eat out of garbage cans. How can they fit into Piaget's white Western male elitist vision? Viruru says that "so much of early childhood education and care is written in the language of affluence and privilege that it is far removed from the realities of so many children" (p. 19). Piagetian thought is, thus, highly problematic.

The Politics of Emotion

Critical theorists do not often deal with the issue of emotions. But as Joe Kincheloe (2007b) points out, it was Paulo Freire who—in the context of critical theory—talked about the notion of "radical love" (p. 9). Kincheloe tells us that "radical love [is]...the foundation that grounds my conception of critical pedagogy" (p. 10). Shirley Steinberg (2009) explains that radical love is the kind of love that is extremely difficult. Difficult love is the love that is nearly impossible. What this suggests is that doing the work of critical theory—if grounded in Freire's notion of radical love—is extremely difficult. And this is what Peter McLaren means when he talks about not watering down critical theory by skipping over difficult intellectual and emotional issues. If teachers are really doing their jobs they must engage—as Megan Boler (1999) puts it—in a pedagogy of discomfort. Engaging in political theorizing is emotional. As Joe Kincheloe says, "From a critical perspective emotion is one of the many ways we know the world" (p. 7). And if one is truly paying attention to the vast inequities of this world, anger—as Shirley Steinberg poignantly points out—is the appropriate response. Steinberg (2007) calls for a "pedagogy of insubordination" (p. ix). Steinberg goes on to say

> Refusing to compromise to the standards-wielding, neo-liberal pedagogical pundits [the writers of her edited collection on critical pedagogy] are engaged in a pedagogy

> of insubordination. Insubordination borne by the fact that we have been violated by conservatives, liberals, quasi-critical pedagogues, and just about everyone who doesn't get *it*. And therein lies the proverbial rub: there is no *it*. Critical pedagogy isn't formulaic, it isn't stagnant, and it isn't an *it*... . Critical pedagogy has the right to be angry, and to express anger. (p. ix)

It is exactly this anger—Julie Webber (2003) tells us—that kids are not allowed to express in school. Pent-up anger leads to school shootings, according to Webber. A "policy of containment" (p. 193)—that is containing kids' emotions—leads to violence. A violent atmosphere leads to violent acts. Henry Giroux's (2003) adults have abandoned an entire generation of kids because they are treated like criminals.

Both Henry Giroux (2003) and Kaustuv Roy (2008) comment that fear is part and parcel of being an American since 9/11. Living in constant fear can only lead to bad things. Giroux suggests that it is not only that kids live in fear, but that adults fear kids. Kids have become school shooters. But they are not alone. A man flew a plane into an IRS building because he hated the IRS; a biologist at the University of Alabama opened fire on six of her colleagues, killing three of them, because she didn't get tenure. And at Georgia Southern University a professor's wife shot and killed her husband because he was cheating on her. Violence is pervasive in American culture. This is Michael Moore's point in his film *Bowling for Columbine* (2002). Douglas Kellner (2008), William Pinar (2001), and Julie Webber (2003) all point out that gender and the crisis of masculinity have something to do with violent actions. As Julie Webber remarks, violence is a form of rage. Anger and rage are two different things. There is appropriate anger—and there is inappropriate and murderous rage (Searles, 2005). Rage is, as Julie Webber says, symptomatic of "a failure to hold."

Standardized testing is violent. Any attempt to standardize people and or knowledge is symbolically violent. Peter Taubman (2009) argues that under NCLB (and I would add Race to the Top) teachers today feel worthlessness (p. 128), shame (p. xi), and are held in contempt (p. 138) in American culture. Schooling is little more than "paint by numbers" (p. 1).

School teachers and professors have rarely been held in high regard in America. Perhaps during Franklin Roosevelt's administration professors who advised Roosevelt and made up what was called the "brain trust" (p. 7) altered this pattern a bit, as Adam Cohen points (2009) out. But by and large educators are not valued and in fact are scorned because—and this is worth repeating—as Calvin Coolidge said "the business of America is business" (cited in

Hofstadter, 1963, p. 237). NCLB and Race to the Top are built on a business model, which means schools are businesses and the business of school is not school but business. Taubman (2009) claims that teachers have so bought into the business model that they have given in to NCLB and have allowed this to happen. However, William Ayers (2004a; 2004b) suggests that despite the horrors of NCLB and the ever-increasing march toward standardization, teachers must hold onto the idea of hope. Ayers (2004a) says we must "teach consciously for ethical action" (p. 13) and we must find "the moral heart of teaching" (2004a, p. xi) and work "toward [building] a moral universe" (2004a, p. 11). But Sharon Todd (2009) is not so sure that this way of thinking helps us out of our current conundrum. Todd emphasizes that scholars must study our inhumanity and our aggressions.