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Politics and Transformation: critical approaches toward political aspects of education

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ABSTRACT The current situation in education in the United States of America (USA), with an emphasis on high-stakes testing and privatization, calls for a counter-discourse revealing what is sacrificed by these educational policies and what forms of education are needed to prepare future teachers to engage their students in effecting social justice. We draw upon Adorno's ideas of self-reflection and debarbarization and Foucault's analysis of *parrhēsia* (truth-telling) for formation of souls as the framework for this theoretical discussion on critical approaches to the political in education. University students arrive already 'formed' by the polarizing neo-conservatism of their communities. For students to be re-formed they need to be faced by truth-telling at both theoretical and practical levels. Those who teach need to emphasize that education involves an inner activity of reflection and care adopted for oneself. Using examples of cross-cultural teleconferencing and service-learning with subcultures, we suggest that perspective-altering care for self and others supplemented by the development of autonomy and reflection can help undo the rhetoric of animosity and confusion abundant in our culture and help students uncover transformative dialogic practices. The authors suggest this be fostered by classroom practices that open the adamantine closures of lives subsumed by our 'disciplined' (Foucault), 'administered' (Adorno) society.

Introduction

The current situation in education in the USA, with an emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests as a measure of accountability, the forces of privatization, and policies of zero-tolerance, calls for a counter-discourse that speaks to what is being sacrificed and how new forms of education for future teachers are needed to raise the self-awareness and self-care required to engage students in efforts to effect social justice. In the words of Giroux (2005b),

> Made over in the image of corporate culture, schools are no longer valued as a public good but as a private interest; hence, the appeal of such schools is less about their capacity to educate students according to the demands of critical citizenship than it is about enabling students to master the requirements of a market-driven economy ... many students increasingly find themselves in schools that lack any language for relating the self to public life, social responsibility, or the imperatives of democratic life. In this instance, democratic education with its emphasis on social justice, respect for others, critical inquiry, equality, freedom, civic courage, and concern for the collective good is suppressed and replaced by an excessive emphasis on the language of privatization, individualism, self-interest, and brutal competitiveness. (p. 64)

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We draw upon Adorno's ideas of self-reflection, self-awareness, and debarbarization, and Foucault's analysis of *parrhēsia* (truth-telling) with regard to formation of souls as the framework for this theoretical discussion on critical approaches to entertaining the political in education. Although there are opposing views regarding the compatibility of Foucault's ideas and the Frankfurt School (see, for example, Dallmayr, 1997; Stuhr, 1998; Olssen, 2006; Egan, 2007), we argue that Foucault and Adorno afford complementary perspectives from which to engage in discourse and practice toward truth-telling, self-awareness and self-care, which in turn will inform efforts for social justice education. Zalloua (2004) remarks upon the links between Foucault's notion of technologies of domination and technologies of the self and the practice of reading, noting parallels with Adorno's views of technology, as well as parallels between Adorno's and Foucault's ideas of the essay as a crucial approach to thinking. Teaching and learning are technologies sometimes of domination, sometimes of self-fashioning. Zalloua points out that both Adorno and Foucault describe the essay as a means by which education can become a technique of self-fashioning against the frequently unnoticed powers of domination. Thompson (2006) uses Adorno's view of the social mediation of knowledge – as she says, 'in Foucauldian terms, the connection of knowledge and power' – and critique to describe a way of engaging in self-fashioning through an education that allows for 'an uncontrollable event that enables us to investigate views of ourselves and the world that are imposed on us and that could be otherwise' (p. 86).The purpose of this article is to examine possibilities within the framework of Adorno's ideas of self-reflection and self-awareness and Foucault's ideas surrounding truth-telling and care of self, that will facilitate efforts toward social justice education. As examples we offer the political import of practices such as cross-cultural teleconferencing and civic engagement through service-learning with subcultures in the context of education for pre-service teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Foucault's analysis of parrhēsia as it relates to formation of souls and Adorno's ideas of self-reflection, self-awareness, and debarbarization provide the theoretical framework for this article. How we think is directly connected with what we think so that 'deformed reason' (Honneth, 2009) [1] is not just a matter of wrong beliefs, though it includes those, but is also a matter of mistaken processes of thinking. For Foucault (2011) [2] 'true life' comes together with 'true speech' in that they both originate in a particular way of thinking and being. Adorno (1998a, c) speaks of this as reflection, philosophy, or culture. Foucault (2010, 2011) speaks of parrhēsia in its relation to true life.

Human practices (linguistic-experiential; conceptual-practical; social-historical) harden into habit, which has the advantage of taking pressure off the thinking and awareness process, but the disadvantage of lumping difference under sameness and of hiding social and historical assumptions under the guise of 'fact'. The critical function of education lies in its exposing linguistic habitude for what it is and thus breaking up complexes of alleged fact that underlie thoughtless practice. So when Adorno (1998a) calls for a philosophical education to prepare students for a philosophical examination for teachers, he is not suggesting another set of names, dates, and concepts for memorization, but rather an education in self-reflection, in 'culture' as he often calls it. This process of philosophical education does not clutter the mind with additional information; it requires instead an action, or rather a process of intellectual engagement that changes the individual, leading both to and from self-awareness. The aim of education then becomes not a human 'product' provided with a set of skills and armed with a portfolio of facts, but a person engaged in reflection on her thinking and acting in the world. This process of reflection cannot be taught, strictly speaking, nor can it be tested in any standardized way. It is a matter of 'spiritual experience' – an active commitment to and practice of *geist*, that is, of mind or spirit (Foster, 2007). This cannot be taught, for it is always an inner activity that one must adopt for oneself; a combination, perhaps, of ordering the disordered and disordering the ordered. There is no method for this practice, for the practice itself questions every method.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005), Foucault begins by contrasting the much-cited 'know oneself' with the (then) more obscure idea of 'care of self' (pp. 2-3). It has appeared obvious for many years that ancient philosophy placed much emphasis on knowing oneself. Foucault wants to

correct or rather balance this appearance with a contrasting weight upon a notion that lies prior to it both in practice and in theory – care of self. The care of self is what motivates one to know oneself and knowing oneself is necessary in order to care for oneself well. Further, care of self makes one capable of caring properly for others. In the last three sets of lectures he gave at the Collège de France, Foucault continued to interrogate these notions with an increasing focus on parrhēsia or truthful speech.[3] In the set of lectures given the year after *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault says, '[One] cannot attend to oneself, take care of oneself, without a relationship to another person. And the role of this other is precisely to tell the truth ... and to tell it in a certain form which is precisely *parrēsia*' (2010, p. 43, original emphasis).

Parrhēsia and the Self for Critical Engagement

Students come away from much of their education having learned sets of facts, as well as sets of skills or methods, but without learning to reflect, without gaining 'culture' or a means to think about things in ways that diverge from the society that has formed them. What is needed, Adorno (1998c) explains, can be characterized in several ways based on his idea of culture, on the danger of reified consciousness, on gaining a measure of autonomy that works as an antidote to the barbarism that characterizes much of society, and on a view of the relationship between philosophy and science. For our purposes here we focus on the first three.

There is, first of all, the element of culture. If one were to ask, in Adorno's terms, what one would need in order to pass a philosophical examination for those who are going to teach, the answer would be 'culture', and,

> culture is precisely that for which there are no correct rules; it is acquired only by spontaneous effort and interest and is not guaranteed by courses alone ... In truth, culture is ... about having an open mind and the general ability to engage in intellectual matters, to take them up productively within one's own consciousness ... If I did not fear being mistaken for a sentimentalist, then I would say that culture requires love: what is lacking is probably the ability to love. (1998a, p. 28)

The key to culture lies not so much in what one has been exposed to, but in the consciousness by which one takes up 'within one's own consciousness' the ideas presented and represented. This can be likened to what Freire (2003) calls for in what he terms a 'problem-posing' education, in which the teacher and students become engaged in dialogue as 'co-investigators', whereby 'the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own' (pp. 80-81). And for Freire this involves a co-creation of 'true knowledge' that supersedes 'knowledge at the level of the *doxa*' (p. 81, original emphasis). For Adorno (1998a), the reason for testing the 'culture' of the teacher lies in the effect of that teacher on students. The teacher who does not engage in self-reflection cannot very well foster such in students. And this lack (of culture in the sense of self-reflection) is 'partially responsible for the catastrophe of National Socialism' (p. 28). Similarly, in *The Government of Self and Others*, Foucault says:

> Who wishes to follow the path of the dialectic, which will establish a relation with Being itself, cannot avoid having a relation to his own soul, or to the other's soul through love, which is such that his soul will thereby be modified and rendered able to accede to the truth. (2010, p. 335)[4]

One central idea in that set of lectures lies in the role of 'psychagogy', the forming of the soul. In his analysis of some of Plato's works as discussed in this set of lectures, Foucault accords this role to the philosopher. The truth must have its proper effect – 'namely, transformation of the subject's mode of being' (2005, p. 408) [5] – and that effect cannot be provided by rhetoric – 'marked by being concerned solely with the effect to be produced on the soul of the listener' (2010, p. 335). The effect of philosophy, on the other hand, cannot be circumscribed by any set of methods or ideas; its impact must instead be itself formed out of the 'direct effect … not just on the soul of the person to whom the discourse is addressed, but also of the person giving the discourse' (2010, p. 335). The difference, then, between rhetoric and philosophy lies parallel to the difference mentioned in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* between pedagogy and psychagogy.

> Let us call 'pedagogical,' if you like, the transmission of a truth whose function is to endow any subject whatever with aptitudes, capabilities, knowledges, and so on, that he did not possess before and that he should possess at the end of the pedagogical relationship ... [W]e can, I think, call 'psychagogical' the transmission of a truth whose function is not to endow any subject whomsoever with abilities, etcetera, but whose function is to modify the mode of being of the subject. (2005, p. 407)[6]

This takes us back to the idea Adorno (1998a, 1998c) addresses of the purpose of the test in philosophy for those who would teach. The candidates for teaching must not only have knowledge, of course they must have that. They are asked as well, and especially, to have, in Adorno's terms, self-reflection, autonomy, a debarbarization of themselves, a willingness and ability to sit quietly in the presence of their own anxieties, so as not to project those in rage or fear onto groups or individuals within society, nor to produce through destructive desire a zero-sum game of self-aggrandizement. In Foucault's terms, the basis of psychagogy lies not in a simple desire to persuade others to think or behave in certain ways, ways that one can with psychological ease examine with standardized testing, [7], but rather in the infinite, Socratic self-examination of the 'mode of life', in which life 'must be submitted to a touchstone in order to make an exact division between what is and is not good in what one does, what one is, and how one lives' (2011, p. 145).[8]

The difficulty for all of us, when we are engaged in the life of our academies, the learning–teaching–learning life, the life that always engages us in a psychagogy, whether acknowledged or not, is that we cannot find that final and perfect method, that 'best practice' by which to nail down once and for all the coffin of correct classroom pedagogy. It always escapes us, an infinite regress of possibilities, because there is no 'it' for us to find. What we find, if we live the critical capacities toward which Adorno and Foucault point, is a continually reformed mode of being, a 'true life, life in the truth, life for the truth ... [through] the principle and form of truth-telling (telling the truth to others and to oneself, about oneself and about others)' (Foucault, 2011, p. 163).[9] We possibly see in ourselves and our students and for ourselves and our students, though often only at a great distance, what Foucault sees 'as the object of Socratic *parrhēsia* and discourse', namely, 'the emergence of life, of the mode of life' as more central than any specific content (p. 145, original emphasis).[10] Our mode of life will be tested daily (or at least often) by ourselves and those whom we teach and from whom we learn. As Freire (2003) notes, in a problem-posing education, or education for liberation, 'the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students' (p. 80).

A life such as this is not one we can have under our control, not one we can encapsulate in a PowerPoint presentation to be mapped out and implemented as another means of producing better student evaluations, moving up the academic food chain, or raising test scores. Adorno points out that although he believes being evaluated by a test in philosophy is crucial preparation for those who would teach, he does not think that such a test can ever be formed in a way that eliminates the fallible but significant presence of a mentor who is herself or himself engaged in the very process to be tested. As Foucault puts it, 'Knowledge of Being through the dialectic and the effect of discourse on the being of the soul through psychagogy are linked' and they 'constitute the mode of being peculiar to philosophical discourse' (2010, p. 334).[11] This mode of being is not optional for those who would engage in the formation of the soul, and the formation of the soul through true speech and the true life that must accompany true speech are necessary for a good city.

> Even in an ideal city [and even more so in the actual cities in which we live] ... they will still need a supplementary discourse of truth, and someone will be needed to address them in complete frankness, using the language of reason and truth to persuade them. [We see] this supplementary parrhesiast as the moral guide of individuals ... [I]t is also what must act on citizens' souls so that they are the citizens they should be, even in the well-governed city. (2010, pp. 205-206)[12]

Further, we must engage in undoing a 'reified consciousness' – in promoting an atmosphere of autonomy and debarbarization (Adorno, 1998a, p. 22). From Adorno's 'Taboos on the Teaching Vocation':

> Barbarism is a condition where all the formative, cultivating influence, for which the school is held responsible, is shown to have failed. It is certain that as long as society itself engenders barbarism, the school can offer only minimal resistance to it. But if barbarism, the horrible shadow over our existence, is in fact the contrary to culture, then it is also essential that individuals become debarbarized ... The pathos of the school today, its moral import, is that in the midst of the status quo it alone has the ability, if it is conscious of it, to work directly toward the debarbarization of humanity. (1998b, p. 190)

As Adorno further put it in 'Education after Auschwitz': 'People of such a nature have, as it were, assimilated themselves to things. And then, when possible, they assimilate others to things' (1998c, p. 199), and 'The single genuine power standing against the principle of Auschwitz is autonomy, if I might use the Kantian expression: the power of reflection, of self-determination, of not cooperating' (p. 195).

It is these practices of truth-telling, self-care, self-reflection, and self-awareness that we believe form a basis for effectively engaging pre-service teachers in critical social justice education that will effect transformation for a more egalitarian society. Praxis for Freire (2003) is 'action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it' (p. 79). Practice without critical reflection is 'pure activism' (1998, p. 30, 2003, p. 66). For teachers to be able to model the type of reflection needed to examine the underlying systemic forces that maintain inequalities in society, including schools, they must be able to engage in such reflection themselves. And, according to Adorno (1998a), the teacher who does not engage in self-reflection cannot very well foster such in students. According to bell hooks (1994), in order for teachers to teach for empowerment, they must commit to 'a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being' (p. 15). This aligns with the self-care of which Foucault speaks. Part of effective reflection 'upon [one's] world' necessarily involves a self-awareness as one reflects upon his or her reflection. Returning to Adorno's (1998a) words, 'In truth, culture is ... about having an open mind and the general ability to engage in intellectual matters, to take them up productively within one's own consciousness' (p. 28). Truth-telling in the Foucauldian sense – 'telling the truth to others and to oneself, about oneself and about others' (Foucault, 2011, p. 163) – is integral to this self-reflection and self-awareness as well as to reflection 'upon [one's] world' (Freire, 2003, p. 79).

We return now to the question of what we are to do, how we are to implement the insights of Adorno and Foucault in the actual classrooms in which we find ourselves and for which we might prepare others. Although engaging ourselves and our students in reflection concerning our modes of being must be an everyday aspect of classroom endeavors, we want to offer the modest suggestion that certain types of activity can offer special opportunity to address this possibility. In particular one of the authors uses in her classroom two approaches that afford particularly helpful access to reflection on one's mode of being, namely, cross-cultural teleconferencing and guided urban service-learning. While it is common to engage in activities meant to increase student learning through a variety of means, and service-learning has been applied broadly in education in recent years, we have observed that we can make use of such forums for helping students address their own reflectivity in a way that has the potential to be especially helpful in applied debarbarization, increased autonomy, active parrhēsia, and the elements of psychagogy. We offer, then, not a method for correct teaching-learning, but an approach to practices and to the continuing evolution and revolution of our practices. We echo Socrates, who when on trial for his life affirmed that there is no truly human life without examining oneself and others. There is a decisive and recurring need for a dialogue engaging each and all of us in this act of examination, not the examination that Foucault (1995) warns curbs difference and installs the norm above all things, but an examining of ideas that calls forth our difference and yet allows us to reach rolling points of agreement. We all are teachers and learners in everyday life, and our engagement in a teaching vocation calls for willingness to curb our certainties and to place our mode of being in question, as we encourage our colleagues, whether they be called students or not, to play out this same practice of questioning.

While service-learning has a transformative potential for students, it must be implemented in a way that avoids a 'romantic pity' (Darling-Hammond, 2002, p. 209) mindset. As Darling-Hammond noted, teachers need to be able to see each individual as a person and a learner. In order for our students to do this and to develop an understanding of how underlying systemic cultural,

political, and economic forces play out in the lived experiences of those with whom they work in their service-learning, they must engage in reflection. As Hatcher and Bringle (1997) noted, 'When students contemplate their service activities, there is potential to reformulate assumptions, create new frameworks, and build perceptions that influence future action' (p. 153). And in the words of Boyle-Baise (2002):

> Guided reflection, a key aspect of service learning, helps jar personal perceptions and initiate self-transformation. As a constitutive dimension of a multicultural education, the definition, organization, and contemplation of service learning should accentuate and affirm community, cultural diversity, equality, and equity. (p. 12)

Activities that promote reflection are important for students to meaningfully connect their service with course content. In the case of one of the author's courses, one of which is an introductory Education course and the other a Cultural Foundations (history, philosophy, and sociology of education) course for students aspiring to become secondary education teachers, a central theme is social justice. Therefore, the service-learning component is closely aligned with course content regarding issues of equity. The author uses directed reflection questions that encompass examination of, among others, personal biases, attitudes about diversity, attitudes about urban youth, learned pedagogical techniques, and commitment to future social justice endeavors. In addition, students in the introductory course create artwork that depicts their personal growth through their service-learning experiences. They also write letters to legislators and newspaper editors addressing a systemic problem related to the lives of those whom they serve. Students often indicate that their service-learning experiences change their previously held negative assumptions about urban youth, but fewer demonstrate an intent to become more critically engaged in systemic transformation efforts (Keller & Osgood, 2010, p. 73).

The personal development required to make such a commitment often requires more than a semester, as many of our students are from surrounding communities and suburbs and have not been exposed to the same degree of diversity that they are when they undertake their service-learning. It is crucial, therefore, to facilitate a learning environment that fosters personal introspection, the beginnings of genuine reflection, as students tackle issues many of which they have not previously encountered. In a study by one of the authors (Keller, 2007) that examined the impact of service-learning on senior elementary education majors, several students indicated that they intended to become more politically active (p. 91). This might have been due to the fact that they were about to become professionals and/or their increased maturity level.

Another activity that the author employs in an effort to encourage students to reflect on their individual modes of being and the potential for transformative thought that such reflection offers is cross-cultural teleconferencing. This affords students the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other university students, in this case, in Mexico. The session involves turn-taking between the students there and the author's students asking questions specifically about each other's country's educational system. For most students it is the first time they have conversed through an interpreter. This experience forces students to consider the challenges and obstacles that immigrants have when learning English. The teleconference also allows students to 'see' similarities between the two countries in the midst of difference, and to appreciate difference as just that, not necessarily better or worse, but just different. Teleconferencing with students in Mexico is particularly significant in the wake of current sentiment toward Mexican immigrants and of reform efforts to restrict undocumented immigrants' rights (see López & López, 2010). Our community has a high number of Latinos/as, and several of the author's students do their service-learning at a community center that serves many Latino/a youth. Reflection is also a component of the teleconference assignment, and students' reflections indicate learning outcomes involving specific tenets of the Mexican educational system, a sense of community with the Mexican students, the importance of learning about other countries' educational systems, and the importance of learning languages other than English.

While the results of these efforts represent only a beginning, they promote self-awareness, reflexivity, cultural competence, and they challenge students to continue on the journey. This is imperative if we are to hold out hope for applied debarbarization, increased autonomy, active parrhēsia, and the elements of psychagogy. As Giroux (2005a) notes in his discussion of Adorno's insights with regard to how inhumane acts are linked to the educational practices that create the

conditions for their existence, specifically in the context of the atrocities of Auschwitz, Adorno's call for 'education as a moral and political force against human injustice is just as relevant today'. While the lived situations of the children and youth with whom the author's students work in their service-learning are certainly not to be placed on the same plane as the atrocities of Auschwitz, Giroux points out that the political and economic elements that undergird crimes against humanity, whatever their nature, are 'mediated by educational forces' (p. 234). Further, he notes that knowledge and self-reflection are required in order to name these crimes and work toward the prevention of such acts. So situating curricular components such as service-learning in a critical context versus merely allowing students to go into the field with the 'romantic pity' mindset of which Darling-Hammond speaks (2002, p. 209) is paramount to the consciousness raising that comes from self-awareness, self-reflection, and truth-telling. And this truth-telling comes in the form of such 'naming', of engaging in dialogue with one's students (Freire, 1998, 2003), which involves the listener as integral (Freire, 1998). In addition to directed questions for students' self-reflection with regard to their service-learning, then, curricular materials that promote critical consciousness are essential to supplement the service-learning experience. Truth-telling is both enhanced by and enhances the self-reflection of which Adorno speaks. Parrhēsia is crucial for self-care, which is necessary for care for others, and self-reflection, which is necessary for self-care, and both of the latter are integral to parrhēsia.

Likewise, with cross-cultural teleconferences it is important to allow students to debrief and self-reflect in the context of such critical issues as racism, ethnocentrism, and anti-immigrant sentiment. Empowering education involves connecting individual growth to public life, a social process 'because the self and society create each other' (Shor, 1992, p. 15). Kellner (2005) asserts the significance of education everywhere in providing what is needed to improve individuals' lives, society in general, and the world. He specifically calls for 'expanded *cultural literacy*' and posits that due to our multicultural society that currently provides the educational context, we need 'novel forms of social interaction and cultural awareness ... that appreciate differences, multiplicity, and diversity' (p. 102, original emphasis). For the author's students the cross-cultural teleconference provides them an opportunity to 'see' some of the similarities among differences and to consider other cultures' perspectives on issues of schooling. While this effort is limited in scope with regard to what they can do, it supports the course curricula for social justice. Specifically, the teleconference with students in Mexico is a way that the author's students can reconsider any negative biases they might hold toward the Latino(a) population here in the USA and our city. It also helps to foster a more 'global' mindset that hopefully will increase students' cultural competence and desire to work for global social justice endeavors. The use of technology in such efforts demonstrates to students what is possible for themselves as future teachers in their own classrooms, as well as for them personally. The teleconference experience also affords students an opportunity to engage with each other cross-culturally in social literacy, which, according to Kellner, involves, among other things, 'how to relate and get along with a variety of individuals ... and how to communicate and socially interact in a diversity of situations' (p. 103).

In both service-learning and cross-cultural teleconferences, the author's students are able to work with and/or dialogue with those from subcultures and cultures different than their own. These opportunities, along with the complementary course material, help students to gain knowledge about issues of democracy and citizenship – both global and national – as they examine structural inequalities and work toward a more egalitarian society and world. These experiences allow students to see life through different lenses, as well as prepare them for working with and advocating for their own students in their future roles as teachers. As Kellner (2005) notes, while globalization is largely economic driven and in many ways undermines democracy, it also opens spaces for facilitating democratic ends. Returning to Giroux (2005b), in his discussion of zero-tolerance policies, he warns that 'as the social order becomes more privatized and militarized' we face the challenge of youth becoming lost to 'a system of increasing intolerance, repression, and moral indifference'. He notes the need for education that connects learning to what is necessary for 'developing democratic forms of political agency and civic struggle' (p. 64). Truth-telling and care of self as Foucault presents them and Adorno's notions of self-awareness and self-reflection form a critical combination for engaging in such educational endeavors. Students and teacher are able to engage in self-reflection as they reflect on their own responsibilities and responses to public life as they name lived experiences and contradictions. Border pedagogy, according to Giroux (2005a),

calls for challenging existing borders that have been socially and historically constructed for political aims, and recognizing how those constructions influence our conversations and relationships, and facilitating students' crossing these borders 'in order to understand otherness in its own terms, and to further create borderlands' (p. 20) that afford students the space to draw upon different cultural resources to form new identities within existing power structures. Citing Gramsci, Gross (2011) discusses the implications of the school as a vehicle for maintaining hegemony. He notes that while this is a role that schools play, they also are a space for 'counterhegemonic education' (p. 66). He points out that while students might conform to dominant ideologies, their schooling experiences might inform their dissent. Shor (1992) notes that student resistance can play out in students' dropping out (all together or disengaging in the classroom), acting out, or self-educating, but that teachers can choose whether to teach to the status quo or engage students in critically relating their lived experiences to structures of power and knowledge.

In 'Education after Auschwitz' (1998c), Adorno claims that 'The only education that has any sense at all is an education toward critical self-reflection' (p. 193). It is, he suggests, nearly impossible to modify the objective conditions of violence and cruelty – both in terms of social structures and in terms of such material or semi-material objects as bombs, administrative apparatuses, and torture chambers. What is left in our hands he would suggest is to transform 'the psychology of people who do such things' (p. 192). A key aspect of self-reflection is its connection with unconscious motivations and with rites of initiation into collectivities. To reflect, in the sense in which Adorno uses this term, and also to gain 'autonomy' requires an engagement with one's own inner life and with societal norms that calls for considerably more depth of awareness than that required to engage in the 'critical thinking' so often promoted as a helpful aspect of being a productive member of society. Critical thinking, in the sense that is valued today, means being able to assess ideas and potential actions on the basis of the values and aims one has been given. That ability, however, Adorno would point out, can go hand in hand with the 'banal' evil of an Eichmann.[13]

Conclusion

When addressing our students, then, we face the cultural monstrosity of the absolutizing of the anti-virtue of manipulation. For if rational self-interest is all important, and if maximizing profit is the most direct route to maximizing happiness, and if the only legitimate ideals are those of the so-called business 'community', then whatever works to attain these ends is the proximal good. Our students enter the classroom already in thrall to universal principles of technological and market-oriented collectivities and of an individualism that is the thoroughly heteronomous creature of processes of social normalizing. They seek ways to get ahead; ways to maximize their own interests, as they see them; surefire methods and procedures that have scientific weight without any need for scientific questioning. They are ripe for authoritarian models of teaching and learning, authoritarian models of best practice for whatever 'business' they enter – and there is nothing but a set of businesses from which to choose a career since the notion of 'vocation' or calling seems not only passé, but dangerously and subversively out-of-touch – and authoritarian models of family and community life, and authoritarian models of citizenship and interest group cohesion. The bombastic sound of these reflections make students sound as though they are a much more cohesive group than they in fact are. There is questioning of social certainties; there are ways in which students themselves undermine these worrisome absolutes; there are times when we listen in awe of the insights students generate and share. Our concern is with the prevalence of the forms of disciplinary, one-dimensional practices and discourse that often make of these few prophetic voices the sound not of one hand clapping, but of an empty and silenced silence.

What are we to do? Part of the answer to that question, so parallel to the fundamental ethical question of how we are to live, lies in engaging in classroom practices aimed specifically at opening the adamantine closures of lives so thoroughly subsumed by our 'disciplined' (Foucault), 'administered' (Adorno) society, and in the political practices that make such classroom practices viable.

Adorno and Foucault provide us with a challenge concerning our notions of how education should proceed. We need to find ways to take issue with our own complacency so as to call ourselves and our students and our society to account. We cannot continue to place primary importance on pedagogies that make students malleable products, but fail to address their being. And we cannot teach autonomy, reflection, parrhēsia, and true life unless we are willing to enter into a dialogue with ourselves and others that questions our own mode of being. Service-learning and even cross-cultural teleconferencing are common enough approaches to the educative task. We must turn methods like these into sharp tools for aerating the soil of certainty, into dialogic means for questioning not just the everyday issues of difference, but for setting students and ourselves on a course toward an examined life, toward that care for the self and for others that undermines the placidity of business as usual. We are the heirs of the great, and small, questions of life. We are the learner-teachers whose political endeavors come to fruition, or not, in the lives of our students as they make their way into a society that values normalizing and fears difference. We are the ones who may offer 'a supplementary discourse of truth, [the ones who may] address them in complete frankness, using the language of reason and truth to persuade them ... [The ones who may] act on citizens' souls so that they are the citizens they should be, even in the well-governed city', and also in the cities in which we live (Foucault, 2010, pp. 205-206).

Notes

[1] Honneth's (2009) description of the key insight of Critical Theory: 'Through all their disparateness of method and object, the various authors of the Frankfurt School are united in the idea that the living conditions of modern capitalist societies produce social practices, attitudes, or personality structures that result in a pathological deformation of our capacities for reason' (p. vii).

[2] 'True life' is Foucault's (2011) description of one central aim of philosophy.

[3] Foucault interprets parrhēsia in terms of a family of related concepts over the course of these lectures, but the baseline for those ideas is speaking truthfully in the personal, political, and philosophical contexts. Please note that in Foucault (2010) he spells this key word 'parrēsia' and in Foucault (2011) he spells it 'parrhēsia'.

[4] Foucault is discussing Plato's *Phaedrus*, 270-271.

[5] Foucault has been addressing Seneca's *Letters*, in particular, Letter 75. In the section where this quote is found, Foucault is marking what he sees as the transition from ancient Greek and Roman spiritual practices to those of Christianity. His discussion focuses on the difference between pedagogy as such and psychagogy.

[6] See note 5.

[7] We might expand our thinking here in the direction of Foucault's perceptive discussion of the 'examination' in *Discipline and Punish* (1995).

[8] Foucault, at this point, is discussing Plato's *Laches*.

[9] See note 8.

[10] See note 8.

[11] See note 4.

[12] Foucault is discussing Plato's *Laws*, Book VIII, 835 – 'The task, indeed, is one for God himself, were it actually possible to receive orders from him. As things are it will probably need a bold man, a man who puts plain speaking [parrhēsia] before everything' (835c) (1961, pp. 1400-1401).

[13] Arendt (1994) uses this phrase and the idea behind it in several works, but especially in her book on Eichmann.

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