GIROUX EDUCATION VOTER  
Henry A. Giroux, Global TV Network Chair in English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, “What Might Education Mean After Abu Ghraib: Revisiting Adorno’s Politics of Education” 2004 http://www.henryagiroux.com/online\_articles/giroux.pdf

Often **framed within dominant forms of** circulation and **meaning**, such **images** frequently **work to legitimate particular forms of** recognition and **meaning marked by disturbing forms of diversion** and evasion. **This position is evident in** those **politicians who believe** that **the photographs from Abu Ghraib are the** real **problem—not the conditions that produced them.** Or in the endless commentaries that view the abuses at Abu Ghraib as caused by a few “bad apples.” **Subjecting such public pronouncements to critical inquiry can only emerge within those pedagogical** sites and **practices in which matters of critique and a culture of questioning are requisite to a** vibrant and **functioning democracy.** But public pedagogy at its best offers more than forms of reading that are critical and that relate cultural texts, such as photographs, to the larger world. **Public pedagogy not only defines cultural objects of interpretation, it also offers the possibility for engaging** modes of **literacy** that are not just **about** competency but also about **the possibility of interpretation as an intervention in the world. Meaning** does not **rest[s] with** the images alone, but with **the ways in which images are** aligned and **shaped by larger institutional** and cultural **discourses and how they call [condemnation] into play** the condemnation of torture (or its celebration), how it came about, and what it means to pre- vent it from happening again. This is not merely a political issue but also a pedagogical one. **Making the political** more **pedagogical** in this instance **connects what we know to the conditions that make learning possible in the first place.**

Implicit in Adorno’s argument is the recognition that **education as a critical practice could provide the means for disconnecting commonsense learning from the narrowly ideological impact of** mass media, the regressive tendencies associated with hyper-masculinity, the **rituals of everyday violence**, the inability to identify with others, **as well as from the pervasive ideologies of state repression and its illusions of empire.** Adorno’s response to retrograde ideologies and practices was to emphasize the role of autonomous individuals and the force of self-determination, which he saw as the outcome of a moral and political project that rescued education from the narrow language of skills, unproblematized authority, and the seduction of common sense. Self-reflection, **the ability to call things into question, and the willingness to resist the material and symbolic forces of domination were all central to an education that refused to repeat the horrors of the past and engaged the possibilities of the future.** Adorno urged educators to teach students how to be critical, to learn how to resist those ideologies, needs, social relations, and discourses that led back to a politics where authority was simply obeyed and the totally administered society reproduced itself through a mixture of state force and often orchestrated consensus. **Freedom** in this instance **meant being able to think critically and act courageously, even when con- fronted with the limits of one’s knowledge. Without such thinking, critical debate and dialogue degenerate into slogans, and politics, disassociated from the search for justice, becomes a power grab.**

**Adorno believed that** **educators had to** be educated to **think critically and avoid becoming** the mediators and **perpetrators of social violence**. This meant addressing their psychological deformations **by making clear the** ideological, **social**, and material **mechanisms that encourage people** to participate or **fail to intervene in such deeds. Pedagogy**, in this instance, **was not simply concerned with learning particular modes of knowledge,** skills, and self-reflection, **but also with addressing those dominant** sedimented **needs** and desires **that allowed teachers to blindly identify with repressive collectives and** unreflectingly mimic their values while **vent**ing **acts of hate and aggression.**66 If unlearning as a pedagogical practice meant resisting those social deformations that shaped everyday needs and desires, **critical learning meant making visible those social practices** and mechanisms **that represented the opposite of** self-formation and **autonomous thinking**, so as **to** resist such forces and **prevent** them **[such forces] from exercising** such **power** and influence.

The theoretical framing of the kritik emphasizes the value of critical education. Without engaging in the critical discussion absent from real-world political banter, debaters would be backed into a corner where we all run arguments without being able to critically engage their premises and learning how those premises shape our lives both in and out of round. THAT IS LITERALLY FASCISM: repressing entire schools of thought just to serve monolithic mystical debate concepts like fairness and asserting one unquestionable conception of how to live. The function of LD debate is to increase our knowledge of ethics in order to better inform and justify our real world actions. The learning gained from debating the empirical aspects of a topic is useless without philosophically rigorous standards of evaluation. Simply learning how to regurgitate empirics back and forth doesn’t teach the same level of critical thinking that interacting with these arguments in terms of layers of philosophical debate does because they all link back to inherent standards of what is good or valuable that can’t be compared without philosophical investigation. I am not ceding the political by abolishing the criminal justice system; I am reformulating the ignorant and negligent politics that reinforce objective violence in order to make genuine, unhindered political discussion more accessible.