

publication of his teaching diary, *Cries from the Corridor: The New Suburban Ghettoes*. The book became a best-seller in Canada and catalyzed a national debate on the state of Canada's inner-city schools. Entering graduate school after this success, McLaren reported that his reading of critical theory, cultural studies, and feminist studies taught him that teachers had to be grounded both theoretically and politically. In this context, he developed the belief that critical teachers had to engage in the difficult work of developing a coherent philosophy of praxis. The ideas took shape in his *Schooling as a Ritual Performance: Towards a Political Economy of Educational Symbols and Gestures*—a very important ethnography of education—and *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*—a resource now in its third edition used to introduce critical pedagogy to numerous teachers and other scholars.

These praxis-related insights moved him to become less focused on the classroom per se and more directed toward political, cultural, and racial identity, antiracist multicultural education, the politics of whiteness, white supremacy, modes of resistance and popular culture. During this period—the early and mid-1980s—McLaren, as a professor of education along with Henry Giroux at Miami University (Ohio), focused on the larger relevance of critical pedagogy involving its capacity to expose life's permanent conditions of oppression and exploitation. In the last half of the decade, McLaren researched the relevance of postmodernism for inclusion in the discourse of critical pedagogy. In 1986 he published the first article in education journals on the relationship between postmodernism and pedagogy.

In McLaren's revolutionary critical pedagogy critical educators seek to realize in their classrooms democratic social values and to embrace their possibilities. Consequently, McLaren argues that they need to go outside of the protected precincts of their classrooms and analyze and explore the workings of capital in the larger society. Critical revolutionary pedagogy sets as its goal the reclamation of public life under the assault of corporatization and privatization. Here McLaren offers no blueprint but a contingent utopian vision that offers direction not only in "unpacking the apparatus of bourgeois illusion" but also in diversifying the theoretical repertoire of the critical educator so that new questions can be generated along with new contexts in which to

raise them. Here McLaren's emphasis is not only on denouncing the injustices of neoliberal capitalism and serving as a counterforce to neoliberal ideological hegemony but also on establishing the conditions for new social and economic arrangements.

Peter is at his best when describing the globalitarian world with its unacceptable and ever-increasing disparity of wealth. His work in this domain documents the economic and environmental effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on Latin American nations such as Mexico—disease, birth defects, and an intensification of poverty. All of this is occurring at the same time that many political and educational leaders are proclaiming the virtues and victory of the unfettered free market. In the name of freedom they demand that the peoples of the world submit to the demands of the market. As the U.S. government provides grants of public money to corporations, budget cuts gut programs designed to help the victims of unregulated capital. McLaren warns us that such a reality cannot continue indefinitely without some type of violent explosion. McLaren's work is a secular prayer that calls for action in the present that will avert the intensification of the major human tragedy known as globalization (McLaren, 1989, 1995, 1997, 2000; McLaren, Hammer, Reilly, and Sholle, 1995).

Ira Shor

Growing up as a Jewish kid in the South Bronx, Ira Shor quickly came to understand the lived experience of being white working class as well as the specificities of racial and ethnic discrimination in New York in the 1950s and 1960s. These experiences, like those of so many other men and women now involved in critical pedagogy, shaped his sociopolitical perspectives and his conception of the role of a teacher. With these ideas in mind, Shor became fascinated with the work of Paulo Freire, and to some degree Shor's critical pedagogy has always been intimately involved with what it means to apply Freire in the classrooms of North America. In this context, Shor has carefully worked to integrate critical notions of social critique with techniques of pedagogy in ways that create new educational possibilities. Joined together these two notions help produce a thoughtful, just, and democratic education. Such an education engages students in a way that subverts the exploitation of the subordinate classes, the

manner in which social structures reproduce themselves in the everyday life of the classroom, and the process by which authority regulates the poor.

Keeping these ideas in the front of his consciousness, Shor calls for (and employs in his own teaching) a dialogical pedagogy. In such a teaching the teacher starts with student experience—student responses to themes, texts, and/or problems. In this context the teacher engages students in a critical discourse about these issues. Such a pedagogy, Shor maintains, disconfirms a teacher-centered, authoritarian form of teaching and replaces it with a dialogical one. Indeed, teaching of this kind helps focus critical pedagogy's questioning of the status quo as it enacts its democratic dimension. At the very core of his democratic, decentralized pedagogy, Shor is dedicated to the proposition that the classroom is the venue for the construction of knowledge, not merely for its inculcation. This assertion is inseparable from his profound discomfort with the teacher-driven, authority-dependent nature of many classrooms claiming a variety of ideological positions—critical pedagogy included.

In this context, Shor insists that teachers develop an epistemological relationship to subject matter. Entering into this relationship, teachers monitor students' forms of knowledge and interpretations of subject matter and experience, expressing their own insights at appropriate times in this process of student engagement. Critical teaching of this variety is a compelling art form in the hands of an adept teacher such as Shor. When it is running on all cylinders, Shor posits that a "third idiom" is created. Such an idiom is distinct from both the everyday language of students and the academic language of teachers. It is a critical language constructed as a synthesis of these different ways of thinking and talking in the lived world of the classroom. As such it comes out of the conflicts and the collaborations of teachers and students and emerges as something new—a power-mediated hybrid discourse.

In some ways, Shor's work in critical pedagogy has become, in a right-wing socioeducational *Zeitgeist*, a guidebook for resistance to the standardization and deskilling of contemporary schooling. In an era of hyperbanking pedagogy, Shor challenges the relationship between information-transmitting teachers and passive student receivers. Such challenges position him as the

critical pedagogical champion of the democratic classroom. Up front about both its benefits and its difficulties, he is unafraid to speak and write of his own failures in the complex process. Positioning oneself as a teacher in opposition to the hegemonic culture inscribing classrooms is never a comfortable role for teachers or students. In this sometimes discomfoting role, Shor asserts, one must struggle to find strategies that encourage rather than discourage students from thinking of themselves as critical agents shaping their own education. When students are able to think of themselves as such empowered agents, Shor maintains that both students and teachers develop their capacities as democratic agents and social critics—everyone becomes involved in the learning process. Achieving the best balance of teacher and student input into the critical classroom is central to Shor, as he pushes the boundaries of the democratic classroom as a sophisticated form of group process (Shor, 1980, 1987, 1992, 1996; Shor and Freire, 1987; Shor and Pari, 1999a, 1999b).

Jesus "Pato" Gomez (1952-2006), Ramon Flecha, and CREA

Jesus "Pato" Gomez was one of the world's premier scholars on critical pedagogy and love. Gomez who was a professor of Research Methods in Education at the University of Barcelona, much in the spirit of his dear friend Paulo Freire, he studied the power of a revolutionary love to address unequal power relationships among diverse individuals. As many of us who knew him recognize, not only was Pato's scholarship a great testimony to his genius as a critical pedagogue, but his revolutionary pedagogy was also seen simply in the way he lived his life. He was gifted in his ability to teach critical pedagogy through the example of his everyday love for people, his omnipresent *joie de vivre*, his informed empathy, and his critical interconnection with the people he knew.

I wish I could have been privy to his conversations with Paulo Freire about radical love and its relationship to critical pedagogy's scholarship and activism. Pato and I discussed these conversations and I listened carefully to every dimension of what he told me—but I still would like to have been there to listen to the dialogue between the two greatest advocates and practitioners of radical love I was ever privileged to meet. Always concerned with the role of affect in critical pedagogy, Gomez and Freire

spoke about writing a book on revolutionary love and critical affect entitled "Pedagogy of the Shine in the Eyes." Their time on earth was too limited, though, and it was not to be.

It is important to note in this critical pedagogical context that Gomez's love was never trite in the "love conquers all" school of thought. Pato's truly was a critical love that recognized the need to interrogate love, to theorize it in the critical theoretical tradition. In this critical love domain, much of his scholarship and activism involved love-related issues such as the origins and causes of gender violence. This historicization of love was central to his work and led him to pedagogies that helped adolescents think about and construct the modes of critical analyses needed to overcome contemporary patriarchal tendencies that often led to oppressive, often violent, and degrading "romantic" relationships. In this critical context, Pato worked to develop romantic relationships and modes of love that were life-affirming and empowering. His book, *El Amor en la Sociedad del Riesgo (Love in a High Risk Society)* delineates many of these ideas.

In this book and others Gomez questioned popular romanticized assumptions that love is a fairy tale-like dynamic that suddenly overcomes human beings no matter how dehumanizing or unhealthy the relationship may be for one or both of the lovers involved. Promoting a critical pedagogy of love that engaged students in a power-literate and ideologically informed understanding of love, Pato sought to engage diverse people in questioning whether certain social practices associated with love were liberating or oppressive. As individuals recognize the way power permeates all dimensions of human experience, Pato believed that they could develop ways of loving in pedagogy in particular and in life in general that led to passionate and enhanced modes of living.

In the last years of his life Gomez took the ways he studied love and applied them to interdisciplinary research methodologies—what Pato labeled the "communicative methodology of research." This methodology—similar in many ways to the bricolage that will be discussed later in this book—was used in a number of influential research projects including ones that dealt with the oppression and liberation of Romani peoples (Gypsies) living in Spain and various countries in Europe. In his communicative methodology Gomez worked to make sure that so-called



subjects of research were included in the interpretive and analytical dialogue with university-based researchers and scholars. Pato's sensitivity to the genius and forms of knowledge of oppressed peoples and the subjugated perspectives they bring to research of any type laid the foundation for his critical multiperspectival research. This sensitivity was present in every dimension of his life, work, and play and serves as a beacon to all of us who presume to engage in critical pedagogy. As his beloved friend/Basque brother Ramon Flecha said of Pato: "he was too intelligent, too creative, too revolutionary, and too sensitive for the current structures of our universities." I hope that universities, research, and pedagogy in general move in the direction theorized and lived by Pato in the coming years.

Ramon Flecha is one of the preeminent critical pedagogical scholars in the world today. A professor of Sociological Theory at the University of Barcelona, Flecha has worked tirelessly since the 1960s to help implement the groundbreaking critical work of Paulo Freire. Working with Freire for over twenty years, Flecha helped establish Freirean literary circles with nontraditionally educated working class peoples in the factories and shops of Barcelona in the early 1970s. Continuing this work into the present, Flecha's labors in this domain have helped create one of the most successful examples of critical pedagogy operating in informal settings to help teach the word and the world. Having visited CREA (Center for Social and Educational Research with which Flecha's—as was Gomez's—work is connected at the University of Barcelona) several times, Flecha and his fellow critical scholar/activists have shown Shirley Steinberg and me a compelling example of how "critical pedagogy in the streets" can change the lives of thousands of individuals.

CREA is one of the premier critical pedagogical research and social action centers in the world. The center has produced research and organized social action movements that have not only transformed education in Barcelona and Spain but throughout Europe in general. The group's major domain of study involves the investigation of sociopolitical inequities and the development of pragmatic ways of addressing and surmounting such injustices. Cofounder of the European Research and Development Institutes for Adult Education and a member of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, the center's

work has influenced critical research in North American and Latin American venues. CREA has sponsored numerous research studies involving social justice, political action, and education. Any student of critical pedagogy should be familiar with the emancipatory work that CREA has produced and is presently completing.

Flecha has been deeply concerned with the inclusion of the voices and insights of those people not traditionally educated and included in academic and public policy conversations. It was quite obvious when we attended the twentieth-anniversary celebration of the establishment of the literacy circles that Ramon had been so central in founding and nurturing, that something very special was happening. Several of the older people who had learned to read and become scholars in Flecha's critical adult education were excited to speak to me as an American critical pedagogy scholar about their love of the work of Antonio Gramsci.

After the ceremony over dinner we began our excited conversation about Gramsci's notions of the organic intellectual, the social role of intellectuals, hegemony, and so on, I enthusiastically responded to the questions of the wonderful worker/scholars with whom I was dining. After several responses to their questions, I asked their opinions on the topics discussed. The responses to my queries were life changing for me. I realized I was privileged to be sitting with a group of the most learned Gramsci scholars I had ever met. Their readings of Gramsci vis-à-vis their life experiences and what they had learned in Flecha's literacy circles had turned them into scholar-activists with unique insights into the work of Gramsci (and many other theorists and topics) that needed to be shared with the critical world. I already understood the brilliance of what Ramon Flecha had set in motion, but I had little idea just how powerful it was until that moment. In addition to such compelling critical work, Flecha has published numerous books including *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (with Jesus Gomez and Lidia Puigvert) with Peter Lang.

Deborah Britzman

Deborah Britzman began working in critical pedagogy in the early 1980s. In 1986, in collaboration with Catherine Walsh and Juan Aulestea, she organized the First Working Conference on Critical Pedagogy at the University of Massachusetts. The

conference supported three strands of educational practice not often in discussion with one another: adult education, bilingual education, and teacher education. Although teacher education did have a critical strand of research, it was typically isolated from social theory, other branches of education, and larger political and philosophical discussions. To address this isolation, Britzman invited Maxine Greene to speak to the teacher education strand of the conference. In this context, she engaged in conversations with some of the main proponents of critical pedagogy at the time: Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Madeleine Grumet, Roger Simon, Elizabeth Spellman, and John Bracey.

It was in this context that Britzman made presentations that would evolve into one of her best-known works: *Cultural Myths in the Making of a Teacher: Biography and Social Structure in Teacher Education* (1986). In this piece, Britzman applied to education some of the basic concerns of Frankfurt School Critical Theory, arguing that there was a way out of the technocratic, individualistic manner in which mainstream teacher education operated. This work would be expanded into Britzman's influential first book, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*. Along with engaging the research discussions of critical pedagogy, *Practice Makes Practice* became an influential work in critical pedagogy because of its consideration of the inner world of the teacher.

With this concern in mind, Britzman connected the problem of self-knowledge with social structural constraints, in the process highlighting some of the main issues of critical pedagogy. Focusing on the ways secondary education abstracts knowledge from its social context, extends the perpetuation of marginalization through the construction of canons, and harbors implicit values in the curriculum that constrain teacher voice, Britzman pushed the boundaries of critical pedagogy. The concept of voice in Britzman's conception was not merely a personal phenomenon but a social struggle with authority, knowledge, and power. The key dynamic at work in Britzman's scholarship in this era involved addressing the existential dilemmas that all teachers must confront as they learn to teach.

Another dimension of Britzman's work in critical pedagogy has involved integrating the epistemological and ontological dilemmas of race, sexuality, class, and gender into the problem

of teaching and learning. Here Britzman explored the role of critical pedagogy in encouraging teachers and students to critique their everyday world and the resistance this often elicited. In this context she focused on the psychology of denial, the refusal of many privileged individuals to believe that social inequality matters in their world or the world of others. Britzman asked how this affects critical pedagogy. Pushing the psychological dimension of critical pedagogy, Britzman explored questions of sexuality in relation to teachers, students, and the curriculum. Employing psychoanalysis and queer theory, she explored what she labeled "difficult knowledge" in teaching and learning as a part of a larger process of dealing with traumatic history. This work continues to play an important role in the field, as younger scholars engage it in many diverse contexts.

Britzman's study of difficult knowledge led her to yet another major contribution to critical pedagogy—the use of Freudian and Kleinian psychoanalytic theory in liberatory work. In this context, Britzman has worked to radically extend what counts as education, contending that pedagogical study should always have second thoughts on questions of interiority, self-other relations, and the production of subjectivity. Critical pedagogy, she posits, has often left the psychology of teaching to others, incorrectly assuming that psychology is too grounded in programs of subjection and normalization to be of any use. While clearly the history of psychology in education has been devastating to large populations through its categorizations of emotional disorders, IQ testing, and behaviorist orientations to learning theory, psychoanalysis, Britzman maintains, is of a different order and well worth a second look. Britzman has consistently reminded critical pedagogy of the power, beauty, and controversies of psychoanalysis, the need to study its discarded content, its dreams, and its breakdowns, and the necessity of the attempt to understand the unconscious in education and in critical pedagogy itself (Britzman, 1991, 2003).

Philip Wexler

Philip Wexler has written extensively about his "kinship" to the critical pedagogy movement. He is a critical social analyst, with a long-standing specialization in education. He was educated in "classical" sociological theory, anthropology, social

statistics and cognitive psychology. Despite his "establishment" education and involvement in the mainstream of sociology of education (as editor of the American Sociological Association journal in education, *Sociology of Education*), he was early drawn to critical social theory, in the work of the Frankfurt School, and in so-called "Western Marxism," generally. He was among the few mainstream sociologists to apply this tradition to social theory and research in education, and also to do comparative field research in education, from the vantage point of a class analysis of everyday school life (*Becoming Somebody*).

Wexler has traveled into unmapped critical pedagogical territory in his analysis of the nature of individuality vis-à-vis the larger themes of criticality and a diversity of socio-cultural resources. In *Holy Sparks: Social Theory, Education, and Religion*, Wexler bravely ventures into affect-centric hyperreality, searching for untapped emancipatory possibilities. In this book and also in *The Mystical Society: Revitalization in Culture, Theory, and Education*, he maintains that a decentered revolution, of sort, has already taken place grounded on a form mysticism that reshapes (revitalizes, in Wexler's words) the lives of those ensnared in the commodified, regulated, hegemonized culture of contemporary globalized society. In the same way that affective dynamics can be employed by dominant power to oppress individuals and social groups, they can also be used to make certain dimensions of life matter in ways that assert human agency and group solidarity.

Making use of what is available on the contemporary political and cultural landscape, Wexler recognizes that the transformation of selfhood is central to the mystical revolution that has in many ways already occurred. Knowing, this Wexler works to connect particular critical principles to this commitment to the revitalization of the self in the interests of larger social change. Connecting his commitment to both critical social theory and education to this possibility, Wexler has increasingly drawn upon mystical religious and spiritual traditions as a cultural resource in the development of social analysis and social and educational critique (to the surprise, and even consternation of some of his longtime scholarly friends and colleagues).

As a student of comparative religion with an especial emphasis on the study of Jewish mysticism, in Kabbalah and Hasidism, Wexler continues his work searching for the relevance of these