TRANSGRESSIONS - CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire

Towards a New Humanism

Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo



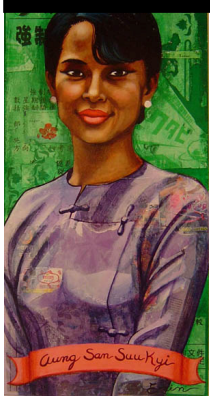
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Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramillo

Written by two of North America's leading educational activists and scholars, Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire is a clarion call to build a post-capitalist society. According to McLaren and Jaramillo, much of the work in critical pedagogy remains dangerously removed from discussions of social class and class struggle. The authors contend that critical investigations into education (in both formal and non-formal sectors) must be undertaken in relation to current theories of globalized capitalism, imperialism and empire-building. McLaren and Jaramillo examine from a Marxist humanist perspective the politics of evangelical Christianity in the Bush administration and the dominant neoliberal ideology of imperialism that shapes the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and other social initiatives affecting primarily racial and ethnic minority student populations in the U.S. In each chapter the authors apply the core principles of Marxist humanism to the development of what they term "revolutionary critical pedagogy." The closing chapter delves deep into the relations between revolutionary critical pedagogy and the politics of organization as evinced in contemporary Latin American social movements. Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire extends previous discussions of critical pedagoy and is formulated to help teachers and students challenge current educational policies and practices in light of socialist alternatives.







Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire



TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION
Volume 3

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We dedicate this book to Rachel Corrie and Iman Darweesh Al Hams.

We want to acknowledge the courageous struggle of compañera/os around the world who are working to build a better tomorrow.

Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire
Towards a New Humanism

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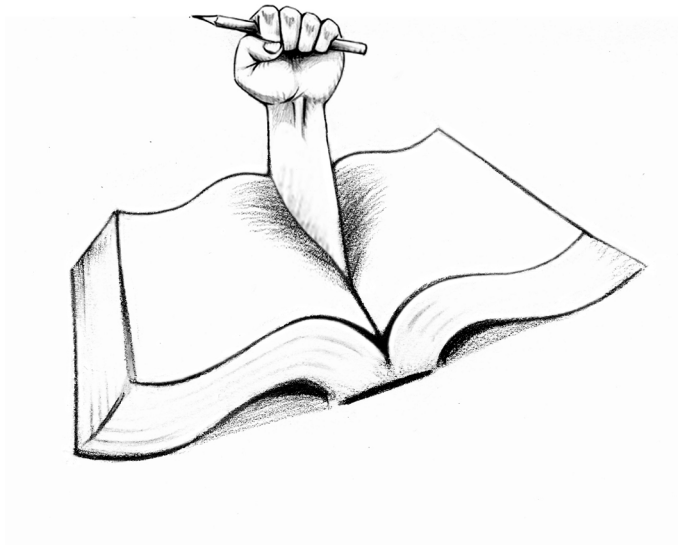
Conducting a seminar in critical pedagogy in Oaxaca

PETER McLAREN AND NATHALIA E. JARAMILLO

INTRODUCTION

WHAT A DISASTER

The Rising Tide of Belligerence



Thanks to Marcelo Layera for his illustrations of the fist of knowledge

THE RISING TIDE OF BELLIGERENCE

PELLEY: Do you think you owe the Iraqi people an apology for not doing a better job?

BUSH: That we didn't do a better job or they didn't do a better job?

PELLEY: Well, that the United States did not do a better job in providing security after the invasion.

BUSH: Not at all. I am proud of the efforts we did. We liberated that country from a tyrant. I think the Iraqi people owe the American people a huge debt of gratitude, and I believe most Iraqis express that. I mean, the people understand that we've endured great sacrifice to help them. That's the problem here in America. They wonder whether or not there is a gratitude level that's significant enough in Iraq.

PELLEY: Americans wonder whether . . .

BUSH: Yeah, they wonder whether or not the Iraqis are willing to do hard work necessary to get this democratic experience to survive. That's what they want.

Retrieved January 15 2007 at:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/01/14/60minutes/main2359119_page2.shtml>

THE SOCIAL HISTORICAL PANORAMA UNFOLDING BEFORE US IS IN TUMULT, ranging from confused and paranoid to lethally vengeful. It is as if all of human decency has been sucked into a vortex of political imbroglio. The Bush oligarchy—poster children for torture and endless war—has become an agglomeration of dangerously co-habiting parasites, enforcers, 'deciders', tyrants and calumniators—Captain Queegs with Blackberrys—operating out of a den of McCarthy-era redivivus. Here in the U.S. the aroma of corruption is as pungent as the flopsweat that graced the storied jowls of an on-camera Richard Nixon. Fear has become the big stick to wield in the service of patriotism, priming us with images and expectations of imminent attack, blurring the distinction between the imagined and the occurrent, desultory and carefully orchestrated threats, and producing through a sultry atmosphere of impending doom political lassitude among the hapless multitude. De-politicization has become the official hallmark of patriotism, presaging a quickening of fascism. Condi Rice with her team of Kobolds circles the globe, reveling in her new found 'warrior princess' role as she unsuccessfully assures her sepoys around the world that the United States

government does not use torture and is protecting the interests and integrity of the free world.

An air marshal guns down a fleeing mentally ill patient who claimed he had a bomb and *Fox News* commentators salivate over how well Homeland Security is doing its job. During a visit to Vietnam, President Bush announces that he wants to apply the lesson the United States learned after its war on Vietnam to the war in Iraq—that this time we shouldn't quit until we win. Doesn't our leader realize that the peoples of the so-called Third World are fed up with occupying armies undertaking a high-tech pillaging of their resources under the specious cover of valiant attempts by the United States (or other foreign nations) to 'export democracy' to underdeveloped states (underdeveloped in this sense meaning 'overexploited') struggling to break the chains of tyranny? He probably does, but then again, as John Bellamy Foster points out, "even the likelihood of being caught up in a long-term civil war, may be considered 'worth it' to a ruling elite playing a high-stakes gamble for control of world oil and global hegemony" (2006, p. 6). The mainstream media don't cover the real story—they dare not. They hold up the public face of the war, shamefully refusing to address for the American people the larger geopolitical issue of securing the Middle East and its oil for the empire of capital. You don't have to be a Marxist to figure it out. As John Bellamy Foster reveals, "U.S. and British corporations are now positioned to gain control over the production of, and to reap huge profits from, the Iraqi oil reserves through so-called "production sharing agreements," which will give them rights to the exploitation and sale of the bulk of Iraq oil reserves for decades to come—even allowing them to book this oil as 'assets' in their accounts" (2006, p. 3). Not only is the global-imperial projection of U.S. power—a type of U.S.-centric imperialism in a unipolar world—a brute reality after the demise of the Soviet Union, but it is now directed at potential future rivals (Foster, 2006, p. 5).

It wasn't that long ago that Americans discovered that maintaining the free world comes at a large financial as well as ideological cost. Earlier in the year, it became alarmingly evident that the Bush administration paid conservative pundit Armstrong Williams $240,000 while he served as a media "talking head" to help persuade African-Americans to back President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* law. More recently it has been made clear that purchasing journalistic mercenaries is not only a major part of a larger and well-fueled government scheme to blur the line between legitimate news reporting and political propaganda here in the United States (as part of PSYOPS operations within the homeland itself), it is also an integral part of the so-called democracy-building efforts in foreign countries such as Iraq.

It has been recently disclosed that the Pentagon hired a propaganda-making firm to cultivate in the Iraqi media an impression of grass-roots support on the part of the Iraqi people for the American occupation. Mr. Rumsfeld may have closed the Office of Strategic Influence, but he kept it functioning covertly by outsourcing work to contractors such as the Rendon Group and the Lincoln Group, which won additional multimillion-dollar Pentagon contracts for media analysis and a media operations center in Baghdad, including "damage control planning." Jacob Weisberg (2005) draws the distinction between propaganda ("a calculated and systematic effort to manage public opinion") and spin (i.e., "lying and routine political dishonesty"). He notes that "when the Bush administration manufactures fake 'news,' suppresses real news, disguises the former as the latter, and challenges the legitimacy of the independent press, it corrodes trust in leaders, institutions, and, to the rest of the world, the United States as a whole."

On the European front, young people of African and Arab descent have recently given the 'bien nacidos' of France the political megrims in their chosen response—the torch—to decades of criminal misrule, the ghettoization of immigrant youth and the imperialist practices of entitlement carried out by the capitalist elite. Back home, capitalist exploitation, and its loyal ally, racism, while unwanted guests at the banquet known as the American Dream, are still the primary reasons why the poor are excluded from eating at the same table as their more economically fortunate counterparts and forced to scramble for whatever scraps are made available to them elsewhere. Whites are likely to forget why more folks of color don't join them at the table of good fortune unless a crisis of national proportion occurs. And such a crisis has occurred and continues still.

Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire is a collection of essays that we have written during such a time of crisis in the United States and in capitalist societies worldwide, what we could call a crisis of global capitalism. We call it a crisis of global capitalism because, as Foster argues, "Since the 1970s the dominant reality of the U.S. and world economy has been that of stagnation and financial explosion…the general condition of the U.S. economy and world economy as a whole has been slow growth and rising unemployment/underemployment and excess capacity" (2006, p. 7). We have described in these pages the condition of neoliberalism that includes stagnating wages, an economic surplus at the top, a redistribution of income and wealth toward the upper classes, limited profitable investment opportunities within production as a result of overcapacity in key industries worldwide, a shift toward financial speculation and the financialization of the global economy—a condition that Foster explains from the perspective of monopoly capital theory, and which he calls the phase of

global monopoly-finance capital (Foster, 2006, p. 7). We agree with Foster that "capitalism, as witnessed particularly its naked imperialism abroad, is increasingly degenerating into a kind of barbarism, where war, brutality, torture, misery, superexploitation, all sorts of draconian measures against the poor, border security, anti-immigration, gated homes, racism, extreme environmental devastation threatening whole populations and even the globe, nuclear proliferation (and hence the danger of more terrible wars), etc., are on the rise" (Foster, 2006, p. 9). We have been able to gauge (modestly) such a crisis not only during our various journeys over the past five years of working together—which took us to Palestine, Israel, South Africa, Cuba, and numerous times to Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico—but also during our visits with radical teachers, scholars and social activists in the United States and Canada. We view the bulk of our work not as grist for advancing our careers in the academy but as a way of participating in a wider political project in which we attempt (to echo Henry Giroux) to make the pedagogical more politically informed and the political more pedagogically critical. We have included some photos of various moments in our work.

When Hurricane Katrina struck the coast of Louisiana and began to devastate the city of New Orleans, we began to see this event as metonymical of the crisis of race and class in the United States, and watching the coverage of Katrina was a pedagogical lesson in itself for us and for our *camaradas* and students. We wrote about this event for several publications and then decided that it would make a good introduction to our book in so far as it provides an expansive context for many of our arguments about the persistence of racism and class warfare in the United States. We decided to begin our book with our commentary on Katrina because, while we agree with Lawrence D. Bobo, writing in the *Du Bois Review*, that "Katrina raised powerful questions about American democracy and the racial divide," we also concur that "the sort of deep democratic dialogue…about poverty, racism and the obligations of government that many had hoped for in Katrina's wake has not come about" (2006, p. 2). Bobo remarks that "Americans responded to Katrina on the basis of existing attitudinal, ideological, and political predispositions" resulting in an "absence of profound change in response to dramatic events connected to major social cleavages"—a situation that is unfortunately and tragically "consistent with other major episodes in U.S. race relations" (2006, p. 2). As Bobo also notes, media and politics scholars have shown "how the media portrayed Katrina disaster victims strongly influenced the amount of assistance that their fellow Americans thought victims should receive" (2006, p. 2). Lack of expedient government assistance to the victims of Katrina certainly impacted

how African-American women "bore the brunt of the storm's wrath" and contributed to how single mothers and poor and elderly women would become the most "readily visible victims of Katrina" (Bobo, 2006, p. 4). In many ways the response of the U.S. government to the victims of Katrina is emblematic of the fate of those oppressed by the racist and imperialist practices of global neoliberalism.

We are not surprised to learn that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has reported that millions of Americans who cannot put food on their table—who describe their condition as a state of hunger—are to be (euphemistically and shamefully) re-named as existing in a condition of "very low food security" (Williamson, 2006). The term "hunger" has been expelled because, according to a sociologist for the USDA, it is "not a scientifically accurate term" (Williamson, 2006). Hunger, after all, refers to a "potential consequence of food insecurity" due to a "prolonged, involuntary lack of food." Welcome to the future.

KATRINA: EMBLEMATIC OF AMERICA'S WAR WITH THE POOR

On Sunday, August 28, less than 48 hours before Katrina struck, residents of New Orleans were starting to get antsy. While they may not have been prepared for that devastating *rara avis* among mother nature's storehouse of storms, they were even less prepared for the human callousness that would follow in its tremulous wake—especially those among the 112,000 people in New Orleans who were without any private form of transportation and had to bear the full brunt of the havoc wreaked by the category 4 hurricane (at one stage a category 5 just prior to making landfall). While they were angry at remarks made by David Brooks in the *New York Times* that "most of the ambitious and organized people abandoned the inner-city areas of New Orleans long ago" (Bacon 2005a, 14), implying that those who could not leave deserved their fate, they were hardly surprised.

Coiled like a viper in the hurricane's eye, the Specter of Capitalism unleashed its pent-up supply of hell upon its historically most vulnerable victims: impoverished African-Americans (before Hurricane Katrina, the unemployment rate among Gulf residents was among the nation's highest, with 18 to 30 percent of people in the region living under the poverty line — twice the national rate— and with Blacks in New Orleans suffering 35 percent poverty rate; Bacon 2005a). In the 1950s and 1960s Americans witnessed attacks on African-Americans by lynch mobs, police dogs and fire hoses; but the assault on African-Americans during Hurricane Katrina was of a different sort. It was an attack on hope: Hope that the United States had overcome its historical legacy of racism, hope that educated

journalists had moved beyond portraying life in the United States with brutally overt or subtle racist stereotypes, hope that capitalist democracies had made necessary headways in ending poverty, hope that the government could muster whatever it took to care for its poor and dispossessed in a time of emergency. Katrina sounded the death-knell of such a hope, a hope born in the crucible of the civil rights movement of earlier—and seemingly much more unreal—times. Not only has the immoral geography of the country been illuminated for the world to see but the very meaning and purpose of American capitalist democracy has been called into question. Of course, there was no absence of media pundits (such as Kathleen Parker of the *Orlando Sentinel* and Jeff Jacoby and Kathy Young of the *Boston Globe*) eager to defend Condolezza Rice's condemnation of the idea that the slow response to Katrina had to do with racism (Bacon 2005b, 13).

Despite the protestations of Condi and the Bush gang, many of the most cherished American values have imploded in the sinkhole of global capitalism. More than just a series of untenable contradictions accumulated in successive moments of bureaucratic neglect, Hurricane Katrina has become emblematic of white supremacist free-market democracy, prompting an international reassessment of the status of the American Dream. Much of this reassessment echoed The Human Development Report, an independent report commissioned by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Its 2005 edition (370 pages) written by Kevin Watkins, the former head of research at Oxfam, investigates inequalities in health provisions inside the US as part of a survey of how inequality worldwide is retarding the eradication of poverty. We learn, for instance, that the infant mortality rate has been rising in the US for the past five years—and is now the same as Malaysia. We learn that America's black children are twice as likely as their white counterparts to die before their first birthday and wealth creation does not necessarily mean eradicating or even lessening poverty, because eradicating poverty means providing people with full access to health, education and other social provisions. What we don't learn is that we have known about similar conditions for decades and longer and we still seem incapable of overcoming them. It's much easier to blame and demonize the victims, and that's exactly what happened in the case of Hurricane Katrina. One stunning illustration of political naiveté and lack of even a rudimentary understanding of the relationship between race and class can be found in remarks by journalist Kathleen Parker of the *Orlando Sentinel*:

> Parker…expressed surprise that an African-American woman told her 'matter-of-factly' that Bush doesn't care about people 'who look like me' because the woman was 'an elegant professional woman clearly not of the Al Sharpton school of reactionary politics' (Bacon 2005b, 13).

The act of God that began like a susurrus of wind in the eerie darkness swelled into the piercing, piteous wail of a banshee, a blackened sky draped over the city of New Orleans like the funeral cowl of the unshriven dead. The gale force winds seemed to arch the stars across the horizon like a diadem of death. For many, all would soon be lost in the impending chaos.

A moral panic ensued when the public was fed horror stories about what it was like to be trapped in the inferno of black anarchism, stories refracted in the cesspool of racism and fear that lies deep within the structural unconscious of a nation founded upon violence, slavery and genocide: African-American 'wildings' gang-raping women and children, looting stores of liquor and drugs, shooting at ambulances, police patrols, and rescue helicopters, and throwing the city into a vortex of violence and anarchy—stories that were later confirmed as untrue. (We are not arguing that no looting took place but we challenge the sentence recently handed down by a judge who condemned three convicted looters—who stole beer, liquor and wine—to 15 years of prison.). *Fox News* correspondent Steve Harrington described New Orleans as the "Wild West", while *Fox News* correspondent Phil Keating characterized a fire visible in some news footage as being set "perhaps for no apparent reason but just for the joy of arson" (Yassin 2005, 11). An article in *USA Today* was unembarrassingly headlined "The Looters, They're Like Cockroaches" (Yassin 2005, 10). *Fox News'* viagra posse leader, Bill O'Reilly, revealed that it was not blood running through his veins but the muck that lined the city's drainpipes when he repugnantly opined in the *Florida Sun-Sentinel* on September 10, 2005:

> [T]hat 'the suffering' of 'the poor in New Orleans' should be a lesson: 'Connect the dots and wise up. Educate yourself, work hard and be honest…If you don't…the odds are that you will be desperately standing on a symbolic rooftop someday yourself. And trust me, help will not be quick in coming.' And in O'Reilly's view, help should not necessarily be offered…: 'The white American taxpayers are saying: "How much more do we have to give here?" (Bacon, 2005b, p. 13)

For all the descriptions in military terms about New Orleans being bruited about like "war zone", and "theater of operations" where marauding hordes of looters supposedly overturned every act of human civility, it is interesting to note the *Seattle Times'* report concluding that there was no more violence in New Orleans during the aftermath of Katrina than in any other typical week (Bacon 2005b, p. 14). Many stories of violence—such as snipers firing at rescue vehicles and police being attacked by mob violence—were later discredited (Bacon 2005b; Yassin 2005). The *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, on September 26, 2005, discovered an official count

of only four violent deaths citywide for the entire flood period, which was typical of a city that anticipated approximately 400 homicides in 2005 (Yassin, 2005, p. 9). According to Jaime Omar Yassin (2005),

> As the Washington Post observed days after the hysteria began to die down (9/15/05), National Guard troops were surprised to encounter 'virtually no violence' at the Convention Center made infamous by countless unsubstantiated media reports of raped babies and wanton murder. Likewise, on the streets, correspondents such as Nick Robertson (CNN Daybreak, 9/5/05) seemed almost disappointed that 'I haven't been asked to wear a bullet-proof vest' by authorities. While there had been some violence, and looting that could only have been motivated by profit, there were apparently no raping/murdering/looting gangs, nor was there any substantial devastation wrought by violence and looting. (p. 12)

In contrast to many prevailing media reports at the time, it would have seemed that the only way to enter the urban hell to help the wayworn victims of Katrina without turning into stone would be to send in Snake Blisken with a rogue team of ex-convicts specially trained in urban warfare. In fact, food was actually airlifted and dropped into the city when, because of the exaggerated media stories of violence, it was deemed too infested with criminals for rescuers to enter New Orleans safely. The *New York Daily News* retorted that because "anarchy, Mogadishu-style, is just around the corner if they're not stopped," officials "must do whatever it takes to curb the hardcore, armed, violent felons who are making it impossible to save the city," and who are "a very different breed from desperate citizens who are trying to get food and water" (Bacon 2005b, p. 14). Of course, it is hard to tell which citizens were trying to acquire food and water when a white couple was described in media reports as "finding provisions" while a black man was described as "looting" (although Jonah Goldberg admitted: "I don't know what's in the bag the black guy is tugging along behind him. Perhaps he really did loot the grocery store for more than mere essentials? The white couple found the bread and soda 'from' a local grocery store. Did they go in it?"; cited in Bacon 2005b, p. 14) It is telling that the *Daily News* evoked the image of Mogadishu (Somalia), one that the American public associates with 'Blackhawk Down' fame, a place where eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed in a rescue attempt, and where U.S General Boykin claimed to have taken a photograph of a satanic presence over the city before he went on years later to proclaim George Bush Jr. as God's choice for the presidency, and to announce triumphantly that the US army sent to occupy Iraq was a Christian army fighting the evil followers of Islam (see McLaren 2005).

Right wing journalist, Jonah Goldberg, who recently replaced leftist columnist Robert Scheer in a conservative putsch at the *Los Angeles Times*, described the survivors of Katrina in the *National Review Online blog* as a different species and inhuman, as a mutant breed that had infested the Superdome—what Goldberg dubbed a "Mad Max/Thunderdome/Waterworld/Lord of the Flies horror show" (Bacon 2005b, p. 14). Goldberg advised those still trapped in the floodwaters of New Orleans to "hoard weapons, grow gills and learn to communicate with serpents," "find the biggest guy you can and when he's not expecting it beat him senseless," and "protect any female who agrees to participate without question in your plans to repopulate the Earth with a race of gilled supermen." Allan Breed's report in the *Cincinnati Post* described "naked babies wail[ing] for food as men get drunk on stolen liquor" and a crowd "whose almost feral intensity" prevented a helicopter from delivering water to victims (Bacon 2005b, p. 14).

It's not difficult to imagine William Bennett, America's former Drug Czar and now popular radio host and television personality, staying home all week, strangely transfixed by the televised images of the looting and chaos, shaking his head in self-righteous contempt, his obscene racist fantasies about bringing crime rates down by aborting the fetuses of New Orleans' African-American population coursing like a riptide inside his pious brain soured by a frat boy's impish self-hatred. We imagine that his heart began to palpitate with racial pride upon hearing Governor Blanco's assurance to the ruling class that they would be saved from savagery: "These troops are fresh back from Iraq, well trained, experienced, battle-tested and under my orders to restore order in the streets. They have M-16s and they are locked and loaded. These troops know how to shoot and kill and they are more than willing to do so if necessary and I expect they will" (Blum 2005). Even New Orleans Mayor, Ray Nagin, ordered the city's police force of 1500 strong to abandon search-and-rescue missions in order to guard the city from the looters (Blum 2005).

There is never any mistaking the priority given to property rights in capitalist societies. A *Fox News* reporter "boasted that the National Guard and other armed forces, arriving days after the humanitarian crisis had reached critical levels, were 'highly proficient in the use of lethal force" (Yassin 2005, p. 11). CNN's Wolf Blitzer could hardly contain his excitement that the cavalry had finally arrived when he announced: "eight convoys and troops are on the ground at last in a place being described as a lawless, deadly war zone" (Yassin, 2005, p. 12). This news also pleased conservative pundit Peggy Noonan, who, writing in the *Wall Street Journal's OpinionJournal.com*, announced: "I hope the looters are shot" (Bacon 2005b, 14). Not many Americans knew that members of Blackwater, America's

infamous mercenary army, were also patrolling the streets of New Orleans. Never one to be outdone when it comes to protecting the ruling class from barbarism, Tucker Carlson remarked: "Maybe [the National Guard] should have shot people but they didn't" (Bacon 2005b, p. 14). Ann Scott Tyson of the *Washington Post* on September 6, 2005, wrote a piece called "Troops Back from Iraq Find Another War Zone" that allowed the public to hear from the National Guard itself:

> 'Just the smell and feel of a war zone in the city put the soldiers on edge.' The article, subtitled 'In New Orleans,' 'It's like Baghdad on a Bad Day,' featured young Guard soldiers boasting, 'If we're out on the streets, we'll fight back and shoot until we kill them'—though the worst first-hand example of the "violence and looting" that 'shocked' the Guard protagonists was the sight of '70-year old women in new Nike high-tops' (Yassin 2005, p. 12).

Watching images of African-Americans on CNN through Bennett's "dead seeing eyes" (Henry 2004) confirmed not the common humanity of all those facing overwhelmingly perilous conditions but only his own whiteness and his palpable and pure racial supremacy, signaling to him how horrifying it must be to be non-white.

When, in an unscripted NBC benefit concert, rapper Kanye West exclaimed: "George Bush doesn't care about black people, ...[America was organized] to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off as slow as possible", his remarks hit a nerve with people of color throughout the country and they underscored the truism that the poor hit the hardest are disproportionately African-American. They also echoed the observation of philosopher Paget Henry (2004, p. 200), that the condition of African-Americans in the United States reflects a "persistent and long-term inability to recognize the humanity of people of African descent" among the "dead seeing eye of the Western master self" (2004, p. 201). Henry argues that the African does not even qualify as a genuine "other" in the Western dialectic of the master/slave relationship. Hegel made it clear in his own phenomenology that the African is without self-consciousness and was located outside of history and was thus not able to confirm the humanity of the imperial master (Henry 2004).

Despite repeated pleas from Governor Blanco for emergency relief—500 buses, 40,000 more troops, ice, water and food, base camps, staging areas, amphibious vehicles, the return of the Louisiana Army National Guard's 256th Brigade Combat Team (then deployed to Iraq), mobile morgues, rescue teams, housing, airlift and communications systems—little materialized the week that Katrina made landfall. The situation was so bad that Rep. Charlie Melancon (D-La.), having been pressured to spend time in public

relations stunts with President Bush, wrote Blanco's staff that Bush's "entire effort on behalf of the federal government has been reflected in his and his people's nonchalant attitude to the people of Louisiana. You may give him this to read" (Warrick, Hsu, and Hull 2005).

Those African-Americans who had begged in vain to be rescued on floating rooftops, those who drowned in their attics, those who were abandoned and perished in hospitals and nursing homes, those whose bloated corpses floated down the waterlogged boulevards—all of them bore witness to the reverse mirror image of the violence that was directed at their ancestors, but this time dressed up as an 'ineffective response' to an act of God. According to faith-based political theory it was not the place of those affected by the hurricane to question, much less attempt to interfere with an act of God. A number of fundamentalist religious leaders took to the pulpit and declared Katrina an act of holy vengeance against 'southern decadence.' According to Rev. Bill Shanks, pastor of New Covenant Fellowship of New Orleans:

> "New Orleans now is abortion free. New Orleans now is Mardi Gras free. New Orleans now is free of Southern Decadence and the sodomites, the witchcraft workers, false religion—it's free of all of those things now, Shanks says. "God simply, I believe, in His mercy purged all of that stuff out of there—and now we're going to start over again" (Brown and Martin 2005)

Anti-abortion activist Steve Lefemine likened the satellite map of Hurricane Katrina to "the image of 8-week old fetus" and clamored that "God judged New Orleans for the sin of shedding innocent blood through abortion" (Cooperman 2005). Citing "Providence" and judgment against "national sin" Lefemine and his kin washed their hands of the moral and social responsibility to assist our citizens in times of tragedy and rather utilized Katrina to advance their own fundamentalist ideology—a set of beliefs and practices that are increasingly becoming the norm in an evolving 'Christian America.'

We can imagine an old jazz musician sitting on the damp street corner, unaware of the impact that mold would have on his wheezing lungs in the weeks ahead, staring at a waterlogged saxophone case bobbing in steamy sewer like a bloated corpse that had risen up from the river Styx. We imagine his relatives, working in public sector jobs, being denied a living wage when they are finally allowed to return to the city and then being hit with massive layoffs if they are lucky enough to find a job in the casualized work zone of part-time positions (according to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, as late as October, 500,000 of the 800,000 people evacuated had yet to return home; see Bacon 2005b).

For those that do manage to return to their eviscerated homes, and who take a close look at the fine print of their hurricane damage insurance policies, they will notice that the policies cover only for wind damage, not water or flooding. So the policies that they paid into in good faith will be virtually useless for many. But for those fortunate enough to have escaped to Texas, well, we have words of consolation from former First Lady Barbara Bush. After visiting the Astrodome stadium in Houston, Texas, where thousands of evacuees from New Orleans and other affected areas were being housed, Barbara Bush chuckled prior to exclaiming: "So many of the people here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them…What I'm hearing, which is sort of scary, is they all want to stay in Texas. Everyone is so overwhelmed by the hospitality. Almost everyone I've talked to says: 'We're going to move to Houston'" (Parry 2005). This was subtle racism, to be sure, but journalist reports of black inner-city residents and white suburban residents offered a disturbing contrast:

> There was …a more subtle racism at work in much of the coverage of the actions taken by whites and African-Americans after the hurricane…the response of the poor black victims was consistently portrayed as at best selfish, and at worst antisocial and criminal. Commentators were much more generous in their assessment of non-blacks. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (9/1/05) and the *Pittsburg Post-Gazette* (9/13/05), for instance, portrayed residents and business owners from Matarie, Louisiana, a mostly white suburb of New Orleans, as grateful, enterprising and generous. (Bacon 2005b, p. 15)

We're not so sure, however, that the actions of the residents of the mostly white suburb of Gretna could be described as "grateful, enterprising and generous" while they forcibly turned away evacuees, sending them back by bus into the city, and firing warning shots in the air. This seems more like the surfacing of Jim Crow's ugly head than the actions of Mayberry's Aunt Bee. And the police force was behaving anything like Andy Taylor and Barney Fife. Jacqueline Bacon (2005b) asks why "turning one's neighbors away when they are in need—even physically threatening them—[is] not deemed selfish, antisocial behaviour" (p. 15).

How many survivors of Katrina were mercifully oblivious to the possible connection between global warming and the intensity of the hurricane, to the racial politics of why a preventative infrastructure was not in place, to the blaming of the victims because they did not heed the warning to evacuate, to the all out war by conservatives against the poor whom they felt were encouraged to remain poor by liberal programs in the first place, to the high stakes politics swirling around them in the national arena,

unleashed by the federal system of "dual authority" established by the US Constitution incorporating both national and state sovereignty? How, centuries later, this recycled quarrel over the division between state and national power would impact the politics of disaster relief was something few could have imagined.

A major hurricane in New Orleans had been listed as one of the most likely major catastrophes to strike the United States, but what occurred when the hurricane struck was as shocking as the hurricane itself. Much of the equipment (high water vehicles, refueling tankers, and generators) that would have been used to help New Orleans was already deployed in Iraq to help slaughter the Iraqi resistance to the occupation. Instead of being used to help the people of the United States during a time of crisis, these men, women and machines were conscripted into the service of Bush Jr.'s bloody war for oil that has brought about for the people of Iraqa free-market 'democracy'—a malediction that some Iraqi leaders have described as a worse situation than during the rule of Saddam. Noam Chomsky noted that

> Bush funding cuts in 2004 compelled the Army Corps of Engineers to reduce flood-control work sharply, including badly needed strengthening of the levees that protected New Orleans. Bush's 2005 budget called for another serious reduction—a specialty of Bush-administration timing, much like the proposed sharp cut in security for public transportation right before the London bombings in July 2005.

Just six days after Katrina hit, a coalition of low-income groups—Community Labor United—in New Orleans stood resolute and emboldened, demanding that a committee of affected evacuees "actively participate in the rebuilding of New Orleans" (Klein 2005). Concerned that a pack of corporate hyenas would descend onto the area and use federal relief funds to "replace our homes with newly built mansions and condos in gentrified New Orleans," Community Labor United refused to have its citizens victimized twice over, neither instance which could be attributed to a sacrosanct act of God or the result of minor bureaucratic mismanagement. The citizens claimed rights to the land they once inhabited. As Naomi Klein (2005) observed:

> It's a radical concept: the $10.5 billion released by congress and the $500 million raised by private charities doesn't actually belong to the relief agencies or the government; it belongs to the victims. The agencies entrusted with the money should be accountable to them. Put another way, the people Barbara Bush tactfully described as "underprivileged anyway" just got very rich.

Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, reconstruction efforts in the devastated area have not actualized the hopes of the people and we are witnessing—yet again—a return to 'profit over the people' in cases when the afflicted expect capitalism's ardent supporters to at least powder their faces with a bit of humanity. Shortly after the dead calm, the Bush administration declared the region a "Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone" an ominous designation at best, indicative of the very same policies put into effect immediately following the fall of Baghdad and subsequent criminal occupation of Iraq.

Measures to support the Republican agendas included "suspending rules that require payment of prevailing wages by federal contractors and providing displaced schoolchildren with vouchers—another underhanded blow at the public school system. They included lifting environmental restrictions, 'waiving the estate tax for deaths in the storm-affected states'—a great boon for the population fleeing New Orleans slums—and in general making it clear once again that cynicism knows no bounds" (Chomsky 2005). The Davis Bacon Act's protection for workers' wages (a statute that hails as far back as 1931 that mandates payment of prevailing wages on federally funded construction projects) that the Bush gang had suspended was reinstated only after the AFL-CIO and many community groups organized massive protests throughout the region and the threat of a congressional vote prompted Bush to back down. Similar protests from labor groups have emerged following the department of Homeland Security's easing of sanctions against employers who hire undocumented workers, unleashing yet another fierce firestorm in the Hurricane's wake. As a result, the big fat cats of enterprise—Halliburton, Kellogg Brown & Root, and Bechtel—have cashed in on cheap and oftentimes free immigrant labor. Untold numbers of immigrant laborers are being stiffed, going weeks without pay. Nonpayment of wages is a violation of federal law but when it affects workers rendered invisible because of their immigration status, no one seems to pay much attention.

The politics of immigration is most definitely affecting immigrant workers now doing reconstruction on the Gulf Coast and they might also inflame existing racial divisions. According to David Bacon (2005a),

> the racial fault lines of immigration politics threaten to pit Latinos against Blacks, and migrant laborers against community residents hoping to return to their homes. Community organizations, labor and civil rights advocates can all find common ground in a reconstruction plan the at puts the needs of people first. But flood-ravaged Mississippi and Louisiana could also become a window into a different future, in which poor communities with little economic power fight each other over jobs.

Anti-immigrant politicians and common citizens alike are quick to blame immigrant workers for exploiting reconstruction efforts in the washed out region, for cheating the poor and unemployed residents of New Orleans and Biloxi from the much needed opportunity to work, and for changing the racial, cultural and economic demographic landscape of the area. And yet, while the US eagerly accepted assistance in the form of military engineers, doctors and nurses from a Mexican military convoy—the first Mexican military unit to operate on US soil since 1846—dozens of displaced Mexican immigrants from the Katrina's wake seeking shelter in the safe confines of church basements have been deported with nothing to show for their extended stay in the land of freedom and economic success than the haggard and fetid water-soaked clothes on their backs. The steady flow of people-swapping taking place across states and the US-Mexico border can be perplexing to some. As US border control agents steadfastly hunt down displaced immigrants and shoo them out of the country, hundreds of others from bordering states and Mexico are making their way to the "GO zone." Within this context immigrant laborers are conceptualized as actively responding to environmental forces and maximizing their individual interests, a view which fails to recognize the state's role in creating and recreating the conditions for immigrant labor (Burawoy, 1976).

Guest worker programs will exploit immigrant labor, and force wages down and communities of color will be forced to compete with each other, sharpening existing race and class inequalities. American Enterprise Institute researchers Kathryn G. Newmark and Veronique de Rugy (2006) celebrate the entrepreneurial opportunities that Katrina has created for the capitalist overhaul of education. A $20.9 million dollar grant from the federal No Child Left Behind charter school program, combined with assaults on the teachers union, can do wonders in bringing about the neoliberal wet dream of a private sector takeover of public education. When proposed tax-free zones for businesses and school vouchers for students take effect, conditions that further enable the exploitation of the poor will have intensified.

Our understanding of Hurricane Katrina needs to be situated within the disciplinary practices of capital and its process of valorization through unsustainable capital-fueled growth and development, overproduction, resource depletion, and ecosystem destabilization and destruction within the capitalist marketplace. We cannot shift our focus away from capitalism's devastating consequences for the ecosphere as well as the global division of labor and its racialized social relations. Depletion of non-renewable resources, disruption of natural cycles, and waste and pollution are intrinsically connected to capitalist relations of production which in turn have their

differential impacts on populations in terms of race and gender. Capitalists accept collateral damage as part of the overall process, and whether it happens to be the deaths of thousands of human beings or eco-destructivity that leads to the elimination of large clusters of biospheres doesn't really seem to matter to the Masters of Capital—as long as this collateral damage has a minimal effect on the lives of the transnational capitalist class.

The current ecological crisis and crisis of capitalism brought on by fossil-fuel shortage has led to resource wars, geopolitical conflicts and unilateral invasions, and the deliberate sacrifice of African-American communities and other communities of color within the United States who are disproportionately 'cut loose' in times of political, ecological or so-called natural disasters. Continued assaults on the life-sustaining natural processes and resources all of us depend upon can be expected as long as the capital's law of value is not challenged. In the case of New Orleans, the wetlands, for example, were not effective in flood control because they had lost their protection and became casualties of the logic of capitalist accumulation. The wetlands—which provide a buffer against storm surge—are depleting at a rate of about 25 miles per year and since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost nearly 2,000 square miles of wetlands, losing every 38 minutes about the equivalent of a football field.

We need to extend Marx's "relentless criticism of everything existing" not only to the failure of the Bush administration to respond to Hurricane Katrina but also to the capitalist system itself, of which the Bush administration is but one manifestation—albeit one of the most repugnant examples of a "rogue nation" administration in recent history. And even, perhaps, in not so recent history.

Whether the rebuilding of New Orleans will follow the classic capitalist pattern of increased wealth for the few and misery for the majority is still yet to be determined. One of the challenges of critical educators is to make the interconnectedness among capitalism, ecosystem destruction and the racialization of the exploitation of human labor more transparent and less seemingly inevitable—and to find ways of bringing about a socialist alternative. In this regard, the tragedy of Katrina offers us an important pedagogical lesson in initiating change not only in the case of New Orleans but beyond the reach of our national borders.

It is clear that the United States has abandoned its poor, and for its poor populations of color, it considers them no longer even worthy of abandonment. To abandon a population means that you have had to be with them in some kind of solidarity at some level and at some historical moment. Whatever tenuous solidarity that once might have existed between the predominately white guardians of the state and its people of color has turned to

dust. The enlightenment values that once made equality a universal objective have been hijacked by a Christian fundamentalist belief in non- negotiable, ready-made solutions deemed sacrosanct and unalterable by divine fiat. The notion that the population of New Orleans was punished for its sins by Hurricane Katrina is as repugnant as its secular correlate: that those who perished in its floodwaters deserved their fate because the did not prepare themselves for such a natural disaster in advance. Divinely inspired reasoning purportedly found in scriptures and that are on a collision course with evolutionary science and human reason are putting the survival of our eco-system—and our human species—in grave danger. Human technology and the threat of 'resource' wars disguised as 'humanitarian interventions' and defended by the proposition that 'our God is the True God' places our planet on the brink of destruction. We used to be in a position of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) during the Cold War with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. Now it is something quite different. Istvan Mészáros notes: "Now that the 'neoconservatives' can no longer pretend the United States (and the West in general) are threatened by nuclear annihilation, the acronym has been turned into literal *madness*, as the 'legitimate policy orientation' of *institutionalized military/political insanity*" (2006, p. 36, italics in original).

We have addressed in this book the issue of Christian fundamentalism, but we have not approached the broader issue of religion per se. While we are not advocating the elimination of religion, we would like to draw attention to the fact that it is not merely anti-clericalism that needs to be advanced, that is, resistance to those clerics who would use religious triumphalism to justify the waging of wars against others, but the recognition that religion (as it stands today in many of the mainstream churches) is now maladaptive to the survival of the species. Whereas during earlier epochs, religion and war, yoked together, might have enhanced the global dominance of the human species via technological development, since the invention of the atomic bomb it has clearly become maladaptive. What we need now are not politically opportunistic projects dressed in the guise of "faith-based initiatives." We need international co-operation to save the planet from the global marketplace, not efforts at asserting its dominion. As Alexander Saxton notes:

> Religion, by consigning "our" enemies to the Evil Empire, makes the possession of weapons of mass destruction (and readiness to use them) appear under the guise of sacred duty. Scientifically-guided efforts, meanwhile, to salvage our planetary ecosystem point to the need for international cooperation and global re-allocations of energy and resources. These necessarily would impinge on affluent societies and wealth-holding classes. Religious belief, on

> the other hand, assigns priority to believing over knowing, to faith over science. Thus believers believe the Invisible Hand of Providence will save us (or some of us at least), in much the same way that some of our world political leaders believe the invisible hand of the Global Market can exempt (some of us) from the rigors of ecological meltdown. Religion moves in to provide ideological armor for a politics of denial. In God we trust: what market value, today, has biological life on earth a thousand years from now? Or one hundred? (cited in Dunbar-Ortiz, 2006).

What is painfully clear in the midst of such a daunting scenario is the need for a new critical humanist pedagogy, an approach to reading the word and the world that puts the struggle against capitalism (and the imperialism inherent in it) at the center of the pedagogical project, a project that is powered by the oxygen of socialism's universal quest for human freedom and social justice. When the bean chaointe (keening woman) announces the death of humanity, it will be not be a eerie wail from the flapping, criss-crossed jowls of Barbara Bush, but the slow rasp of an emphysemic, dying planet, a planet failed by the human consciousness to which it gave birth.

NOTES

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Beside Che Guevara's automobile at Centro de Estudios Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba

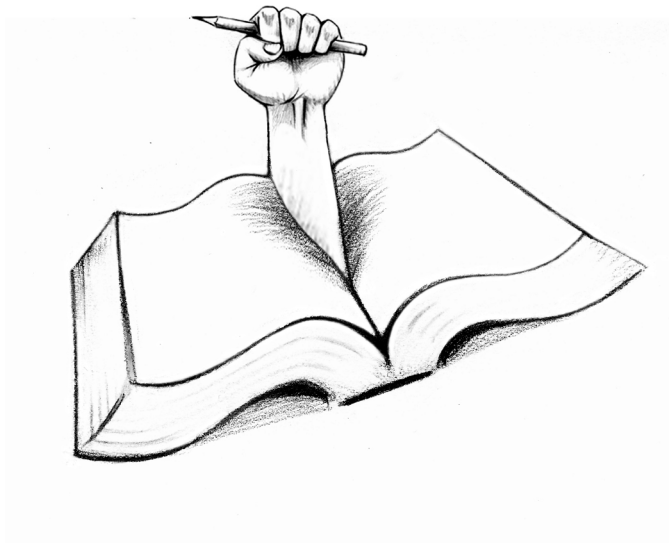


At a march for President Chavez in Caracas

CHAPTER ONE

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS ORGANIZATIONAL PRAXIS

Challenging the Demise of Civil Society in a Time of Permanent War



THE CRISIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEFT IN THE UNITED STATES

CRITICAL EDUCATORS TODAY ARE STRUGGLING ASSIDUOUSLY TO DEFEND THE PUBLIC SPHERE FROM ITS INTEGRATION INTO THE NEO-LIBERAL AND IMPERIALIST PRACTICES OF THE STATE AND THE BEHEMOTH OF GLOBALIZED CAPITALISM.

While no one is seriously talking about seizing the state on behalf of workers struggling against the "petrolarchs" in Washington, there are promising indications that social movements in the United States will become more active in the challenging days ahead. With administration hawks such as former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, former undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, and Defense Policy Board member, Richard Perle, having lead the rabid White House charge for "preventative war," it is clear that their fanatical allegiance to the imperialist Project for the New American Century was fuelled by U.S. triumphalism, unipolar political consolidation and dominion, and the conquest of new markets. The bacchanalia of patriotism that has overtaken cities and towns throughout the country has blinded U.S. citizens to the hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians killed in the 'liberation' of Iraq.

The slogan dripping red and black from anti-war posters that reads "No Blood for Oil" has, if anything, increased in relevance since the U.S. military invasion of Iraq. As it stands, OPEC resides outside the ambit of complete U.S. control. Privileged access over Iraq's oilfields and vast untapped oil reserves would demonstrably change the power equation. Production sharing agreements with U.S. and U.K. oil companies will wrench Iraq's oil industry into private hands and lock Iraq's government into economic terms that cannot be easily altered. New laws the U.S. occupying powers help draft with the Iraqi government will allow the U.S. to exploit Iraq's oil for up to 30 years. Iraqi opposition to the US 'free market' looting of their country was a major factor in the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq. The drive to obtain 'free markets' and to open up investment for U.S. corporations is now accompanied by the most formidable military presence ever known to humankind, one that is fundamentally unopposed. Iraq is now 'liberated' for U.S. corporate investment and control, having been officially 'pacified' as a client state. Judging from recent U.S. history, the future will no doubt require that millions more will die in the oil-rich Middle East and elsewhere around the planet on behalf of the U.S. empire. The

Bush *junta* has serious lessons to learn. You can't bomb democracy into existence. Democracy's universal egalitarian values require the reciprocal acceptance of mutual perspectives. But try telling this to the executives of British Petroleum, Shell and Exxon, who are licking their chops in anticipation of the profits they will make from Iraq's black gold.

Just as in the case of the last two centuries, when U.S. troops invaded Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Colombia, Grenada, and Panama, the recent U.S. invasion of Iraq not only tells us a lot about the history of Western democracy and the imperial roots of U.S. foreign policy, but also about the unholy symbiosis between capitalism and imperialism. While the brutality of Saddam is not in question, his regime did keep oil production under state control and most of the revenues paid for education and other social provisions. Of course, this was unacceptable to the transnational capitalist class whose bony hands now clutch the spigots, and stand to reap the profits. But do they notice the blood dripping from their white knuckles? Aside from the illegality of the invasion and the imperialist ideology that drives the Bush doctrine of "preventative war," we need only look at the 7,000 years of human history that has been defenestrated, stolen, or otherwise pulverized to dust to understand what kind of democracy is in store for Iraq.

Displaying a symbolic violence more wretchedly powerful than when a blue curtain was hung over Picasso's Guernica outside the UN Security Council Chambers so that a photo-op with Colin Powell would not be tarnished by the anti-war masterpiece, or when Laura Bush cancelled a White House poetry symposium when informed by her advisors that some of the poems might reveal anti-war sentiments, the U.S. enthralled the world once again by failing to prevent—some have even said by encouraging—the wanton theft and destruction of 170,000 priceless treasures of antiquity in the Baghdad Archaeological Museum as well as a museum in the northern city of Mosul (treasures of Mesopotainian provenance that included the tablets of the Codex Hammurabi). Multimillionaire art collectors from the advanced capitalist states wait timorously in air-conditioned anticipation for receipt of priceless artifacts whose planned theft was just another facet of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Whose secret office vault-now contains the statue of King Entemena, or the Assyrian god Ashur, or the golden harp from Ur? In a move reminiscent of the destruction of Teotihuacán, the Roman pillage of Carthage, or the devastation visited upon Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, the U.S. has facilitated the liquidation of what has been called the cradle of civilization. Perhaps the U.S. military leadership could learn something from a senior at Trumbull College, Susannah

Rutherglen (2003), who, commenting on the "murder of Iraq's national museum," writes:

> The work of art is the bearer of our cultural memory; it is the only trace we keep of the fact that we have lived at all. Long before Sigmund Freud compared the ruins of Rome to the layers of the human unconscious, the work of art came to stand as a lasting storehouse for the ephemeral contents of human lives, a place where we might recover the meaning of our culture and ourselves through time.

Perhaps the Iraqis would have been better off by placing their museums inside their oil fields which are—by stark contrast—carefully guarded by the U.S. military. While the oil fields were being protected by tanks and armored personnel carriers, thieves were freely looting and burning the National Archives, the Koranic library, the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry of Trade and dozens of other government buildings (not to mention three hospitals). In fact, every one of the city's ministries had been burned except the Ministry of Interior (with its wealth of intelligence information on Iraq) and the Ministry of Oil as well as UN offices, embassies and shopping malls (Fisk, 2003a; 2003b).

As if the looting and burning of Baghdad were not enough, the citizens of Iraq have been put on lockdown. The command of the 1st U.S. Marine Division recently issued its "Message to the Citizens of Baghdad" to "please avoid leaving your homes during the night hours after evening prayers and before the call to morning prayers. During this time, terrorist forces associated with the former regime of Saddam Hussein, as well as various criminal elements, are known to move through the area . . .please do not leave your homes during this time. During all hours, please approach coalition military positions with extreme caution" (Fiske, 2003). Iraqis are locked up from dusk to dawn in homes without electricity or running water. But mostly the media gleefully reported on the cheering Iraqis in the streets, welcoming the conquering heroes. Yet, as Alexander Cockburn notes:

> There's cheering in the streets now. No big surprise. Saddam was not a popular guy, and anyway, people know which side their bread is buttered on. Never forget, upstanding citizens of Nagasaki sponsored a festive Miss Atomic Bomb contest almost at the onset of the US occupation at the end of World War II. As I'm sure Martha Stewart would tell us, the art of living is learning to adjust briskly to changed circumstances. (2003, p.12)

Accompanying the cheers of "liberation" are the frenetic and accelerating cries against a long-term U.S. presence. Only days following the recalcitrant removal of a month-old Saddam Hussein statue (an event carefully stage managed by U.S. military propagandists) whose images flooded T.V. stations across the country, hundreds if not thousands of Iraqis occupied the streets to demonstrate a grim resolve against a long-term U.S. occupation. Greeted by M-16 rifles that left at least a hundred wounded and roughly a dozen dead, the Iraqi people carried signs reading "Occupiers Go Home" and "No US and UK in Iraq" (Keane, 2003).

When Colin Powell was advocating cuts to the U.S. military budget in 2001, he was quoted as saying: "Think hard about it. I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of villains" (cited in Gibbs, 2002, p. 15). A year earlier, Condoleezza Rice (2000) clearly was pushing for a completely different agenda:

> The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its 'national interest' in the absence of Soviet power. That we do not know how to think about what follows the U.S.-Soviet confrontation is clear from the continued references to the 'post-Cold War period.' Yet such periods of transition are important, because they offer strategic opportunities. During these fluid times, one can affect the shape of the world to come.

The opportunities to which Rice was referring could be summed up as transforming U.S. foreign policy into a motor of economic modernization that could move the world inexorably towards economic openness—clearly, Rice was supporting at that time a foreign policy initiative that advocated neo-liberal globalization as the means to export democracy throughout the globe. In this regard, she argued that "the United States and its allies are on the right side of history." It is equally telling that, several years later, Rice would take an even harder line, echoing the unipolar perspective of the administration hawks. In an interview with Nicholas Lemann for *The New Yorker* magazine, she spoke about what the attacks of September 11 afforded U.S. foreign policy initiatives:

> 'I think the difficulty has passed in defining a role,' she said immediately. 'I think September 11th was one of those great earthquakes that clarify and sharpen. Events are in much sharper relief.' Like Bush, she said that opposing terrorism and preventing the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction 'in the hands of irresponsible states' now define the national interest.... Rice said that she had called together the senior staff people of the National Security Council and asked them to think seriously about *'how do you capitalize on these opportunities'* to fundamentally change American doctrine, and the shape of the world, in the wake of September 11th. *(The New Yorker,*

> 1/4/02, emphasis added; this quotation was taken from The Research Unit for Political Economy, 2003)

According to India's Research Unit for Political Economy (2003), the above quotation by Rice reveals that the target of U.S. foreign policies is not terrorism. On the contrary: "The supposed suppression of terrorism worldwide merely offers 'opportunities' for the U.S. to pursue its strategic agenda without geographic or temporal limits." The invasion of Iraq was a shameful attempt to capitalize on the events of September 11, initiating a savage assault on a country weakened by sanctions for over a decade on the contrived assumption that the Iraqi regime posed a direct military threat to the United States. It is therefore no surprise to see the link between neo-liberal globalization and an aggressive U.S. military posture, especially when the military-industrial complex has become such an important economic actor (Gibbs, 2001). Military-Keynesianism is back in vogue. As Richard Friedman made dramatically clear:

> The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist-McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell-Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps (Cited in Gibbs, 2001, p. 33-34).

Neo-liberal globalization gives a powerful competitive advantage to developed countries and benefits the U.S. especially through the liberalization of international finance and the unique function of the dollar in an international economy (Gibbs, 2001). In the process it exacerbates a class and ethnic stratification of the world economy. Greg Grandin offers the following succinct description:

> Along with neo-liberalism, we have a neo-civilizing mission. The West will deliver free-market democracy, one way or another, to the rest of the world, whether through the proper mix of technology, markets, constitutions, consumer goods or out of the barrel of a smart weapon. (2003, p.29)

The strategic agenda of the free-market democratic reconstruction of which Bush, Cheney, Rice and the rest of Washington's oil baron *junta* speak is really another way of describing an assault on the forces that are trying to build a more just and equitable society: the working-classes of the so-called underdeveloped countries (we are clearly aware that what Western and North American researchers call 'underdeveloped' we acknowledge as 'overexploited'). The following observation puts the matter succinctly:

> While the apparent targets of the US assault are the regimes of these countries, that would hardly make sense, since none of them poses a threat to the

> US, and in fact some of them, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are its client states. Rather the real targets are the anti-imperialist masses of the region, whom certain regimes are unwilling, and others are unable, to control. It is these anti-imperialist masses of West Asia, not their rulers of whatever hue, who have always constituted the real threat to US domination. The US appears to believe that its overwhelming and highly sophisticated military might can tackle the masses effectively if they come out into the open. That is why it even contemplates provoking mass uprisings so as to have occasion to crush them. (Research Unit for Political Economy, 2003)

The case of Latin America offers another convincing example. We are witnessing the recolonization of Latin America through militarization as new U.S. bases are installed in Manta (Ecuador), Tres Esquinas and Leticia (Colombia), Iquitos (Peru), Rainha Beatrix (Aruba), and Hato (Curacao). The U.S. is training Latin American militaries from Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay as part of Operation Cabañas in Argentina. In addition to the infamous Plan Colombia, the U.S. is installing the System of Surveillance of the Amazon that can monitor 5.5 million square kilometres, as well as a mammoth radar facility in Argentina (Mendonca, 2003). While struggles against U.S.-supported fascist dictatorships by the Latin American left eventually ended in the restoration of constitutional rule in a number of countries, the United States continues to dissuade political parties there from mass mobilization; the U.S. would prefer that these parties adopt a more "modern" democratic politics of "passive representation and elite negotiation" (Grandin, 2003, p. 29). Furthermore, there has been an ongoing assault on direct democracy by curtailing regional and domestic grassroots efforts at regulating the economy:

> Washington has crafted a number of anti democratic measures—such as international treaties that limit the ability of local states to implement regulations, and the establishment of independent central banks that remove monetary policy from public debate— restricting popular will. (Grandin, 2003, p. 29)

While civilians alternatively continue to cheer and to die in Iraq with ominous regularity, a private contractor with close ties to the Republican Party, Betchtel Corporation, has been tapped by the U.S. State Department to be the primary contractor in rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, including power facilities, electrical grids, municipal water and sewage systems. This must be seen as good news by Donald Rumsfeld, since Rumsfeld worked closely with Saddam Hussein from 1983 to 1987 to secure an oil pipeline contract for Betchtel. David Moberg (2003, p. 17) writes that a "new report from the Institute for Policy Studies, using previously unpublished government papers, documents how Rumsfeld and other Reagan aides worked closely

with Saddam from 1983 to 1987—even after pubic revelation of his use of poison gas in his war with Iran—in an ultimately failed bid to help Bechtel Corporation construct a new pipeline for Iraqi oil." The new Bechtel contract is worth up to $680 million, and the logic here is that the more infrastructure the U.S. destroys, the more lucrative it becomes for the San Francisco-based contractor, whose board includes former Secretary of State, George Shultz. The U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S.A.I.D.) has invited other U.S. multinationals to bid on Iraq's "reconstruction." In line with the reconstruction efforts is a focus on ensuring that 8 million Iraqi children return to school in the fall. A for-profit company, Creative Associates International Incorporated (CAII), has landed the $65 million dollar bid for reopening a battered school system, largely the product of 12 years of U.N. sanctions that led to plunging literacy rates for a country that boasted the highest quality education in the Middle East prior to 1991. Charged with instilling "politically 'neutral' studies" by removing the former Ba'ath party nationalist curricula, Creative Associates International Incorporated will be under close scrutiny by critical educators who will want to see how politically neutral the curriculum will be towards the U.S. CAII currently enjoys multi-million dollar contracts for "rebuilding" Afghanistan's school system along with other U.S.A.I.D.-funded "liberatory" projects in Lebanon, Jordan, El Salvador, and Guatemala, leading to an excess of $200 million in signed contracts.

That capitalism, education, and technology go hand-in-hand is a truism captured—if only symbolically—in the efforts by California Republican Congressman Darrel Issa to introduce a bill that would require the Defense Department to build a CDMA cell phone system (developed by Qualcomm, one of Issa's most lucrative donors) in post war Iraq that would benefit "US patent holders." According to Naomi Klein (2003), "by the time the Iraqi people have a say in choosing a government, the key economic decisions about their country's future will have been made by their occupiers." Of course, the U.S. will partially privatize the oil industry, and sell off Iraq's oil reserves by means of production sharing agreements to Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum and Shell. Iraqi exiles will be given posts in Iraq's interim government in exchange for implementing privatization "in such away that it isn't seen to be coming from the United States" (Klein, 2003). Klein (2003) writes:

> Some argue that it's too simplistic to say this war is about oil. They're right. It's about oil, water, roads, trains, phones, ports and drugs. And if this process isn't halted, "free Iraq" will be the most sold country on earth.

Our point is that the logic of capital itself is what prohibits democracy from being realized as the achievement of individual freedom and self-determination. In capitalist societies, the free cheese is always in the mousetrap. What we are seeing taking place in Iraq is not the triumph of democracy. Klein (2003) asserts:

> Entirely absent from this debate are the Iraqi people, who might—who knows?—want to hold on to a few of their assets. Iraq will be owed massive reparations after the bombing stops, but without any real democratic process, what is being planned is not reparations, reconstruction or rehabilitation. It is robbery: mass theft disguised as charity; privatization without representation.

But isn't the current situation in Iraq—and the events which led up to it—precisely a metaphor for globalized capitalism worldwide? The United States is proclaiming victory and advocating a struggle for freedom and democracy in Iraq—indeed, a proclamation and advocacy that arcs across the firmament like a Fourth of July Roman candle. Yet the very democracy that it has mandated for Iraq has failed miserably to materialize in the United States. As critical educators, we are not convinced that democracy can be sustained in a world ruled by capitalism's law of value—with or without the imposition of empire. The prospect of democracy looks especially bleak these days, as the Bush administration puts the country on ideological lockdown in an attempt to return to the halcyon days of the McKinley era when the fat cats of industry ran a retrograde financial kingdom that enshrined private property rights and supported the annexation of foreign territories (Greider, 2003).

In a social universe pock-marked by the ravages of capitalism's war against the working-class and people of color, there are few places in which to retreat that the global market does not already occupy. Clearly, the United States has not faced up to capitalism's addiction to injustice, and its politicians have provided little space in educational debates for teachers to question the structurally dependent relationship between the standard of living in developed countries and misery and poverty in the underdeveloped ones. Early in the twentieth century, this country failed to heed the advice of one of its greatest philosophers, John Dewey (1927), who, mindful of "the extended meaning which has been given to the Monroe Doctrine," warned: "The natural movement of business enterprise, combined with Anglo-American legalistic notions of contracts and their sanctity, and the international custom which obtains as to the duty of a nation to protect the property of its nationals, suffices to bring about imperialistic undertakings." The militarization of U.S. foreign policy can be linked to the efforts of the ruling class to secure direct control over foreign economic policy in

order to enrich themselves further (mostly via investment banks) as a result of the ascendancy of 'liberalizing regimes' worldwide (as James Petras and others have pointed out). Finance capital now dictates the rules of the game of capital concentration and centralization.

Employing a politics that counts on the stupefaction of a media-primed electorate, the Bush administration has marshaled the corporate media in the service of its foreign policy such that the environment is literally suffused with its neo-liberal agenda, with very little space devoid of it's ideological cheerleading. Where classrooms once served as at least potentially one of the few spaces of respite from the ravages of the dominant ideology, they have now been colonized by the corporate logic of privatization and the imperial ideology of the militarized state. Teachers are left suspended across an ideological divide that separates reason and irrationality, consciousness and indoctrination, as they are reminded by their administrators and government officials that to bring "politics" into the classroom is unpatriotic. Consider the case of Bill Nevins, a high school teacher in New Mexico who faced an impromptu paid leave of absence following a student's reading of "Revolution X," a poem that lends a critical eye toward the war in Iraq.

If the President is to be believed, it was Jesus who first approved of the current Pentagon plan to expand the US empire into the Middle East, as Bush *hijo* shamelessly exploits his policy objectives with frequent Biblical references and overtures of solidarity to Christian evangelical fundamentalists. Through direct presidential orders that circumvent congressional debate and bypass public debate, the White House has launched faith-based initiatives which provide millions of dollars in state funds to right-wing Christian groups who run job-training programs requiring a "total surrender to Christ," or who oversee childcare programs or chemical-dependency recovery programs, or who offer spiritual and moral regeneration to troubled families.

All of this has not gone unnoticed by critical educators. Though they have become used to the academic marginalization that often follows in the wake of attacks by the more churlish and reactionary conservative educationalists among us, proponents and practitioners of critical pedagogy have long feared being cast into the pit of academic hell for being perceived not only as dangerously irrelevant to United States democracy but also as politically treasonous. At this current historical juncture in U.S. history, when fighting a 'permanent war' against terrorism, and expanding the American empire while we're at it, one would think that such a fear is duly warranted. This is partly because critical pedagogy earned its early reputation as a fierce critic of U.S. imperialism and capitalist exploitation. However, times

have changed. Today critical pedagogy is no longer the dangerous critic of free market liberal education that it once was. Rather, it has become so absorbed by the cosmopolitanized liberalism of the post-modernized left that it no longer serves as a trenchant challenge to capital and U.S. economic and military hegemony.

Critical educators have always attacked standardized testing for reducing knowledge to its numerically determinable value. They have attacked pedagogical authoritarianism and rote learning and the silencing of student voices. They have celebrated diversity and creativity and fought against racial segregation and racism, sexism and homophobia and they have done much more. Despite this, they have not challenged the formal structure of the capitalist system and the ownership of the means of production. Social justice cannot occur through a redistribution of wealth. What is needed as a major step towards social justice is a transformation of the social relations of production. This is not a challenge taken up by many critical educators or students. Of course, we believe that this can change.

There are numerous developments on our campuses related to the anti-war and anti-globalization movements that give us hope that the voices of our youth—and among them, youth who will attend our teacher education programs—will be much more politicized and open to what Freire called "conscientization" than in previous years. No doubt this has been encouraged by the worldwide mobilization against Bush and his de facto military/oil *junta*. There will be pressure on critical educators (whom in the United States are mostly liberal, not revolutionary) to respond to the voices of a new generation of politicized student teachers. But it won't be a simple case of preaching to the converted. There are now more than 80 right-leaning newspapers and magazines circulating on college and university campuses throughout the country. Clearly, there is a concerted effort by conservative organizations to silence progressive voices. There is a need for teacher educators to bring a more radical discourse into the educational literature as well as directly into their teacher education programs. Even in the field of critical pedagogy these attempts have been disappointing.

Written as a counterpoint to the onslaught of neo-liberal globalization and its "civilizing mission" for the oppressed of developed and developing countries alike, this chapter is both a commentary on the domestication of critical pedagogy, and a challenge for revivifying its political roots and role in the civil societarian left. It is meant to initiate a dialogue and conversation among progressive educators. Especially for those of us living in the belly of the beast in gringolandia, where we are being shaped by the capitalist protocols of the financial ruling class, by private equity bankers, hedge-fund speculators and Wall Street executives whose mergers and ac-

quisitions have brought them massive windfall profits, we are inhabiting a time when citizenship has become marked by a lived historical presence blindingly uncritical of its own self-formation, when residents inhabiting the nation's multifarious geoscapes are racially marked so as to render them educationally segregated, and when the working-class has become deputized by capital to uphold the neo-liberal market ideology of the ruling class against any and all other alternatives—all of which legitimates the subordinate status of the working-class within the existing division of labor. Is this great refusal by mainstream educators to address the conflict between their recognition of capitalism's essential inhumanity and their acceptance of capitalism's inevitability not a marker of just how unconscious they are of living inside the panopticon of capitalist ideology itself?

This chapter is written at a time of permanent war, which is not only a war against the enemies of the United States (which today seems like just about every other country or dissenting organization/persons) but also a war against the working-class, people of color and women (a war that dates back to the violent founding of the country itself). This is not to say that times haven't changed. For instance, Bush *hijo*, a beneficiary of the so-called 'good breeding' of the 'Episcopacy,' made it into Yale in the days when 'character' (read as the cultural capital of rich white 'silver spoon' families) was a singular badge of merit. Today, increasingly egregious forms of' 'testocracy'—scores from scientifically invalid and unreliable aptitude tests that correlate well with social class, race and linguistic background—serve as the primary route to the academy. The overt racism and class privilege of the ruling elite now enables the bourgeoisie to shirk off the notion of 'good breeding' and hide themselves beneath the 'objectivity' of high school test scores and university entrance criteria at a time in which meritocracy is presumed to have been secured (contrary to most mainstream researchers, we see objectivity as an ontological issue, not an epistemological one, since in our view, objectivity is the structure of reality produced by human laboring practices whereby humans produce their material life). The gilded racism of this position is reflected in Bush *hijo*'s condescending and patronizing attitude towards ethnic populations, both at home and abroad. As William Saletan (2003) has pointed out, President Bush likes to use the term "gifted" when addressing the Iraqi people on their TV screens. "You are a good and gifted people," he conveyed to them while Arabic subtitles appeared below his face during a broadcast that followed in the wake of the destruction of Baghdad. Saletan notes that Bush has used the term "gifted" seven times during his presidency, once to refer to Bill Cosby, once to Martin Luther King Sr., and four times to Iraqis and Palestinians. The additional time was when he was reading from a script at

an arts award ceremony. He has referred to Iraqis and Latinos as "talented" people. The Chinese have been referred to by Bush as "talented, brilliant, and energetic" while Russians are singled out as possessing "entrepreneurial talent." Irish Americans betray an "industry and talent" while Cubans critical of Fidel display "determination and talent." Saletan correctly notes that such descriptions are tantamount to the obscenely patronizing and condescending discourse that white people often use to refer to "ethnic" people who need to be told that they are capable. Satelan remarks:

> If you're black, Hispanic, or a member of some other group often stereotyped as incompetent, you maybe familiar with this kind of condescension. It's the way polite white people express their surprise that you aren't stupid. They marvel at how "bright" and "articulate" you are. Instead of treating you the way they'd treat an equally competent white person—say, by ignoring you – they fuss over your every accomplishment.

At this current historical juncture, as the Bush administration sets its sights on abolishing affirmative action, as the right seizes every chance it gets to replace the social wage with the free market system, to transfer pension and health costs from capital to labor, to freeze the minimum wage, to lower capital gains taxes, to impose regressive local, state and federal taxes, and as conservative think tanks game out plans for privatizing what remains of the devastated public sphere, thousands of teachers and teacher educators throughout the country look to the left for guidance and leadership. Stunned by the results of a *New York Times/CBS News* survey that revealed that 42 percent of the American public believes that Saddam Hussein is directly responsible for the attacks of September 11, and that 55 percent of Americans believe Saddam Hussein directly supported al-Qaeda, U.S. educators are feeling powerless against the hegemonizing force of the rightwing corporate media. Under cover of democracy, Bush's carnival barker lingo about saving civilization from the terrorist hordes rings the air with a sense of profound hypocrisy. Americans old enough to remember the anti-Communist propaganda of the late 1940s and 1950s are experiencing a political deja vu. Millions read the book, *Is This Tomorrow? America Under Communism!* published by the Catechetical Guild Educational Society of St. Paul Minnesota, and watched the anti-communist propaganda film produced by Jack Webb called *Red Nightmare*. In 1948, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States published "A Program for Community" which contained a phrase eerily reminiscent of a remark that President Bush made weeks after the attacks of September 11: "You know that they hate us and our freedom." In the bedroom communities of the United States nightmares were spawned by reading *You can trust the Communists (to be Communists)* written by Dr. Fred Schwarz and published by the Christian Anti-

Communist Crusade. Those too young to remember the McCarthy era get a chance to experience the sequel first hand. Some see this as democracy in practice. Not everybody is fooled. Not all Americans who came of age in the 1980s bought the message of *Red Dawn*, a 1984 film by John Lilius about an invasion of the United Sates by the Soviet Union and Cuba that was defeated by a group of Colorado high school students who called themselves the Wolverines after their school's team mascot.

But even when we are detoxicated of the shadowed obscurity surrounding the current war on terrorism and disabused of the calls for the primitive patriotism of flags and bumper stickers that is part of Bush *hijo*'s petulant crusade for a decent America (i.e., an America devoid of its critics), there still remains a glaring absence within the liberal academy of challenging capital as a social relation. While there exists plenty of talk about income redistribution, with putting a halt on the uncontrolled growth of fiscal deficits resulting from the Iraq occupation, surprisingly little is said about setting ourselves against the deviances and devices of capital's regime of profit-making other than prosecuting a few of the more disposable CEOs of the latest round of corporate offenders. The stunted criticism of the Bush administration's fascist assault on democracy is not so much a refusal of political will among liberal educators as much as a realization that if we persist with an internationalized market economy and the introduction of effective social controls to protect the underclass, the marginalized, and the immiserated it will create overwhelming comparative disadvantages for the nation state or the economic bloc that seeks to institute such policies. If, as liberal educators (begrudgingly) and conservative educators (demagogically) insist, there effectively is no alternative to working within an institutionalized market economy, then admittedly neo-liberal policies that champion free market capitalism and that undermine what is left of the welfare state make eminent and chilling sense. And while surely the punishment exacted against the poor can be staggered by parceling out the conditions for mass poverty in more discreet—yet no less lethal—policies and practices, there remains the question of how to cope with the havoc that will eventually be wailingly wreaked on the poor and the powerless in the absence of a socialist alternative. It is in this context—of breadlines, overcrowded hospitals, wage stagnation, and unemployment lines longer than those at the polling stations—that the question of organization becomes imperative for the left in a search for a socialist alternative. The downward mobility for wage and salaried workers helped along by the restructuring of businesses by downsizing, outsourcing and give-backs will not cease without the mobilization of those hurt most by the unprecedented disparity between productivity and wages.

THE POLITICS OF ORGANIZATION

This brings us face-to-face with the thorny question of organization, a problem that has doggedly exercised both the revolutionary left and the progressive left for over a century. Max Elbaum (2002) notes that organisations are crucial in the struggle for social justice. He writes that "[w]ithout collective forms it is impossible to train cadre, debate theory and strategy, spread information and analysis, or engage fully with the urgent struggles of the day. Only through organisations can revolutionaries maximize their contribution to ongoing battles and position themselves to maximally influence events when new mass upheavals and opportunities arise" (2002, p. 335). Yet at the same time, Elbaum warns that we must avoid what he calls "sectarian dead-ends" in our struggle for social justice.

Reflecting on his experiences with the New Communist Movement of the 1970s, he explains that when a movement becomes a "self-contained world" that insists upon group solidarity and discipline, this can often lead to the suppression of internal democracy. The rigid top-down party model is obviously a problem for Elbaum. On the one hand, social activists need to engage with and be accountable to a large, active, anti-capitalist social base; on the other hand, there are pressures to put one's revolutionary politics aside in order to make an immediate impact on public policy. There is the impulse to "retreat into a small but secure niche on the margins of politics and/or confine oneself to revolutionary propaganda" (2002, p. 334). Elbaum cites Marx's dictum that periods of socialist sectarianism obtain when "the time is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement" (2002, p. 334). Problems inevitably arise when "purer-than-thou fidelity to old orthodoxies" are employed to maintain membership morale necessary for group cohesion and to compete with other groups. He reports that the healthiest periods of social movements appear to be when tight knit cadre groups and other forms are able to coexist and interact while at the same time considering themselves part of a common political trend. He writes that "diversity of organizational forms (publishing collectives, research centers, cultural collectives, and broad organizing networks, in addition to local and national cadre formations) along with a dynamic interaction between them supplied (at least to a degree) some of the pressures for democracy and realism that in other situations flowed from a socialist-oriented working-class" (2002, p. 335). It is important to avoid a uniform approach in all sectors, especially when disparities in consciousness and activity are manifold. Elbaum notes that Leninist centralized leadership worked in the short run but "lacked any substantial social base and were almost by definition hostile to all others on the left; they could never break out of the limits

of a sect" (2002, p. 5). The size of membership has a profound qualitative impact on strategies employed and organizational models adopted. Elbaum warns that attempts to build a small revolutionary party (a party in embryo) "blinded movement activists to Lenin's view that a revolutionary party must not only be an 'advanced' detachment but must also actually represent and be rooted in a substantial, socialist-leaning wing of the working-class" (2002, p. 335). Realistic and complex paths will need to be taken which will clearly be dependent on the state of the working-class movement itself.

We cite Elbaum's insights here not because we adhere to all of his conclusions but because we recognize the importance of the questions that he raises. We believe they are pertinent in building the educational left's anti-imperialist struggle.

It is axiomatic for the ongoing development of critical pedagogy that it be based upon an alternative vision of human sociality, one that operates outside the social universe of capital, a vision that goes beyond the market, but also one that goes beyond the state. It must reject the false opposition between the market and the state. Massimo De Angelis writes that "the historical challenge before us is that the question of alternatives ....not be separated from the organizational forms that this movement gives itself" (2002, p. 5). Given that we are faced globally with the emergent transnational capitalist class and the incursion of capital into the far reaches of the planet, critical educators need a philosophy of organization that sufficiently addresses the dilemma and the challenge of the global working-class. In discussing alternative manifestations of anti-globalization struggles, De Angelis itemizes some promising characteristics as follows: the production of various counter-summits, Zapatista Encuentros; social practices that produce use values beyond economic calculation and the competitive relation with the other and that are inspired by practices of social and mutual solidarity; horizontally-linked clusters outside vertical networks in which the market is protected and enforced; social co-operation through grassroots democracy, consensus, dialogue, and the recognition of the other; authority and social co-operation developed in fluid relations and self-constituted through interaction; and a new engagement with the other that transcends locality, job, social condition, gender, age, race, culture, sexual orientation, language, religion, and beliefs. All of these characteristics are to be secondary to the constitution of communal relations. He writes:

> The global scene for us is the discovery of the "other," while the local scene is the discovery of the "us," and by discovering the "us," we change our relation to the "other." In a community, commonality is a creative process of discovery, not a presupposition. So we do both, but we do it having the commu-

> nity in mind, the community as a mode of engagement with the other. (2002, p. 14)

But, what about the national state? According to Ellen Meiksins Wood, "the state is the point at which global capital is most vulnerable, both as a target of opposition in the dominant economies and as a lever of resistance elsewhere. It also means that now more than ever, much depends on the particular class forces embodied in the state, and that now more than ever, there is scope, as well as need, for class struggle" (2001, p. 291). Sam Gindin (2002) argues that the state is no longer a relevant site of struggle if by struggle we mean taking over the state and pushing it in another direction. But the state is still a relevant arena for contestation if our purpose is one of transforming the state. He writes:

> Conventional wisdom has it that the national state, whether we like it or not, is no longer a relevant site of struggle. At one level, this is true. If our notion of the state is that of an institution which left governments can 'capture' and push in a different direction, experience suggests this will contribute little to social justice. But if our goal is to transform the state into an instrument for popular mobilization and the development of democratic capacities, to bring our economy under popular control and restructure our relationships to the world economy, then winning state power would manifest the worst nightmares of the corporate world. When we reject strategies based on winning through undercutting others and maintain our fight for dignity and justice nationally, we can inspire others abroad and create new spaces for their own struggles. (2002, p. 11)

John Holloway's premise is similar to that of Gindin. He argues that we must theorize the world negatively as a "moment" of practice as part of the struggle to change the world. But this change cannot come about through transforming the state through the taking of power but rather must occur through the dissolution of power as a means of transforming the state and thus the world. This is because the state renders people powerless by separating them from "doing" (human activity). In our work as critical educators, Holloway's distinction between power-to do (potentia) and power-over (potestas) is instructive. Power-to is a part of the "social flow of doing," the collective construction of a "we" and the practice of the mutual recognition of dignity. Power-over negates the social flow of doing thereby alienating the collective "we" into mere objects of instruction.

Holloway advocates creating the conditions for the future "doing" of others through a power-to do. In the process, we must not transform power-to into power-over, since power-over only separates the "means of doing" from the actual "doing" which has reached its highest point in capitalism. In fact, those who exercise power-over separate the done from the doing of

others and declare it to be theirs. The doers then become detached from the origin of thought and practice, dehumanized to the level of instructed 'objects' under the command of those that have assumed power-over. Power-over reduces people to mere owners and non-owners, flattening out relations between people to relations between things. It converts doing into a static condition of being. Whereas doing refers to both "we are" (the present) and "we are not" (the possibility of being something else) being refers only to "we are." To take away the "we are not" tears away possibility from social agency. The rule of power over is the rule of "this is the way things are" which is the rule of identity. When we are separated from our own doing we create our own subordination. Power-to is not counter-power (which presupposes a symmetry with power) but anti-power.

Holloway reminds us that the separation of doing and done is not an accomplished fact but a process. Separation and alienation is a movement against its own negation, against anti-alienation. That which exists in the form of its negation or anti-alienation (the mode of 'being' denied) really does exist, in spite of its negation. It is the negation of the process of denial. Capitalism, according to Holloway, is based on the denial of "power-to," of dignity, of humanity, but that does not mean power-to (counter-capitalism) does not exist. Asserting our power-to is simultaneously to assert our resistance against subordination. This may take the form of open rebellion, of struggles to defend control over the labor process, or efforts to control the processes of health and education. Power-over depends upon that which it negates. The history of domination is not only the struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors but also the struggle of the powerful to liberate themselves from their dependence on the powerless. But there is no way in which power-over can escape from being transformed into power-to because capital's flight from labor depends upon labor (upon its capacity to convert power-to into abstract value-producing labor) in the form of falling rates of profit.

We are beginning to witness new forms of social organization as a part of revolutionary praxis. In addition to the Zapatistas, we have the important historical example of the participatory budget of the Workers Party in Brazil. And in Argentina we are seeing new forms of organized struggle as a result of the recent economic collapse of that country. We are referring here to the examples of the street protests of the *piqueteros* (the unemployed) currently underway and which first emerged about five years ago in the impoverished communities in the provinces. More recently, new neighborhood *asambleas* (assemblies) have arisen out of local street corner protests. Numbering around 300 throughout the country, these assemblies meet once a week to organize *cacerolas* (protests) and to defend those evicted from

their homes, or who are having their utilities shut off, etc. The *asambleistas* (assembly members) also co-ordinate soup kitchens to feed themselves and others. This anti-hierarchical, decentralized, and grassroots movement consisting of both employed and unemployed workers, mostly women, has taken on a new urgency since December, 2002, when four governments collapsed in quick succession following Argentina's default on its foreign debt. Canadian activist Naomi Klein (2003) captures the spirit surrounding the creation of the *asambleas* when she writes:

> In Argentina, many of the young people fighting the neo-liberal policies that have bankrupted this country are children of leftist activists who were "disappeared" during the military dictatorship of 1976-'83. They talk openly about their determination to continue their parents' political fight for socialism but by different means. Rather than attacking military barracks, they squat on abandoned land and build bakeries and homes; rather than planning their actions in secret, they hold open assemblies on street corners; rather than insisting on ideological purity, they value democratic decision-making above all. Plenty of older activists, the lucky ones who survived the terror of the '70s, have joined these movements, speaking enthusiastically of learning from people half their age, of feeling freed of the ideological prisons of their pasts, of having a second chance to get it right.

A recent report in *News & Letters* adds to this description:

> What is remarkable is how ferociously opposed the asambleas are to being controlled, and to any hint of a vertical, top down hierarchy. They insist on independence, autonomy self-determination, encouraging all to learn how to voice their opinions and rotating responsibilities. They are explicitly for individual, personal self-development at the same time as they are for fighting the powers that be with everything they've got at their disposal. (2002, p. 6)

The larger *asambleas interbarriales* (mass meetings of the various *asambleas)* elect rotating delegates from the *asambleas* to speak and vote on issues that their local communities generate. In addition, workers have occupied a number of factories and work sites such as Brukman, Zanon, and Panificadora Cinco. Workers have also occupied a mine in Rio Turbio. Clearly, new revolutionary forms of organization are appearing. As Emesto Herrera notes:

> The experiences of the piquetero movement and neighborhood assemblies allow the possibility of the construction of a revolutionary movement, a democratic popular power with a socialist perspective. The 'great revolt' has put on the agenda the question of a strategy that links resistance and the struggle for power, representative democracy and/or the principle of revocability, the 'saqueos' as acts of self-subsistence in food. (2002, p. 10)

Currently Brukman, a garment factory composed of 55 female workers, aged 45-50, has proved symbolic in the struggle against the Argentine state. Brukman workers are demanding public ownership of the factory, setting a dangerous precedent for the bourgeoise. In fact, approximately twenty-five other factories in Argentina are occupied by workers who are also demanding public ownership. Workers in approximately two hundred and fifty other factories are demanding some kind of state intervention for a type of workers' control (such as forming cooperatives, etc.). The have formed a popular front to resist assaults from the state. However, assaults from the state continue. Over twenty-five thousand people surrounded the Brukman factory recently to defend workers that had been expelled by the police, leading to numerous injuries and arrests.

Of course, the *asambleas* confront many problems in that they are composed of members of different class fractions, with their many different political agendas. Yet all of the *asambleas* hold the re-stratification of recently privatized industries as a top priority (even as they reject vanguardist parties). At the same time, in this new rise of popular mobilization, as subjectivities become revolutionized under the unrelenting assault of capitalism, there needs to occur a progranunatic proposal for a political regroupment of the radical and anti-capitalist forces. There must be more options available for organizers of the revolutionary left. Herrera writes:

> In Mexico, the Zapatista movement could not translate its capacity of mobilization in the Consultas and Marches into a political alternative of the left. There was no modification of the relationship of forces. The theory of the 'indefinite anti-power' or 'changing the world without taking power' has produced neither a process of radical reforms, nor a revolutionary process. (2002, p. 13)

We are more optimistic about the possibilities of the Zapatista movement than Herrera, but we do believe that whatever shape the struggle against imperialism and capitalist globalization will take, it will need to be international. It is true that there is no predetermined road, that we make the road by walking. But it is equally as true that we will need to know where we are going. As the Chesire Cat in Alice in Wonderland put it, "if you don't know where you want to go, any road will get you there." We don't want to take any road. We seek the path to socialism.We also believe that state power will have to be taken and the state itself transformed from below. We believe in a multiracial, gender-balanced, internationalist anti-imperialist struggle. What also appears promising are the rise of the Bolivarian Circles in Caracas, Venezuela, a mass mobilization of working-class Venezuelans on behalf of President Hugo Chavez. The Bolivarian Circles (named after Simon Bolivar) serve as watchdog groups modeled after

Cuba's Committee for the Defense of the Revolution and function as liaisons between the neighborhoods and the government as well as fomenting support for Chavez. They are important in combating business leaders and dissident army generals whom, with U.S. support, are trying to overthrow the Chavez government. Members of the Bolivarian Circles bang on hollow electricity poles to warn against mobilizations by the opposition and to rally supporters across the city's working-class neighborhoods. They are an example of self-determination for sovereignty as evidenced by the Bolivarian declaration "Nuestra America: una Sola Patria" (Our America: one motherhood) which rejects an ideological loyalty to "America" as an America defined by a capitalist laden value system that favors imperialism and exploitation for increased profit margins. According to "Nuestra America" the people will not succumb to neo-liberal modernity at the expense of becoming "scavengers of the industrial extravagance" (translation, Jaramillo). This movement is a clear signal that the present can be rewritten, there is an alternative, and the people can search for their own "America" (Nuestra America, 2003). In the spirit of this declaration we are urging critical educators to pressure the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to open their meetings to the media and to the public and to cancel the full measure of the debt they claim from underdeveloped countries, since such debts were accrued by dictators who used their IMF and World Bank loans to oppress their own people in the service of capital accumulation.

In the struggle against capitalism and its state formations, Alex Callinicos (2003) discusses two options. The first option is reformism within the anti-capitalist movement (as a result of the pressure posed by capital flight and currency crises, or in reaction to 'rebellions of the rich' as seen recently in Venezuela)—a move that has witnessed center-left state bodies surrendering without a fight to the Washington Consensus. Here, the state is considered to be a vehicle through which social change can be successfully achieved. Callinicos, however, makes the important point that the state simply can't be used as an instrument of social transformation since it is already too implicated in the social relations of production and the bureaucratic apparatus centered on the means of coercion. Callinicos minces no words:

> Recent historical experience thus confirms the judgment made long ago by Marx and Lenin that the state can't simply be used as an instrument of social transformation. It is part of the capitalist system, not a means for changing it. The economic pressures of international capital—reflected particularly in the movements of money across the globe—push states to promote capital accumulation. Moreover, in the core of the state itself is a permanent bureaucratic apparatus centred on control of the means of coercion-the armed forces, po-

> lice, and intelligence services-whose ultimate allegiance is not to elected governments but to the unelected ruling class.

A second option discussed by Callinicos is the one that is propounded by the autonomist wing of the anti-capitalist movement. This position renounces a reliance on the existing state and also eschews the objective of taking power from capital. Callinicos cites Tony Negri and John Holloway as perhaps the best known exponents of this position. Holloway's position is described by Callinicos as "an extreme form of commodity fetishism, in which all the apparently objective structures of capitalist society are simply alienated expressions of human activity, based on the separation of subject and object... doer and done." Holloway's "movement of negation" or "anti-power" suggests to Callinicos that "any attempt to understand capitalism as a set of objective structures implies the abandonment of Marx's original conception of socialism as self emancipation. Accordingly, virtually the entire subsequent Marxist tradition is dismissed as 'scientistic' and authoritarian."

Holloway's project of dissolving the fetishistic structures of alienated human activity and liberating the human qualities that are denied by capitalism is regarded by Callinicos as extremely naive and troubling. For instance, he argues that the work of Holloway and Negri is being used in Argentina as a way of justifying "the idea that the small network of factories abandoned by their bosses and taken over by the workers represents the beginning of a new post-capitalist economy." While it is clear that Holloway realizes that the struggle against alienation must not leave productive processes in the control of capital, his approach suffers from a central contradiction. In the final analysis, Callinicos argues that Holloway's cry that "we do not struggle as working-class, we struggle *against* being working-class, against being classified" really amounts to attempting to abolish capitalist relations of production by pretending that they aren't there. If we are really determined to abolish capitalist social relations, it makes less sense to disidentify with working-class struggle than to build more effective forms of working-class struggle and organization. The point here is not to remain paralyzed by the fear that capitalism cannot be defeated but to help to cultivate an alterative source of power in capitalist society—what Callinicos describes as "the extraordinary capacities of democratic self organization possessed by the mass of ordinary people." While one route for this is trade unionism, such self organization against capitalism is not the sole preserve of workers' organizations. Other possibilities include anti-capitalist, anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. The key to all attempts to organize social movements, argues Callinicos, is to develop and cultivate forms of organization that unite the working-class at local and national levels in the

forms of workers' councils (here Callinicos is thinking about the forms of organization that emerge during mass strikes and popular upheavals of the working-class). We have seen such forms of organization during the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Spanish Revolution of 1936, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, and the rise of Solidarity in Poland in 1980-81. According to Callinicos:

> These workers' councils embody a more advanced form of democracy than is practiced in liberal capitalist societies. They are based on rank and file participation, decentralized decision making where people work and live, and the immediate accountability of delegates to higher bodies to those who elected them. The councils represent an alternative way of running society to the centralized and bureaucratic forms of power on which capitalist domination depends.

We are aware that one of the biggest debates occurring among the educational left at this moment is between the Zapatista position of changing the world without taking power, advocated by John Holloway and others, and the position taken by supporters of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales in Venezuela and Bolivia respectively. While we have tremendous respect for the work of the Zapatistas, especially in terms of their advocacy of indigenous and women's rights, we do not believe that actions of those, like Chavez, for instance, who have chosen to take state power, are wrongheaded. We still hold out hope that the state can be remade democratically from the bottom up in such a way that it will be able to serve the interests of the poor and the oppressed. We side with the Chavista position on direct and participatory democracy and continue to support the efforts of the Chavistas to build socialism for the twenty-first century. We support the struggle to advance socialism worldwide.

The overarching goal is to develop the capacity of social movements to challenge successfully the core apparatuses of capitalist state power, and eventually replace the state altogether. Changing the state will not be easy, since the state is not a "fixed entity or container which holds market and society, but…an ensemble of social relations that form a complex, intertwined temporal and special grid" (Kamat, 2002, p. 112). Three main elements of state space, according to Marxist Henri Lefebvre, include "a national territorial space", "an internal grid of sate sociospatial organization composed of politico-institutional and administrative configurations, built environments, and symbolic monuments; and "the mental space produced by the state" (Kamat, 2002, p. 112). As difficult as it will be to challenge the complex spatial typology of power and social control of the state, we must not give up hope in the power of social movements both to reconfigure space and rearticulate the relationship between the state and civil soci-

ety. Social movements can serve as points of departure and shed glimmers of hope for an alternative to the governing force of capital. The challenge for us is to recognize that the United States is as much a product of globalized capital as it is a producer of it and to translate social movements incubated within national borders into a widespread movement against capital. As Michael Lowy (2002) points out, in an unprecedented time when capital permeates lines of demarcation and casts its oppressive force through institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the U.S. empire, what is lacking "is a network of political organizations–parties, fronts, movements, that can propose an alternative project inside the perspective of a new society, with neither oppressor nor oppressed." The multiplicity of social movements (albeit heterogeneous in composition and diverse in their beliefs on how to combat capital) do identify the same enemy—the transnational capitalist class. They recognize the broad scope of the current crisis, which encompasses a crisis of overproduction, a crisis of legitimacy of democratic governance, and a crisis of overextension that has dangerously depleted the world's material resources.

To address this point, we focus attention on the important work of James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (2001) who challenge the egregious inequalities produced by transnational corporations and demand living wages for workers, food production for the urban poor, and land reform for peasants. Such a transformation points towards the importance of 'development from below' which can be achieved through the democratization of the workplace by way of workers' and engineers' councils across international borders, accompanied by a 'development from the inside.' This refers to a major shift of ownership of production, trade and credit in order to expand food production and basic necessities to the poor who inhabit the 'internal market.' In order to bring about socialism–what Petras and Veltmeyer refer to as "an integral change based on transformations in the economic, cultural, and political spheres and based on understanding the multidimensional domination of imperialism" (2001, p. 165)–so-called Third World workers will face multiple obstacles that hinder their path. To face this challenge successfully, Petras and Veltmeyer argue that we must move from a globalized imperial export strategy towards an integrated domestic economy. It is important not to de-link from world production on the basis of being self-reliant or because one believes it is possible to achieve 'socialism in one country.' It would be equally misguided, they note, to embrace a market socialism because it is unreasonable to assume that market forces, private ownership, and foreign investment directed by the government can build the basis of socialism. All economic exchanges–external

and internal—must be subordinated to a democratic regime based on direct popular representation in territorial and productive units.

We emphasize that what needs to be struggled for is not only the abolition of private property but also a struggle against alienated labor. The key point here is not to get lost in the state (nationalized capital) versus neoliberalism (privatized capital) debate. As the resident editorial board of *News & Letters* have made clear, the real issue that must not be obscured is the need to abolish the domination of labor by capital. Capital needs to be uprooted through the creation of new human relations that dispense with value production altogether. This does not mean that we stop opposing neoliberalism or privatization. What it does mean is that we should not stop there.

One of the major tasks ahead is the breaking down of the separation between manual and mental labor. This struggle is clearly focused on dismantling the current capitalist mode of production and setting in motion conditions for the creation of freely associated individuals. This means working towards a concept of socialism that will meet the needs of those who struggle within the present crisis of global capitalism. We need here to project a second negativity that moves beyond opposition (that is, opposition to the form of property, i.e., private property)—a second or 'absolute' negativity that moves towards the creation of the new. This stipulates not simply embracing new forms of social organization, new social movements, etc., but addressing new theoretical and philosophical questions that are being raised by these new spontaneous movements. We need a new philosophy of revolution, as well as a new pedagogy that emerges out of the dialectics of absolute negation.

Over the years a small number of critical educators have made modest efforts to revive the fecundity of Marxist critique in the field of education. In contrast to many liberal educators who see Marxist theory as synonymous with much of the hidebound, box-trained, reductionistic discourse produced by the Second International, we believe that Marxist theory, in all of its heteronomous manifestations and theoretical gestation for well over a century, performs an irreplaceable analytical and political function of positing history as the mediator of human value production. Lamenting the death of Marxism or participating in revolutionary nostalgia will do little more than momentarily stir the ghost of the old bearded devil. Clearly, present day left educationalists need to "suspend the stale, existing (post)ideological coordinates" (Žižek, 2002, p. 195) in order to rethink the state as a terrain of contestation while at the same time developing a multiracial, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist and internationalist popular front. We have to hold onto our belief that another world is possible. We need to

do more than to break with capital or abscond from it; clearly, we need to challenge its rule of value. We look to the Bolivarian revolution as one important example of building a revolutionary state that will enable forms of participatory and direct democracy. One necessary (but not sufficient) way to proceed, in our view, is to develop a revolutionary critical pedagogy that will enable multiracial and gendered working-class groups to discover how capital exploits the use-value of their labor-power but also how working-class initiative and power can destroy this type of determination and force a recomposition of class relations by directly confronting capital in all of its multifaceted dimensions. This will require critical pedagogy not only to plot the oscillations of the labor/capital dialectic, but also to reconstruct the objective context of class struggle to include school sites. Efforts also must be made to break down capital's creation of a new species of labor-power through current attempts to corporatize, businessify, and moralize the process of schooling and to resist the endless subordination of life in the social factory so many students call home (Cleaver, 2000; see also Rikowski, 2001). Rebuilding the educational left will not be easy, but neither will living under an increasingly militarized capitalist state where labor-power is constantly put to the rack to carry out the will of capital. While critical pedagogy may seem driven by utopian longings that a spike barren hinterland of despair, it anchors our hope in the dreams of the present. Here the social revolution is not reborn in the aerosal insights of the postmodernists which only increases ballast for the reigning liberal consensus, but emerges from everyday struggle on the part of the oppressed to release themselves from the burdens of political detente and democratic disengagement. It is anchored, in other words, in class struggle.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE CIVIL SOCIETARIAN LEFT

CNN Headline News host Glenn Beck: "Blowing up Iran. I say we nuke the bastards. In fact, it doesn't have to be Iran, it can be everywhere, anyplace that disagrees with me." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

Fox News host Bill O'Reilly (on his radio show): "Do I care if the Sunnis and Shiites kill each other in Iraq? No. I don't care. Let's get our people out of there. Let them kill each other. Maybe they'll all kill each other, and then we can have a decent country in Iraq." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

CNN Headline News host Glenn Beck: "The Middle East is being overrun by 10th-century barbarians. That's what I thought at 5 o'clock this morning, and I thought, 'Oh, geez, what—what is this?' If they take over—the barbarians

> storm the gate and take over the Middle East (this is what I'm thinking at 5 o'clock in the morning)—we're going to have to nuke the whole place." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>
>
> Nationally syndicated radio host Rush Limbaugh on the Middle East: "Fine, just blow the place up." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

We are living at a time in which civil society is being colonized by the bilious sentiments and hawkish political propaganda of right-wing media pundits, many of whom advocate for pre-emptive or 'preventative' war against any country that impedes the continuation of the "American Way of Life" and who regularly denounce anti-war activists as traitors. While the media are often thought to play a key role in defending democracy, it is clear that today the U.S. corporate media largely serve the interests of the ruling elite, crippling what remains of civil society in the process. While Fox Television has been identified in the mainstream press as an 'infotaimnent' vehicle for promoting and defending the agenda of the reactionary wing of the Republican Party, considerably less controversy has been stirred by the role of Clear Channel Communications, the nation's largest radio chain of about 1,200 radio stations (50 percent of the U.S. total).

In one of his first acts as President, Bush *hijo* appointed the son of Secretary of State Colin Powell, Michael Powell, as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. Powell controls the agency that regulates the domestic news and entertainment networks at a time when the telecommunications industry is in the throes of unimpeded deregulation following the Telecommunications Act of 1996. And while Powell appears concerned about the possibility of anti-trust violations in the radio industry, the most concentrated ownership of all broadcast media, Clear Channel's acquisitions, led by a former Bush *hijo* business associate, Lowry Mays, continues unabated, despite current congressional investigations of its business practices. According to Stephen Marshall, since 9.11 Clear Channel "has been the most sycophantic and pro-militarist Big Media corporation" (2003, p. 24). All of its radio stations were issued songs to be blacklisted including "Peace Train" by Cat Stevens and "Imagine" by John Lennon. During the invasion of Iraq, Clear Channel began sponsoring pro-war, "support our troops" rallies across the United States which they referred to as "Rally for America"─not so surprising, perhaps, for a corporation that supports the toxic hyperbole of Rush Limbaugh, but disturbing nonetheless for peace activists and critics of the Bush administration. Marshall reports: "Using its 1,200 stations, Clear Channel pummeled listeners with a mind-numbing stream of uncritical 'patriotism'(2003, p. 24). Marshall further

warns that "with Michael Powell, George W. Bush and Clear Channel, the lines between political, military and corporate media power have become blurred into one authoritarian impulse" (2003, p. 24). Of course, other television and radio stations are following this lead. We wish to offer one case in point.

Defending its decision to give a weekly television program to Michael Savage, a controversial radio talk show host who specializes in racist, misogynistic, and homophobic diatribes against various groups, the MSNBC cable network (co-owned by Microsoft and General Electric/NBC) called hiring Savage—whose show premiered on Saturday, March 8, 2003—"a legitimate attempt to expand the marketplace of ideas" (FAIR, 2003). Among other supreme acts of hatred, Savage has dismissed child victims of gunfire as "ghetto slime," referred to non-white countries as "turd" world nations, and called homosexuality a "perversion" while at the same time violently asserting that Latinos "breed like rabbits." And while MSNBC's formal report declared that its decision to hire Savage "underscores its commitment to ensuring that its perspective programming promotes no one single point of view" (see FAIR, 2003), the network chose to announce that a program hosted by liberal anti-war advocate, Phil Donahue, had been cancelled, even though the show received the highest ratings on the network.

A study commissioned by NBC described Donahue as "a tired, left-wing liberal out of touch with the current marketplace" and as such, he would be a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war" (FAIR, 2003). The report stressed a fear that Donahue's show could become "a home for the liberal antiwar agenda at the same time as our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity" (FAIR, 2003).

Savage has publicly asked the government to arrest the leaders of the anti-war movement in the case of war. And he has threatened to use his influence to put those who have complained about his upcoming show in jail. He has said that he would make an effort to have his enemies investigated and that he would use to his advantage the fact that the U.S. has a Republican Attorney General.

As critical educators, we condemn the double standards of the U.S. media, particularly in the case of MSNBC's hiring of Savage. We do not believe in a First Amendment (via the U.S. Constitution) absolutist position—a doctrine of pure, indiscriminate tolerance—that advocates the de jure right to express any opinion in public as an abstract and indiscriminate defense of the right of any citizen to express any opinion in any way, regardless of its content or meaning or repressive societal impact. Not only must there be a consideration of content, there must also be standards of rational-

ity (see Reitz, forthcoming). To advocate an "anything goes" approach rewrites anti-racism and anti-sexism as bigotry. We all participate in discussions as rational beings, and this obliges us to know the grounds of our convictions. Any authentic political culture must presuppose an educational and cultural context that does not try to wrest control of ideas but that honors opposing positions as a precondition for the pursuit of truth (see Reitz, 2000). In the case of Michael Savage, his de jure right to express his hate speech is contradicted by the de facto condition within the U.S. that leftist opinions challenging the ruling class are suppressed within the oligopolistic corporate media that "dramatize consciousness" (in the sense used by Raymond Williams) through sanitized abstractions and the management of meaning. Tolerance must become a liberating force, and not a repressive force, and as such pure tolerance of 'free' speech must be challenged when it impedes the chances of creating a context in which people can live free of fear and violence. As Charles Reitz (2000) notes, drawing upon Herbert Marcuse, the First Amendment cannot be used to protect the speech and action of those intent upon destroying the right to liberty and civil rights of others. It appears that within the dominant logic of the corporate media and government institutions that support the media, prohibiting the hate speech of Michael Savage is a threat to democracy whereas the crimes of the right—imperialist attacks on sovereign nations, the exploitation of human labor, the support and training of terrorist groups in the name of U.S. interests—are tolerated in the name of democracy.

This brings us to a crucial question: How can critical educators reinvigorate the civil societarian left precisely at a time when we are creating a world where elites are less accountable to civil society than ever before? Takis Fotopoulous writes: "This new world order implies that, at the center, the model that has the greatest chance of being universalized is the Anglo-Saxon model of massive low-paid employment and underemployment, with poverty alleviated by the few security nets that the '40 per cent society' will be willing to finance, in exchange for a tolerable degree of social peace which will be mainly secured by the vast security apparatuses being created by the public and private sectors" (1997, p. 358).

If we persist with an internationalized market economy, the introduction of effective social controls to protect the underclass and the marginalized will create overwhelming comparative disadvantages for the nation state or the economic bloc that seeks to institute such policies. Additionally, if we accept that there is no alternative to working within the institutionalized market economy, then the neo-liberal policies of the ruling class make sense to the elites and under these circumstances there is a logic in rejecting the imposition of social controls by the civil societarian left. The only an-

swer is one from without—we need to make our choice between socialism or barbarism. If we choose the later, then we truly have no alternative than to sleep in the neo-liberal bed that we have made for ourselves. If we choose socialism, then we must never abandon a vision for the radical transformation of society. Such a vision needs to include the exposure of those institutions such as schools that hijack the historical memory of the U.S. crimes─crimes of war against poor and against other sovereign nations. We must ascribe responsibility for such crimes not only to the state organs and officials who directed the crimes but also to those instruments of learning (i.e., the media, textbooks) that attempt to bury the history of such crimes along with the faceless victims. Our vision must declare partisanship "with the cause of the classless society and international economic equality" (Zavarzadeh, 2003, p. 22). In this way we are being objective, since we view objectivity not as a discursive stage for the performance of interpretation but an intervention into the world structured by class antagonism, a praxiological intervention. Against the Bush regime that reduces politics to utility and instrumentality, we argue for a politics of liberation from necessity; against the Bush regime that stipulates that politics can never transcend domination, we argue for a politics of hope; against the Bush regime that locates the popular masses as disaggregated, inert matter, we view them as disciplined, purposive, and self-conscious subjects of history engaged in self-determination and self-becoming; against the Bush regime that subordinates the popular masses to the ideas of the knowledge aristocracy of the rich, we view knowledge and the knowing subject as one, where the particular finds a pathway to the universal. We envision a post-capitalist world where knowledge is emancipatory because it is objective and acts on the world like a hammer that can pulverize the pillars of capital and wage labor. As critical revolutionary educators who seek to transform the existing capitalist state into a socialist alternative, we can begin by revisiting our notions of democracy, by extending the traditional public realm to include the economic, ecological, and social realms as well as the political realm (Fotopoulous, 1997). Democracy here is seen as a process of self-institution, where there exists no divinely defined code of human conduct.

A number of positions illuminated by Takis Fotopoulous (1997) on the creation of a revolutionary transition to socialism proves exceedingly instructive here for reconquering the notion of democracy and providing a politically robust concept of social justice. According to Fotopoulous, we need to develop a deeper conception of political democracy or direct democracy that includes economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological democracy. This falls under the rubric of what Fotopoulous calls 'confed-

eral inclusive democracy' and refers to the equal sharing of power among all citizens through the self-institution of society. This means that democracy is grounded in the choice of its citizens, mandating the dismantling of oligarchic institutionalized processes and eliminating institutionalized political structures embodying unequal power relations. Economic democracy can be achieved by giving over macro economic decisions to the citizen body whereas micro decisions at the workplace and household are taken over by the individual production or consumption unit. Here, the focus is on the needs of the community and not growth per se; where satisfaction of community needs does not depend upon the continuous expansion of production to cover the needs that the market creates.

Within this model of deep democracy, unequal economic power relations are structurally eliminated by assuring that the means of production and distribution are collectively owned and controlled by a multiracial citizen body. Democracy in the social realm refers to an equality of social relations in the household and in the social realm in general such as the workplace and the educational establishment. Cultural democracy means the creation of community controlled art and media activity. Democracy must also be ecologically sensitive, developing an expanded level of ecological consciousness which will work to create the institutional preconditions for radical change with respect to society's attitude toward nature, making it less instrumentalist and less likely to see nature as an instrument for growth within a practice of power creation. In sum, Fotopoulous's notion of inclusive democracy implies a new conception of political citizenship and the return to the classical concept of direct democracy: where economic citizenship involves new economic structures of 'demotic' ownership and control of economic resources; where social citizenship involves self-management structures at the workplace, democracy in the household and new welfare structures in which all basic needs are democratically determined and served by community resources; where cultural citizenship allows every community worker to develop their intellectual and cultural potential. Here Fotopoulous combines democratic and anarchist traditions with radical Green, feminist, and liberation traditions. In our view, such a reworked notion of citizenship is compatible with building independent working-class political action involving teachers, students, families, and other cultural workers. As the basis of the self-organization of the working-class, this transitional stage would include a confederation of workplace assemblies as part of a broader democratic movement directly linked to communities.

For critical revolutionary educators, the struggle for inclusive democracy stipulates working with students to build revolutionary consciousness and

collective action as a means whereby we can resist our insinuation in the ugly truth of capital: that it is designed to separate the laborer from her labor. Capitalism is based on a false diagnosis of the means to combat necessity, and it is at the point where it is exacerbating the condition it is supposed to heal. The fetishization and unequal distribution of life chances produced by capitalist social relations of production must be challenged by dialectical praxis. Dialectical praxis does not refer to the pernicious trinkets of philosophical verbiage but is grounded in a materialist dialectics. It refers to action in and on the world. Contradictions are not seen as existing in the realm of discourse alone, but permeate the messy terrain of historical struggle over the means and relations of production. The center-left liberal covenant which enshrines resource distribution as the site of resistance, and seeks to calibrate social transformation according to how easily it can be integrated into a more 'compassionate' capitalism with a human face, must be directly challenged by a coherent philosophy of praxis that directly confronts globalized capital with a socialist alternative. This challenge can be mounted most productively within the framework of an intergenerational, multiracial, gender-balanced, transnational and anti-imperialist social movement. This will not be an easy task, especially at this current moment of political despair that has infected much of the educational left. It will require radical hope.

Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history's hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of 'what is,' but becomes a reality carved out of 'what could be.' Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Hope refers to the rejection of subjective idealism in favour of a materialist reading of social life in its totality. Hope mediates between the universal and the particular in grasping the concrete forms of our objective existence under capital. Hope is the medium of dialectical praxis. Revolutionary dreams are those in which the dreamers dream until there are no longer the dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential.

The days ahead will witness furious attempts by the petrolarchs of the Bush administration to justify its political and military occupation. They will say that they are making the world safe for freedom and democracy and providing opportunities for other countries to benefit from "the Ameri-

can Way of Life." This will be accompanied by attempts by the Bush administration to get a whole new generation of nuclear weapons into production in order to meet its expanded "national security objectives." And Bush's neocon advisors will have most of the evangelical Christian communities behind these initiatives. It looks as though the American public will be left out of the debate. But why should Bush care about what the American people think? After all, most of them didn't vote for him.

Currently the most important front against capitalism is stopping the U.S. from invading more countries, since the administration's National Security Strategy of the United States of America establishes an irrevocable connection between U.S. global domination and the neo-liberal Washington consensus (Callinicos, 2003a). Callinicos warns that If the U.S. is victorious in Iraq, then it is more likely to go on the offensive in Latin America, in zones in the south where resistance to neo-liberalism is most advanced. Even if the B-52s and Special Forces aren't directly deployed against Brazilian landless laborers or Argentinean piqueteros, victory for U.S. military power will weaken the struggle against poverty and hunger everywhere. It is very likely, however, that a U.S. "black operation" will be employed against the government of President Hugo Chavez, in both lethal and non-lethal modes. Our work with the Chavistas in Venezuela has taught us that there is little the U.S. government is not prepared to do to deter a country's drive towards socialism, especially if the country in question has large oil reserves. Clearly, the attempt by the Bush administration to destabilize Venezuela's government is aberrant with the stated aims of democracy.

Commenting on the disturbing growth of imperialistic sentiment among the American people (with specific historical reference to Mexico), John Dewey (1927) wrote that "it is only too easy to create a situation after which the cry 'stand by the President,' and then 'stand by the country,' is overwhelming.... Public sentiment, to be permanently effective, must do more than protest. It must find expression in a permanent change of our habits." Of course, we need more than 'habits of the mind' but rather a change in the social relations of production that can provide further conditions for consciousness to acquire a more dialectical understanding of the social totality and the will and purpose to seek a permanent alternative to the social universe of capital. Addressing U.S. imperialism since September 11, 2002, Gilbert Aschar (2002, p. 81) portentously warns: "The real, inescapable question is this: is the U.S. population really ready to endure even more September 11s, as the unavoidable price of a global hegemony that only benefits its ruling class?" Perhaps it's time to give consideration to comments coming not from the theater of war but the theater of playwrights

and actors. Recently, Peter Ustinov observed: "Terrorism is the war of the poor, and war is the terrorism of the rich" (cited in Berger, 2003, p. 34).

We reject the notion, advanced by Foucault and other post-structuralists, that posing a vision of the future only reinforces the tyranny of the present (Hudis, 2005). Similarly, we reject Derrida's insistence that the fetish is not opposable. It is self-defeating in our view to embrace the advice of many postmodemists: that all we can do is engage in an endless critique of the forms of thought defined by commodity fetishism. In contrast, we believe that we can do more than enjoy our symptoms in a world where the subjects of capitalism have been endlessly disappearing into the vortex of history (see Hudis, 2003). As Peter Hudis (2003) notes, such defeatism arises as long as critics believe that value production within capitalism is natural and immutable. Thoughts will imprison us whereas concepts that result from critique can set us free. We believe that the value form of mediation within capitalism is permeable and that another world outside of the social universe of capital is possible. We are also committed to the idea that revolutionary critical pedagogy can play a role in its realization.

The voices and actions of critical educators will become more crucial in the days ahead. Whatever organizational forms their struggles take, they will need to address a global audience who share a radical hope for a new world.

NOTES

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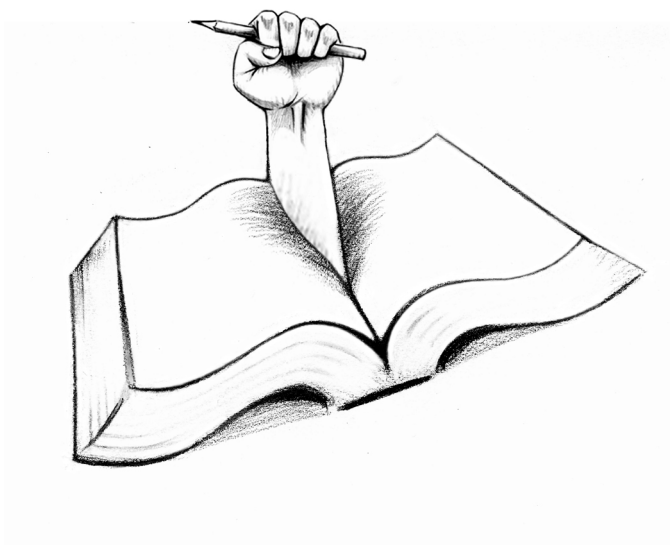


Noah De Lissovoy, Nathalia, and Peter in Johannesburg SA

CHAPTER TWO

NEO-LIBERAL CITIZENSHIP, THE NEW IMPERIALISM, AND FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY

A Critical Analysis



CAPITALISM AND CONTEXT

> The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is in my opinion, the real source of the evil.
>
> —Albert Einstein (1949)

A CENTRAL ANTAGONISM OF THE CURRENT HISTORICAL MOMENT IS ONE THAT WE CAN NOW UNHESITATINGLY CALL EMPIRE. Its most fervent protagonists and inveterate apologists include those who equate global peace and freedom with the free trade gospel of neoliberalism. It is not exorbitant to claim that the current U.S. drive toward empire follows the same indurated logic that drove earlier stages of imperialism—the concentration and centralization of capital. What is different about the imperialism of today, in contrast to that of Lenin's day, is that today imperialism is not simply rooted in private financial capital but also in state financial capital; secondly, whereas in Lenin's day imperialism was based on the export of surplus capital, since WWII it has been based on the import of surplus capital (Hudis, 2003). For instance, since the war in Vietnam, the U.S. has moved from a creditor to a debtor nation.

Although U.S. private capital is not the most productive in the world economy, the U.S. nevertheless orchestrates the policies of the I.M.F. and World Bank (pace Paul Wolfowitz) so that most of the surplus value from other countries is directly shipped to it (Hudis, 2003). But the present stage of state-capitalist imperialism is also characterized by its opposite: by those who, in taking to the streets of Seattle, Quebec City, Genoa, Prague and elsewhere, demonstrate their defiant conviction that another world outside the razor-wired precincts of globalized capitalism is possible. As market fundamentalism unleashes its vicious assault against humanity under the auspices of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Washington Consensus, and as it accords itself the sacerdotal status necessary to divine a future of human dignity, prosperity and democracy, the transnational ruling elite is being afforded a rite of passage to scourge the earth of its natural resources while besieging the working-class, women, children and people of color. The far-flung outposts of "democracy," built upon centuries-old pillars of imperialism and conquest, and on the dream of a global Americanism and the devaluation and domestication of the "other," demonstrate that the soil in which democracy is cultivated is the dung heap of capitalism's valorization process. Throughout the global life world (or should we say the "living death world"), the labor-power of aggrieved groups is being subsumed into an abstract calculus and value form

that reduces them to inhuman instruments in the process of capital accumulation. Capitalists regularly demanding that there be more competition are in reality making an argument for increasing the rate of exploitation and the likelihood of unemployment.

Since the 1974-75 world recession, capitalism has not been able to overcome the decline in the rate of profit, even with the expansive growth of labor-saving devices and high-tech production. What makes the current historical conjuncture palpably unique is the success of the world's only superpower in achieving global hegemony and extracting profits through the creation of new markets. This it achieves through its drive for permanent war in a world in which its closest contenders, Russia and China, are in no position to challenge the United States either militarily or economically. That the United States today is not interested mainly in direct territorial control of the rest of the world in order to extract super-profits from its conquered lands, in contrast to the classic stage of imperialism of imperialist colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, does not mean that it is a post-imperialist superpower.[1] Rather, it signals the fact that the United States can realize its imperial will through its military bases, surrogate states, and through economic threats and bribes. Iraq is an interesting case, since the U.S. occupation is clearly there to protect the oil reserves of which it has de facto control by means of production sharing agreements. Of course, capitalism's vampire thirst for profits is hidden under its raspy clarion claim that it will bring democracy to the entire globe, come hell or high water. What greater way to demonstrate the achievements of democracy than to point to the fact that McDonald's opens up 800 restaurants a year, and Coca-Cola claims to have achieved 10% of the total liquid intake of the world, with a goal of achieving 20% (Hawken, 2003, p. 527). The metanarrative of American triumphalism now threatens to smother its traditional anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist adversaries, demonizing them as unpatriotic and in league with the world's "evildoers."

U.S. imperialism is no longer an ivory tower abstraction bandied about by denim-clad radical professors in the safety of their post-Marxist sociology seminars. Rather, we are witnessing a time when the brute exercise of force over sovereign nations (whether through bullying or invasion and occupation) in the name of "liberation" and "freedom" equates to Americanism. The message to our youth resonates clearly: "God" is on our side, joining the armed forces is a call of honor, and the United States will unflinchingly prevail against all odds in its pursuit of "democracy." In support of this concept of neoliberal citizenship, the education of the poor and children of color is largely to be carried out by the instruments of standardization, testing, privatization, Christianization, and militarism as these are

connected to the fiscal strongholds and legislative leashes of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In a post-9/11 era, where wholesome family outings at the neighborhood park now include fifty cent dunking sessions of the local soda jerk from Johnny Rockets wearing an Osama Bin Laden mask, American culture is fueled by an obsession with the dark, hirsute, Arab terrorist. It's also obsessed with fighting science in the name of Jesus, especially when its findings contradict holy writ. Witness the solemn, overweight couples with children in tow filing into The Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, a 27 million dollar enterprise created by the Answers in Genesis Ministry, that operates under the premise that the earth is less than 6,000 years old and was created in six days. Dioramas show prehistoric children cavorting with dinosaurs in the garden of Eden just after Adam bit the apple (presumably before the giant lizards acquired a taste for other living creatures) even though scientists agree that the dinosaurs lived millions of years before humans appeared on the earth. This was before humans began to slaughter each other, and prehistoric students had to pass SAT exams. With so much focus on U.S. corporate and military adventurism around the world, alarmingly little is said of the implications of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—the federal government's Gold Card educational package.

This chapter is a discussion of U.S. neoliberal ideology of imperialism in light of the No Child Left Behind Act, a major political initiative that has been extolled by the Bush administration as the most significant educational reform package in the history of the nation. We wish to demonstrate that the NCLB is implicated in the historically extant categories and practices of neoliberalism and the globalization of capital. Our purpose is to expose the tensions and contradictions between what the official transcript of U.S. educational policy claims will expand the "circle of opportunity" both domestically and abroad for the nation's student population and the U.S. drive for global economic hegemony through direct and indirect domination and force. Our claim is that NCLB is a historical apparatus that serves to exert control over the largest and most vulnerable segments of the population in the interest of promoting capitalist consumption and the reproduction of the law of value and the value form of labor. Most important, however, is the realization that there is a burgeoning counterpoint to this imperial momentum. We also want to throw a lifeline to those foundering on the reef of reformism by situating our analysis in a Marxist critique of global capitalism, and arguing that a redistribution of capital is insufficient in a system that is predicated on the exploitation of human labor. Unlike educational reformers who try to flush out the arteries of our sclerotic civil

society in order to create conditions more favourable to educational equality—in a type of educational angioplasty—we realize that a healthy educational system can only function in a post-capitalist, socialist democracy. Accordingly, our analysis is anchored in a historical materialist analysis of the Bush administration's neoliberal assault on citizenship.

THE CLIMATE: PRE AND POST-9/11

> Republican strategist Mary Matalin: "I mean, you know, I think these civil rights leaders are nothing more than racists. And they're keeping constituency, they're keeping their neighborhoods and their African-American brothers enslaved, if you will, by continuing to let them think that they're—or forced to think that they're victims, that the whole system is against them." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

Prior to 9/11, the majority of the U.S. electorate and millions of onlookers throughout the world stood slack-jawed and politically aghast at the Supreme Court's decision to legitimize an illegitimate election, thereby securing George W. Bush's ascendance to the oval office (Ahmed, 2002; Kellner, 2001). Hailed as the "best democracy money can buy" (Palast, 2002), the United States did boast a relatively untainted history when it came to voter fraud and election tampering. However, this history came to an abrupt halt when the public was presented with President George W. Bush, a fraudulent figure who stands only second to former president Benjamin Harrison (1888) in assuming the presidency without the majority of the popular vote. In addition to media reports of Bush's lack of international travel and his pathetic grasp of global politics, there was a general sentiment that Bush would claim his post as a "domestic" president, focusing on national priorities and remaining relatively distanced from international politics. How wrong this sentiment proved to be.

Lauded as Texas's education governor, Bush was determined to leave his mark in the arena of educational reform. He wanted to pass an education bill that would be modeled after his alleged success at bringing about "Texas-style" public school education—testing, accountability, and privatization. While Bush was announcing his educational agenda, the press corps for the most part decided to overlook the grim reality of Texas, a state which, following his "reform" movement, boasted the highest number of students graduating from high school with alternative certification (1.6 million G.E.D. in 1996). Bush's emphasis on "reform with results" and "leave no child behind tactics," led to what is now termed "Enron accounting" in determining the number of dropouts in major cities (Schemo, 2003). School

districts in Texas and particularly Houston (the "education reform capital" of the country), have underreported the number of dropouts in their high schools as a last ditch effort to disguise the effects of high stakes testing and accountability (Schemo, 2003). NCLB, signed into law in January of 2001, did indeed carry many remnants of Bush *hijo*'s Texas policy, but it was far from original. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was due for reauthorization in 1998, and although members of Congress had put forward various reauthorization bills, the process had filibustered miserably in a move that some speculated was to prime the platform for a Bush-Cheney reprisal in 2000. Having had the groundwork already prepared for the NCLB, Bush *hijo* and his team of advisers to a large extent pieced together a compilation of previously designed education bills by both parties in the House and Senate.[2]

Bush *hijo* was to become the "Education President" until the terrorist attacks of September 11 infamously halted his Reading First initiative tour and placed him in front of the camera, serpent-eyed and resolute, calling for a "War Against Terror." The smirking fraternity brat had suddenly transformed himself—through the political meretriciousness of his most hawkish advisors—into the world's preeminent warrior leader of what was to become known as the "homeland." A month later, 25,000 cluster bombs showered the arid terrain of Afghanistan in a so-called 'humanitarian' shift toward removing the Taliban—an operation fielded as a way to "free" the Afghan people from tyrannical rule (a rule that was largely created with the support of the United States during the 1980s as a counter-offensive against the Soviets assuming control of Afghanistan)[3] and eliminate the so-called breeding ground for terrorists (Ahmed, 2002). Although security agencies around the world had engaged in policing and surveillance methods to detain "terrorists," the United States decided to exercise its full military force ("full spectrum dominance") on a destitute and historically war-torn nation. Shortly thereafter, the fall of the Taliban removed any remaining obstacles to the establishment of a U.S. supervised oil pipeline across Afghanistan and Pakistan (*Monthly Review*, 2002). A year later, after hundreds of Taliban prisoners were slaughtered by the Northern Alliance, after hundreds of unidentified prisoners from Afghanistan (including some children) traveled in wire-mesh cages to a detaining facility in Guantanamo Bay, and after the whereabouts of the terrorist "mastermind" Osama Bin Laden was pronounced compellingly as unknown (as it is as of this writing), the United States unilaterally decided to wage an additional war—what was euphemistically termed a "preventative" or "preemptive" war—this time against Iraq.

Bush *hijo* had indignantly declined a fully-fledged congressional investigation into both the events of 9/11 and intelligence reports leading up to the invasion of Iraq, absenting his administration from the civic responsibility of public debate. In doing so, he needlessly abridged the ethical imperatives that underwrite the democratic ideals he purports to uphold. In cases such as this, the ethical indigence of his elitism exposes his presidency to a new level of appall. Claiming that the Bush administration "is more narrow-minded, more ideologically driven, more hostile to international cooperation than any since Ronald Reagans' first term" (Ali, 2003), John R. MacArthur (2003a) assails current U.S. foreign policy as hostile and belligerent. Specifically referring to President Reagan's "murderous proxy war in Central America during the 1980s, when Mr. Reagan's ideologues viewed tiny, enfeebled Nicaragua as the greatest Marxist threat to the world since Lenin boarded the train in Zurich bound for St. Petersburg," MacArthur condemns Reagan's "overt and covert support of the Nicaraguan contras, his tacit support of right-wing death squads in Guatemala and El Salvador." He draws attention to the fact that two major players in the Bush administration—Elliot Abrams and John Negroponte—both held positions in the Reagan State Department. Abrams "was a ferocious overseer of the Central American carnage wrought in large measure by his government" while Negroponte "acted as U.S. proconsul for the whole region." In addition, Abrams "pleaded guilty in 1991 to two counts of withholding information from Congress during his investigation of Mr. Reagan's secret and illegal funding of the contras." In effect, the Bush administration not only has taken their ideological lead from Reagan's political thugs, but include a number of them on its payroll.

The historically persistent use of military force by the United States—especially visible during the Reagan and Bush *hijo* regimes—is central to an imperialist project that ensures that the forces of the capitalist market essentially prevail in every tapped or untapped corner of the world (Wood, 1999). Possessing the world's most powerful military helps to shape the global playing field so that market forces will overwhelmingly obtain to the advantage of the U.S. economy (Wood, 1999). Tariq Ali (2003) expands the notion of "new imperialism" to include the assertion of raw imperial power through military might. The marked difference between the old and new imperialism is that the United States no longer has the funds to colonize foreign lands. In its stead, U.S. military campaigns are fought through local compradors, such as Afghanistan's Northern Alliance or Iraq's Shiite population (although in the case of Iraq, the strategy seems to be breaking apart).

The client governments that consent to U.S. and allied control over capitalist markets suggests that the new imperialist project has no need to conceal its national interests (i.e., securing oil fields) and affirms the fact that the United States, as the world's sole superpower, simply has no regard for any opposition. Whereas we agree with Ali that the imperialist project has become crudely obvious, it is further legitimated under the guise of "human rights imperialism" (Wood, 1999). Human rights imperialism (also known as the new military humanism) is intended to placate the public's ontological anxiety about feeling vulnerable to terrorist attacks and sustain the image of the United States as global savior and purveyor of freedom and liberty (Chomsky, 1999). In this context, the term "human rights" secures (albeit not completely) the support of a general populace and replaces the common interests of humanity with the particular interests and calculated actions of the United States (Wood, 1999). But before we put all the blame for war and imperialism on the knobby spine of the far right, we need to consider the fact that liberals have also been jumping on the bandwagon of humanitarian intervention and regime change. We only need to witness all the liberals who played the human rights card in advocating intervention in Bosnia and Iraq. Too often such liberal intervention gives a "moral cover" to the most undemocratic impulses seen in this country since Woodrow Wilson signed the Espionage Act (which put Eugene Victor Debs in jail for opposing the war) and unleashed his attorney general's infamous "Palmer raids" against "subversives" (MacArthur, 2003b, p. 25). George Bush must envy the free hand of Alexander Mitchell Palmer.

The Bush administration characterized its campaign against Afghanistan as the need to liberate the Afghan people from the cruel regime of the Taliban while cleansing the country of its al-Qaeda training camps. Limited attempts were made to let diplomacy resolve the crisis precipitated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Shortly after the "precision" bombing campaign began, the Bush administration called upon U.S. schoolchildren to join the "humanitarian" effort by contributing to the newly formed "America's Fund for Afghan Children." Thousands of "Freedom" cards stuffed with one-dollar bills filled the White House Rose Garden in a vulgar media spectacle—a spectacle that was followed by the establishment of the Freedom Timeline, a sequential curricular series dating back to 1777 that was designed to teach children about the major turning points in the struggle for "freedom" throughout U.S. history.[4] The U.S. Department of Education reports that more than 350,000 requests to date have been made to acquire the series. Ultimately, the Bush administration was able to utilize classroom technology in its war against terrorism, calling upon schoolchildren across the nation to exercise their patriotic duty and compassion for their global

"underlings" by participating in Freedom Friendship Letters—a global pen pal program that connects children in the United States with children in Muslim countries. Millions of children participate in these campaigns as a result of carefully orchestrated initiatives designed to capitalize on the resurgence of patriotism since September 11, 2001—patriotism that is defined by the most egregious U.S. propaganda.

As the Bush administration continues its mission of inculcating U.S. schoolchildren and their families according to its ideological ruse, a new Bush sponsored magazine, *Hi*, has gone on sale across the Middle East to "teach young Arabs to love America." According to Tucker Eskew, director of the White House's Office of Global Communications, "We're [U.S.] fighting a war of ideas as much as a war on terror" (Buncombe, 2003). The ideas put forward include celebrity profiles, exotic yoga poses and the spotlighting of Arab students in American Universities "enjoying freedom of thought"—a marked contrast to the fact that students in Oakland were subjugated to questioning by the U.S. secret service following a set of remarks they made about the president during class discussion (KRON, 2003). In addition, USAID funded multimillion dollar contracts to Creative Associates International Incorporated, a private corporation that holds roundtable discussions with the military about educational initiatives in postwar Afghanistan and Iraq. CAII has offered to rewrite the Afghan and Iraqi national curricula, train Afghan and Iraqi teachers, and administer education programs similar to those found in the United States (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2002). As critical educators we remain decidedly cautious of the "ideas" put forward by the U.S.-sponsored ruling elite under the mantra of politically neutral school plans.

GROWING DISPARITIES

As children in the U.S. confront the concocted image of the American empire as one that equates freedom and democracy with the holy gospel of free trade—a monolithic and undifferentiated image if there ever was one—not all of their teachers are so easily fooled. In fact, they have sufficient reason to be alarmed. Over the last twenty years, 90% of the private capital assets have been transferred into the hands of 10% of the citizenry, prompting, in the words of Lewis Lapham (2003), "the establishment of a social order not unlike the one known to the early Roman Empire—an oligarchy in place of a republic, an equestrian clan that buys its rank at the prices paid for apartments on Fifth Avenue and houses in Pebble Beach, a Senate and Cabinet composed largely of opulent landlords openly contemp-

tuous of their tenants, a president of the United States who received his office as an inheritance" (p. 8).

Activist teachers know that free trade has devastated the world's poor and filled the coffers of capital's comprador elite. James Petras (2002) reports that from 1990 to 2002, during the "Golden age of neo-liberalism," U.S. banks and multinational corporations remitted $1 trillion in profits, interest payments and royalties from Latin America while approximately 9 billion dollars in "dirty money" was sent by the Latin American elite overseas via U.S. and European banks. U.S.-owned multinational corporations and banks in Latin America produce 2 to 3 times the rates of return than in the United States. In addition, U.S. enterprises that had relocated to Latin America were able to reduce labor costs by 70 to 80%. Petras notes that "the 'free market' policies generated diametrically opposing results. One result is the highest profits and presence in Latin America for the 20/21st century for U.S. Mac's (multinational corporations)" and he further asserts that "the poverty and stagnating of Latin America is a product of the concentration and centralization of wealth and expansion of the U.S." Petras, in our view, is correct in proclaiming that "the Bush regime's emphasis on military conquest is premised on the present economic deficits and future monopoly profits from direct control over Middle East and Venezuelan oil."

While the Bush administration would prefer that U.S. citizens view its quest for empire as responsible for the safety and security of the country—and for its ongoing prosperity—the recent "economic stimulus" crusade and three hundred billion dollar war budget has cultivated the ground for a bludgeoning deficit estimated to reach 4.1 trillion over the next ten years, never falling below 325 billion in any year and reaching an annual high of 530 billion by 2013 (Kogan, 2003). Since assuming the presidency, the total number of jobs lost under the Bush administration has reached an apocalyptic 2.5 million, marking the jobless rate at 6.4% (the highest since 1984) (Cornwell, 2003). While mainstream economists foretell a future of unprecedented economic recovery, gains in productivity are said to limit the number of jobs for working-class America. Peter Gosselin (2003) reports:

> The nation's non-financial corporations boosted their labor productivity—the amount of goods and services they can produce per hour of labor—by a record 5.5% last year, according to government statistics. But the working Americans who provided that labor saw their wages rise by less than one-third of that amount, and at less than half the pace of the hottest moments of the late '90's.

Meanwhile, Ben White of the *Washington Post* (2003) summarizes 2002 as an "Excellent Year for Executives" as executives from Standard and Poor's

Fortune 500 averaged a 17% increase in executive pay and benefits, lifting the median income to 1.2 million dollars. The 400 richest taxpayers have also reaped the benefits in the recent past, reporting an average income of 174 million dollars in 2000. The *New York Times* correspondent, David Cay Johnson (2003), reports that if Bush's tax cuts had been in place during fiscal year 2000, the richest segment of the population would have experienced a tax break of 17.5%, nearly half of their current tax bracket. Of course, this is the same kind of logic as we find in the assertion that we live in a "shareholder democracy" in which million of citizens supposedly own shares of corporate empires and therefore automatically participate in the decisions made by the board members. But the reality is that nearly 60% of U.S. citizens own no stock—not even a mutual fund or 401 (k)—and those who do have to face the fact that 90% of all corporate stock is owned by the wealthiest 10% of the population (Hightower, 2003, p. 3). Globally, the distance between the haves and have nots is perhaps more alarming. Larry Elliot of the *Guardian* writes, "The richest 1% of the world population (around 60 million) now receive as much income as the poorest 57%, while the income of the richest 25 million Americans is the equivalent of that of almost 2 billion of the world's poorest people." Of course, none of these statistics grace the pages of Bush's new Middle East propaganda rag, *Hi*.

THE SPECTACLE OF EMPIRE

> Savage: "I don't know why we don't use a bunker-buster bomb when he comes to the U.N. and just take [Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad] out with everyone in there." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

Employing a politics that counts on the stupefaction of a media-primed electorate, the Bush administration has marshaled the corporate media in the service of its foreign policy such that a general equivalence has been established in the public's mind between capitalism and democracy and the need to rid the world of ruling "evildoers" who refuse to give their citizens the benefit of a U.S. dominated "free" market capitalism. The corporate media that supports Bush extends beyond the border of the United States into other countries, such as Canada. Wherever the ruling class exist, they recognize their own, from the anti-Chavez supporter (an '*escualidos*') in Caracas, Venezuela, to the Bay Street business elite in Toronto, Canada, to New York's Wall Street banking establishment. The corporate media is the electronic gendarme of the ruling class. Canadian defender of the Bush ruling *junta*, columnist Kelly McParland of Canada's *National Post*, tried his best to deflect the Nigeria yellow cake uranium scandal by describing Bush

as a straight-talker and by desecrating Bush's opponents because they are, after all, mainly democrats, and therefore not objective or trustworthy. In the same conservative rag, U.S. columnist Charles Krauthammer (2003) attempted to paint the yellow cake controversy into the fading horizon of summertime scandals by claiming that Bush invaded Iraq to prevent a future 9/11. He raises again the familiar theme of the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 and how Bush, like Churchill before him, had issued a warning against the future actions of evil dictators. He argues that the U.N. sanctions would never have restrained Saddam or his sons. Krauthammer is right to mention Hitler's invasion of Poland, but for the wrong reason. Like Hitler, it was Bush who exaggerated the enemy threat, justifying a "preventative" war against a country that posed no immediate danger to its security (it's been said that German soldiers in Polish uniforms would fire at German lines to help justify a German invasion). Inspections clearly were working to prevent Iraq from building weapons of mass destruction. And we wonder why Krauthammer failed to mention the half million Iraqi civilians murdered by the U.S.-driven United nations sanctions, since more people died from these sanctions than all the weapons of mass destruction ever employed by Iraq, including the gas used to slaughter the Kurds during the 1980s when the United States was funding and supporting Saddam. Hundreds of weapons inspectors were ordered out of Iraq when it became obvious that a number of them were working for the CIA and helping to target Iraqi positions and that the United States was determined to launch its preventative war without Security Council approval. Krauthammer failed to mention the lucrative contracts for rebuilding Iraq given to U.S. firms and also ignored the attempts by the U.S. occupation force to impose a "democratic" counsel that will rubber stamp the privatization of Iraq's oil, industries and ministries. Iraq will possess a fig leaf ownership but the naked power brokers will be Western oil firms.

The U.S. media climate today is literally suffused with its neoliberal agenda, with very little space devoid of its ideological cheerleading. Not only has Bush acted like an emperor who has received the laurel wreath (when he should be wearing a wreath of myrtle, signaling in ancient Roman times a hollow victory over an unlawful enemy or one that constituted an inferior force), he has also skillfully used the corporate media to present his foreign policy measures in light of Biblical history. We know what democracy means for Iraq from the taste of liberation that former Proconsul Paul Bremer has given them. Liberation for Iraq means bringing it into line with global efforts at trade liberalization. Elbaum (2003) reports:

> On May 28 Bremer unilaterally canceled a U.S. supervised mayoral election in Najaf. And the *New York Times* reported on June 23 that Bremer vowed to

> immediately sell off at least 40 Iraqi government-owned companies, to encourage foreign investment and to turn Iraq into a "model of free trade and deregulation" (pp. 1-2).

Furthermore, it isn't exactly a good advertisement for democracy when 18 U.S. corporations that received contracts by the Bush administration to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq are known to have egregious human rights, environmental, business, and social responsibility records. In fact, Bechtel Corporation was one of two dozen companies who supplied Iraq with one or more forms of banned weapons, military logistics and construction. MCI-Worldcom, a corporation that was granted a 30 million dollar contact to build a wireless network in Iraq, perpetrated the largest corporate fraud in U.S. history (Eisencher, 2003). U.S. corporations are privatizing Iraqi resources and denying Iraqis the right to form independent trade unions and to organize, bargain and strike.

As the Bush administration contemplates which patriotic image it will produce next to captivate an already stupefied American audience, George W. plans to disinter himself from the rubble of ground zero and become reborn as the remaker of American schooling. Segueing into the 2004 election with a team of eight education propaganda advisers, and with an estimated cost of half a million dollars (includes salary and benefits only), Bush *hijo* will hit the production stage and send the message that he is indeed attuned to domestic priorities (Davis, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Communications and Outreach team will undoubtedly stage Bush's reelection campaign by placing educational reform as a top priority while minimizing the nation's economic downfall, camouflaging legislation that renounces civil liberties, and rewriting the ongoing slaughter of "dissidents" and U.S. forces as the bloody march of freedom and democracy that is being waged in Afghanistan and Iraq to the tune of nearly 5 billion dollars a month (United Press International, 2003) as winning the war on terror.

The media will most certainly manufacture the humanitarian emphasis of the NCLB by focusing on the crisis of education prior to NCLB, and its alleged remedies through the "tough love" ploys of Bush *hijo* when he became famous as Governor of Texas (Bush was known as the "Texacutioner" for the number of executions carried out under his watch). Audiences have already been subjected to the soundbyte rhetoric, "leave no child behind," "accountability with results," and "compassionate conservatism." Secretary of education Rod Paige (2002) recently addressed a ballroom full of educators and stated: "Creating good schools for our children is more than a matter of doing what is morally right. It is a matter of maintaining our national security, building on our prosperity, preserving our

democracy, and strengthening our great country." We wonder what this statement means when read against the U.S. Justice Department's policy on racial profiling in federal law enforcement that allows racial profiling when it is related to national security at border enforcement. Although none will be charged with any terrorist-related crime, thousands of Arab, Muslim and South Asian men will be deported even though all of them complied with the Department's "antiterrorist" registration program (Garcia, 2004).

Paige's statement indicates that not only is the nation bound by a moral conviction to "leave no child behind" in relation to the social relations of production of capitalist society and its logic of profit maximization, but also that the education system must support a neoliberal citizenship on behalf of democracy, freedom and global dominance. A report by the U.S. Commission on National Security (a conservative panel of commissioners that includes Newt Gingrich in its ranks) further elaborates: "If the United States does not stop and reverse negative educational trends—the general teacher shortage, and the downward spiral in science and math education and performance—it will be unable to maintain its position of global leadership over the next quarter century" (U.S. Commission on National Security, 2000). Meanwhile, IBM chairman Lou Gestner, author of *Reinventing Education: Entrepreneurship in America's Public Schools*, a powerful position paper that played into the development of NCLB, describes schoolchildren as "human capital," teachers as "sellers in a marketplace" and the public school system as a "monopoly" (Metcalf, 2002).

Vowing to save humanity and the American people from terror and pledging to expand the circle of wealth and opportunity across the globe, the actions of the Bush administration do not indicate that the general public's interest is foremost on its mind. Of course, this mirrors a pattern that we are seeing worldwide as economic disparities are widening, disease and dysentery is spreading, and nearly 250 million children around the world work—half of which have never seen the inside of a classroom (The International Conference, 2003). In education, the "moral panic" of a "crisis in the public schools" sets the stage for broad sweeping reform that will benefit the few. With a focus on the nation's poorest and allegedly disenfranchised "minority" student populations, the Bush administration is following an imminent post 9/11 trajectory—call the nation and the world into crisis (without recognizing its own role in crisis development), instill neo-liberal economics as the pathway to freedom and democracy across the world (with or without consent) and claim to have saved the poor and immiserated from their own demise. For education, we simply have to read the No Child Left Behind Act to grasp the script.

NCLB—KEY ELEMENTS

NCLB can be summed up as the following. First, it imposes standardized annual testing in language arts and math in grades 3-8 on an annual basis. Science was added in 2006. Based on annual test scores, NCLB prescribes an accountability schema, "adequate yearly progress", for every state in the nation. The schema focuses on sanctions for failures. Schools that fail to improve their test scores must use federal funds to pay for extracurricular tutoring and the possibility of transferring to another so-called high-achieving school. Sanctions encompass a wide variety of activities but in the most salient terms, they open the doors to corporate and faith-based sponsorship of instructional services—a move that is unprecedented at the federal level. NCLB imposes numerous other regulations on teaching practices in the realm of literacy, pushing forward a phonics-based initiative that is largely extrapolated from SRA/Mc-Graw-Hill's business plan (see Metcalf, 2003) and whose proponents include members of the Christian right movement that refer to phonics as "Judeo-Christian" while "discovering language through discussion and reading indicate Secular Humanism" (Paterson, 2002). And finally, NCLB mandates that local authorities not only provide access to military recruiters on their campuses but that they provide them with student names and contact information. Marking an additional unprecedented shift in education policy, schools that receive federal financial support risk having their funds withheld if they do not provide access to military recruiters. Prior to the legislation, one-third the nation's high schools refused the military access to student information (Wells, 2002). San Francisco (CA) and Portland (OE), for example, had board policies against military recruitment because of its discriminatory policies against gays and lesbians. The only true option provided to students who do not wish to be contacted by the military is to have their parents initiate restricted access to their children, but as David Goodman (2002) reports:

> Recruiters are up-front about their plans to use school lists to aggressively pursue students through mailings, phone calls, and personal visits—even if parents object. "The only thing that will get us to stop contacting the family is if they call their congressman," says Major Johannes Paraan, head U.S. Army recruiter of Vermont and northeastern New York. "Or maybe if the kid died, we'll take them off our list."

We wish to underscore the fact that military recruitment does not take place on every high school in the nation. Key to the legislation is the specification that only high schools that receive federal funding are required to comply. The largest federally funded program, Title I, only provides fund-

ing to schools with a level of poverty of 40% or greater. Other programs are accompanied by similar regulations, in light of the fact that the Federal Education Act was conceived as a tool to equalize educational services between the nation's poor and wealthy populations and to a great extent it continues to serve a primary function in the education of poor and working-class children. Unfortunately for the poor and working-class, the "function" in this case includes increased regulation and control, and now, military recruitment. Through "niche recruiting" the Pentagon locks its jaws on growing minority and poor student populations (i.e. Latinos and African Americans) that do not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college—either as a result of immigration status or lack of financial resources (Jordan, 1999). In order to recruit greater numbers of minority student populations, the Army is contemplating various options to seriously attract otherwise marginalized segments of the population. By eliminating so-called "cultural bias" from screening exams to softening requirements on high school completion, the Army seeks to attract students on the cusp of falling into Marx's reserve army of labor. This is consistent with current military demographics. A recent report by the *New York Times* describes the skewed composition of the U.S. military. As Halbfinger and Holmes (2003) report,

> A survey of the American military's endlessly compiled and analyzed demographics paints a picture of a fighting force that is anything but a cross section of America. With minorities overrepresented and the wealthy and the underclass essentially absent, with political conservatism ascendant in the officer corps and Northeasterners fading from the ranks, America's 1.4 million-strong military seems to resemble the makeup of a two-year commuter or trade school outside Birmingham or Biloxi far more than that of a ghetto or barrio or four-year university in Boston.

It should come as little surprise that the nation's Elementary and Secondary Education Act includes a military recruitment provision. Over the past several years Congress had quietly attempted to insert the provision but their efforts were met with resistance. In fact, the military provision made it into the final versions of NCLB only weeks prior to closed-door negotiations between members of the House and Senate. While educators tried to influence the administration's position on testing and accountability, virtually no one paid attention to the military recruitment provision. Ken Saltman (2003) best describes the effects of such policies on students when he states that, "Students are being increasingly defined by their future capacities to serve the nation's military as it takes on a more overt imperial mission and continues the state of permanent war begun with the war on terror."

Aside from increased militarization, NCLB carries legislative provisions that clearly pave the path for privatization through what is highly regarded

across the country as a testing and accountability scheme that will pit a substantial proportion of the nation's poor schools against the increasing likelihood of failure. According to William Tabb (2001), the neoliberal model in education contains as a necessary element for the full marketization of public education, the complete destruction of the quality of public sector education. He further highlights three elements involved in the neoliberal model of education that are worth repeating: "Making the provision of education more cost-efficient by commodifying the product; testing performance by standardizing the experience in a way that allows for multiple-choice testing of results; and focusing on marketable skills." While we agree that the move toward commodifying education has become a cardinal constituent of reform in NCLB, —i.e., relying on the market to "fix" educational services—we are also alerted by the testimonies of conference participants for the International Conference Against War and in Defense of Public Education. There, concerned educators from around the world declared:

> Understanding that the processes of decentralization/privatization aren't fundamentally about "transforming education into a commodity"; first and foremost, they are about destroying public education as an institution on a world scale. Only a small part of the education market—that which deals with solvent clients—can be profitable for the private organizations. (The International Conference, 2003).

In effect, the type of privatization that is making itself self-evident through NCLB is one that imposes a dominating regulatory role in education—a role that runs contrary to what the Bush administration has termed the New Federalism (Federalism in the sense of returning power to states in what is often called "laboratories of democracy")—as a means of facilitating the process of privatization (if the public cannot do it on its own, then private industry can essentially fix education through market principles). Not only does education serve as a commodity that creates an estimated global price tag of 2.2 trillion dollars, but in the logic of privatization that dominates the Bush administration, its role as one of the publicly constituted and governed institutions that seeks to transform society into a collective and more democratic society is no longer compatible with neoliberal capitalism's vampire thirst for endless profits. The Bush administration has betrayed the classical bourgeois liberal language of education as an institution that cultivates the needs and desires of young people that develops their vernacular for describing and transforming the world that opens their eyes to the past and present, and calls them to the future leaders of our planet. The lofty ideals of bourgeois democracy are reduced to an unvarnished appeal to defending and extending global marketplaces.

While we, as Marxist humanists, place our hope in the ability of young people to participate in anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle, "education reform" in the neoliberal optic of the NCLB, does not share the interests of citizens–at–large, does not relate to the lived experiences of the poor, and does not provide adequate opportunities for young people to develop into critical thinkers and active participants in the development of a society freed from capital's value form of labor. The Bush administration has called education an issue of "national security" and an instrument of "economic prosperity." Given that there exists no neutral administrative science of organized human learning that goes under the name of "education," whose interests are being served? Whereas NCLB purports to focus on the poor and on students of color, it is likely that the legislation will run congruent with the reproduction of capitalist social relations and the global division of labor in general and thus benefit the wealthy and regulate the poor. And contribute to the ongoing reproduction of asymmetrical relations of power and privilege within the overriding orbit of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.

The most likely benefactors of Bush's annual testing and accountability schemes are titled the "Big Four." This refers to the testing industry that comprises four major testing companies: Harcourt Educational Measurement; CTB McGraw-Hill; Riverside Publishing; and NCS Pearson. Harcourt, McGraw-Hill and Riverside write 96% of the exams administered at the state level while NCS Pearson leads the nation in scoring (PBS, 2003). With a testing market that has an annual value of anywhere between 400 and 700 million dollars, the Big Four companies have year-end earnings that top off in the billions, and are primed to expand their industry globally with the United States pushing forward a global testing industry through negotiations with the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Stephen Metcalf describes the snug relationship between the testing conglomerates (particularly McGraw-Hill) and the Bush administration (see also McLaren, 2003). He cites Harold McGraw, the chairman of McGraw-Hill who addressed a White House audience with the words: "It's a great day for education, because we now have substantial alignment among all the key constituents—the public, the education community, business and political leaders—that results matter." The focus on results is clearly a focus on testing. Without testing, there are no results, and without results, there is no need to pay for the multibillion dollar testing mandate.

Tests are constructed with a bell curve rationality; half of the student population is expected to pass them and the other half to fail them. Cutoff scores are placed irrespective of a student's linguistic background, class background, or national origin. All students are treated as a monolithic,

heterosexist, Eurocentric and middle class entity. Without addressing the plethora of information on the pitfalls of testing (an issue with which this article does not have space to address) it is clear that in the eyes of most families, a 44-percentile ranking justifies labeling their children as inadequate while a 96-percentile ranking qualifies a student for gifted and talented education. Students are sorted into varying degrees of intelligence categories based on single test scores and both the Bush administration and the testing industry has but one response: "results matter." The result, however, is that a growing number of school districts forcibly discharge students that threaten to bring down their school and district-wide testing averages. Steve Light (2003) documents this phenomenon in New York City Schools. He writes,

> In the most recent revelation, the *New York Times* disclosed a massive undercounting of dropouts in New York City. While the Department of education reported 12,885 dropouts in the class of 2002, or 20 percent of the class total, an additional 14, 891 students were categorized as "discharged" to other cities or to adult programs. Most of these dischared students are in fact believed to have been forced out, which would make the true drop-out rate 25 to 30 percent. Including these "pushouts," the actual graduation rate for those in the city who began 9th grade in the fall of 1998 would be 39 percent rather than the 51 percent reported (1).

The testing regime has garnered the interests of various constituencies, including heads of state and school districts that—as a result of plundering budgets—do not have the economic capacity to institute yearly tests. But the brunt of Bush *hijo's* reforms are wholeheartedly felt—as evidenced in New York City—by students that fail to represent value or even the possibility of generating value for a school's or district's accountability index.

Decades ago, the nation rebelled against the use of test scores designed to label children as mentally retarded, recognizing that those arcane testing methods had a disparate yet irrevocably deleterious impact on children of color. Black students remain overrepresented in Mental Retardation categories and Latinos are on the rise as well (Artiles, 2003), as we now officially view testing as the remedy to society's ills, as the answer to the development of a stronger and better workforce, as the educational remedy for national security. The absurdity of these arguments casts a mind-numbing pallor over educators while the general public remains relatively complacent, seemingly defenceless against the rhetoric and ideology that "test results are all that matter."

TOWARD A GRASSROOTS EDUCATION

> Nationally syndicated radio host Neal Boortz: "I want you to think for a moment of how incompetent and stupid and worthless, how — that's right, I used those words—how incompetent, how ignorant, how worthless is an adult that can't earn more than the minimum wage? You have to really, really, really be a pretty pathetic human being to not be able to earn more than the human wage. Uh—human, the minimum wage." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/

In other writings, McLaren et al. (see McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2003; McLaren & Jaramillo, in press; McLaren et al., 2004.) have called for a Marxist-driven transformation of critical pedagogy known as "revolutionary critical pedagogy." Here, we again draw attention to the primacy but not exclusivity of Marxist theory in revolutionary critical pedagogy, and also focus on the various manifestations of grassroots education movements in response to the privatization and businessification of schooling and the attempts by the Bush administration to create the educational underpinnings of a neoliberal citizenship.

Critical educators in the United States should take heart from the fact that 94,000 unionized teachers in South Korea are exercising their rights under South Korean education law to supplement their teaching materials with what is being referred to as "unconventional teaching materials" in the social studies curriculum. Materials include a factual description of the effects of the Gulf War on Iraqi civilians, visual footage of antiwar protests, and additional materials that, according to one teacher, are intended to "teach students about the consequences of war and why humankind should oppose any kind of war" (Demick, 2003). The union's position has not traveled uncontested, but it is evidence of the type of dialogue that at minimum should be taking place in our public schools.

Some grassroots mobilizing efforts are underway in Los Angeles, as the Center for Education and Justice (CEJ)—a coalition of parents, teachers, students, and other activists—has mobilized the Los Angeles Unified School Board to oppose high stakes testing that would limit access by seniors to high school diplomas when they have not had sufficient opportunity to learn. What we wish to highlight here is the importance of collective decision-making and the power of members of grassroots constituencies to enter debates and forums where they can contest curriculum and policies largely constructed unilaterally and with the interests of corporate America at the forefront. Danilo Streck (2003) defines grassroots education as "a pedagogical movement founded on the explicit commitment to create a more just society and which, therefore, always eludes ready-made schemes,

being reinvented with and by the people on the move." Streck further advocates the need to establish grassroots educational movements across the world, and to develop global networks where new parameters for the production of knowledge are created.

We realize that capitalism is not something that can be fixed, or humanized, because it's very "value form" is premised on the exploitation of human labor. We are, in some sense, tied to the mast like Ulysses as the sirens of consumption beckon us to a fool's paradise. Consequently, critical educators need to pose to their progressive liberal counterparts questions that include the following: Can liberal reformers—even stalwart World Bank dissenters such as Jeff Sachs, George Soros and former Senior Vice President and chief economist of the World Bank and Nobel Prize recipient, Joseph Stiglitz (2002)—rebuild and redirect the capitalist financial system in the interests of the poor and powerless? Can they prevent the rationality of financial capital—which is more interested in short term profits than investing in fixed capital and long-term technological progress—from prevailing over what is rational from the standpoint of society as a whole? Can they prevent the suffering of workers due to the dismantling of protectionist trade barriers? Can they stop privatization from resulting in oligopolies and monopolies? Can they adequately safeguard against the human tragedies that follow economic downsizing? Can they prevent the chaos that results from massive capital inflows and outflows? Can they stop the IMF from bailing out international investors and granting elites the opportunity to protect their financial assets by massive capital flight, while placing the burden of repaying loans, in the words of Tony Smith (2002), "on the very group that benefited least from them, working men and women?" Do they have the power to prevent the gangster capitalists of Russia, for instance, from buying up most of the privatized assets and natural resources of the country? Can they stop the multilateral agencies from advancing the particular interests of the United States? Can they prevent new nation state-driven racisms that follow in the wake of the new U.S. phallomilitary warrior nationalism currently providing ideological ballast for its practices of primitive accumulation via cluster bombing Iraq? Can they transcend the creation of plutocratic political subjectivities from above in order to combat the uneven development of epidemics such as AIDS and SARS in the equal opportunity inevitability of death? Can they reverse the damage to the poor as a result of financial market liberalization accompanied by high interest rates? Can they reverse the systematic tendencies to crises of overcapacity or overaccumulation or the structural mechanisms generating uneven development? Can they prevent speculative bubbles from expanding and bursting? Can the balance of power in capital/wage labor relations shift in

favor of labor? Can the fundamental dynamic of capitalist property relations be challenged? Questions such as these cut to the very root of the capitalist system.

From the perspective of our analysis, honest answers to these questions will lead to a resounding "no." Liberal capitalist reformers in the main fail to comprehend "that money is the alien form of appearance of abstract labor" and they refuse to challenge the money fetish as the master trope of capitalist social relations (Smith, 2002). Of course, liberal reform efforts to make global capitalism more "humane" are welcomed—such as debt relief and a more balanced trade agenda, adequate laws enforcing competition, the creation of adequate safety nets and job creation programs, state expenditures to stimulate the economy, appropriate regulatory structures for trade liberalization, making loans available to countries to buy insurance against fluctuations in the international capital markets, cutting back on the bailout packages by the I.M.F., government oversight committees to ensure monopoly powers are not abused, restrictions on speculative real estate lending—but it still remains the case that in the last instance they cannot prevent financial disaster from being visited upon developing countries (with the understanding that 'developing' countries are usually 'overexploited' countries) or the poor in general because these problems are inherent in the system of property and productive relations that constitute the very blood and gristle of the capitalist system (Smith, 2002).

We do not agree with the position that a market-capitalist system is consistent with a just and decent society. Neoliberalism's image is one that denies any alternative to the status quo since it purports to have provided humanity with its highest level of development (McChesney, 1998). In the following quotation, Alex Callinicos (2003), clearly articulates the absurdity of capital in all of its reverberations (neoliberalism, Keynesianism, etc.):

> A market economy violates the requirements of justice. Individuals under capitalism do not have equal access to advantage. Not only are access to productive resources and the distribution of wealth and income grossly unequal, but individuals' life chances are drastically affected for both the better and the worse by processes outside their control—in particular the fluctuations of the market. Think of the fortunes made, but also the lives destroyed by the financial booms and busts of the neo-liberal era (p.116).

Later, Callinicos warns that "the concentrations of economic power that capitalism generates gravely restrict the scope of democracy, since most citizens are deprived of any say in crucial decisions affecting their lives" (2003, p.118).

The critical tradition in education has become irrevocably alienated from its Marxist roots, and has undergone a disparaging rejection of the insurrec-

tionary energies of critical theorists since such energies have, over the years, become suffused with the accelerated transformation of a bipolar cold war politics into a unilateral domination by the United States. The consequent diminishment of revolutionary momentum and the insult delivered to it via the embourgeoisement of critical pedagogy has prevented educators from acknowledging sufficiently the class character of U.S. culture within the vertical structure of capitalist society. It has fostered a neo-Kantian claim to the superiority of bourgeois thought and subjectivity that condemns the masses to the ranks of uncivilized subalternity. Clearly in this so-called information age, when knowledge becomes a major factor in production, when the knowledge composition of commodities has increased, the fundamental relation between labor and capital remains the same, as the dynamic of capitalist accumulation has not been transformed so radically that we can boast that we now live in a post-capitalist society. But it is true that alarming numbers of workers are being thrown out of the sphere of production, because their cost to the capitalists far exceeds the value of their labor power. This is largely due to advances in computer technology that helps to cut costs (e.g., workers) and raise productivity, as factories are created in countries with cheap labor, weak unions, and relaxed environmental restrictions, resulting in fewer jobs and lower wages. The means of production is still owned by the capitalists but fewer workers are required to participate in the production process. Workers thrown out of a job cannot survive and contribute to the social wealth so long as private property relations prevail. What is needed is a system based on cooperation and sharing which will increase the collective social wealth. We call this system socialism.

We challenge the official social imaginary and rationality of the NCLB through the political and pedagogical imperatives of revolutionary critical pedagogy. In our view, the inexhaustible fountainhead of working-class creativity can be channelled into efforts to resist and transform capitalist schooling that has been irretrievably debased by the logic of neoliberalism in both its regulated and disarticulated forms. New social movements linked to anticorporate and anticapitalist protest augments the opening up of the political environment to new spaces of critique and activism. We seek a supercession of capitalism by socialism as the beginning of a new history of social relations.

We need more than pamphleteers and protesters to bring about another social order. We need critical citizens capable of and willing to exercise their agency on behalf of a world without capitalist exploitation. A central challenge for critical educators today is to reject the dematerialized understanding of the sociohistorical ground upon which the Bush regime rests its

case for the NCLB. Needed is a language of analysis that will enable teachers, students and families to unpack the real objectives of the Bush regime's educational initiatives in light of its adherence to policies and neoliberal imperialist practices as the foundation of its dominant optic. Teachers need to reject their role as amanuenses of history, as clerks of testing regimes, as custodians of empire, and assume a role of active shapers of the historical present. Of course, educators need to realize that the problem of exploitation, domination, oppression and imperialst aggression and war exends beyond the Bush gang. It is the continuation of capitalism that is the underlying issue. The notion that what we are seeing is a takeover of U.S. democracy, a hijacking of justice by a single cabal of neoconservative militarists falsely delinks current history from the entire imperialist/capitalist system. Those who bemoan the fact that the United States has transformed into a global version of *American Psycho* with the election of Bush, and is acting like an empire when it should act as a responsible democracy are really expressing the ideology of imperialism themselves, rather than contesting it. They are recuperating the very logic they are attacking because they presume the ruling class can become divided among themselves and actually choose a political course other than empire. To reduce U.S. imperialism to a false choice of the Bush cabal is to exercise an apologetics of imperialism since it presumes that the U.S. role of sole superpower is one that has not been planned for decades and one that could ever be abandoned by the U.S., especially in the current climate of terrorist war, and the struggle for recourses such as gas, oil and water. That the Bush junta has given the criminal Elliot Abrams a free hand in planning a "black operations" to destabilize the Iranian government by means of propaganda, disinformation and manipulation of Iran's currency and international financial transactions, is not a surprise to us, given the history of covert actions undertaken by so many U.S. administrations.

While we need to transform the ancillary contradictions of capitalism that result in the antagonisms of racism, sexism and homophobia, we need to first acknowledge that capitalism does not need these antagonisms to reproduce itself. What must be challenged is the location of the subject of labor in relationship to the ownership of the means of production. This challenge must not only be local or regional but transnational. The pattern of global pillaging of the poor countries by the rich is destined to continue unabated while the poorest developing countries will be left to languish in ever increasing poverty.

Critical educators need to develop a revolutionary critical pedagogy whose arena of praxis puts the well being of the developing countries squarely on the agenda. Because the well-being of developing countries

constitutes, in the final analysis, the preconditions of our own well-being. In this regard, critical educators need to consider citizenship outside of a narrowly nationalist sense in a manner that situates them in a larger practice of global citizenship and solidarity.[5] Our own (admittedly modest) work for the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela underscores our support for a permanent worldwide socialist revolution. In addition, critical educators need to reject the postmodernist and postcolonial disavowal of Marxism, which is part and parcel of the claim that a Eurocentric absolutism underlies all modern critical thought and social discourse. We need to advance our project of social transformation with the confidence that it can be built upon what John O'Neill (1995) calls "common sense sociability" that is able to "discern truth and falsity, freedom and slavery, justice and injustice and to hold these distinctions on behalf of anyone, anywhere, defended and preserved in any future legacy of humankind" (p. 196). This project will need to reject the admonitions of post-Marxists that there no longer exist any grand narratives capable of giving ballast to common sense. John O'Neill says it best:

> Postmodernism addresses us with a series of one-line observations—always borrowed or recycled—to which are attached pictures that claim to represent nothing but reproduction. In addressing us—men or women—these one-liners repeat the ideological voice of the system they cannot describe or analyze. Otherwise, Marx might have bought a camera. The monotony of postmodernist aesthetics is bearable only in the circles of radical chic. Lacking patronage, these groups massage the market with its own products seen from a different angle in the same museums and galleries seen from the same angle of radical chic. In all this, nothing is learned except the conscription of the cave with disciplines us through the eye's ignorance. Capitalist rhetoric cannot be imploded by the rhetoric of capitalism in which the techniques of critical analysis are themselves hostage to the debasement of vision without knowledge. (1995, p.198)

Schooling has become another business partnership with capital where the historical needs of capital are fulfilled: the creation of a pliant workforce that will not question the prevailing arrangements of social reproduction and the selling of a person's labor power in return for a wage. Our challenge is to show that, under capitalism, this exchange between labor power and wages is not equal. Our struggle is one that is driven not by a master narrative of liberation, but by a meta-narrative of hope and solidarity. It constitutes a project that is both collective and democratic and that refuses to debase its vision or to sow the seeds of freedom in the ground of despair bequeathed to us by capitalism. In short, it is a struggle that attempts to de-

naturalize capitalist social relations by struggling to transform them on the path to a socialist alternative.

NOTES

This is a revised chapter that first appeared as McLaren, P. & Jaramillo, N., (2004), Neoliberal citizenship, new imperialism and federal education policy: A critical analysis. J. ODonnel, M. Pruyn & R. Chavez, *Social Justice in These Times* (pp. 265-292). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

[1] The well-trodden path of U.S. colonialism takes us to the Spanish-American war and the conquest of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines and the occupation of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua. More covert attempts at regime change involved Iran, Chile, Congo, Guatemala and Vietnam.

[2] The No Child Left Behind Act is largely a compilation of two bills previously presented in the Senate and House of Representatives. If interested, peruse the Joseph Lieberman Three R's bill in 106th Congress and the HR 1, the Straight A's Bill in the House.

[3] The U.S. support for the Mujahadeen fighters actually began before the invasion for the Soviet Union; in fact, the Soviet invasion was partly a result of the U.S. support for fanatical Islamic groups.

[4] From the deck of the Abraham Lincoln, Bush triumphantly declared the war over; the fall of Baghdad had culminated the one-month long military coup.

[5] Fatally undermining the political efficacy of critical pedagogy is its preferred habit of speaking of the "West" or of "empire" without specifying the role of capitalist production or calling for an end to capitalism's value form of labor. We disagree that Marxism's celebrated capacity for critique is "presumed merely to notify rather than undermine the narrative of capitalism" (Lazarus, 2002). Because Marx's vision of emancipation clearly specifies "the globality of captialism as an historical foundation" (Lazarus, 2002, p. 63). Neil Lazarus (2002) makes the important point that Marxism is not internal to "modernist" narratives of modernity. According to August Nimitz (2002), Marx and Engels "were first and foremost revolutionaries who viewed the entire globe as their theatre of operations." Not only did they view the class struggle globally, they posited that the revolutionary party must necessarily be interdependent.

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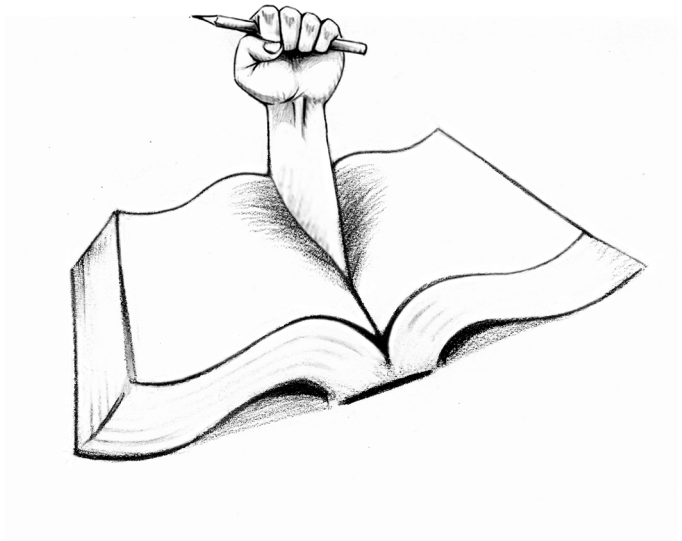
With Aleida Guevara March, the daughter of Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba



Continental drifters: the authors resting on stones from the Mayan temple at Palenque, near the Usumacinta River in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Palenque, called Lakam Ha (Big Water), was the capital of the Classic period Maya city-state of B'aakal (Photo by Jose Luis Acosta Crespo)

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, LATINO/A EDUCATION, AND THE POLITICS OF CLASS STRUGGLE



TEACHING IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

> Fox News host John Gibson: "Do your duty. Make more babies. That's a lesson drawn out of two interesting stories over the last couple of days. First, a story yesterday that half of the kids in this country under five years old are minorities. By far, the greatest number are Hispanic. You know what that means? Twenty-five years and the majority of the population is Hispanic. Why is that? Well, Hispanics are having more kids than others. Notably, the ones Hispanics call 'gabachos'—white people—are having fewer." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at:
>
> <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

DUE TO THE FACT THAT CRITICAL PEDAGOGY CONSTITUTES A NARRATIVE OF UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION (at least those versions that have escaped attempts by post-modernists and neoliberals to domesticate them), critics on both the political left and the right not only have dismissed its politics as yet another example of the colonizing incarnations of the Western educational canon but also have rejected it as a valid means for social transformation. They have accused it of possessing, among other toxic attributes, an outdated and historically discredited working-class triumphalism premised on vulgar economic reductionism that should have been abandoned long before Fukuyama (1989) famously announced that the teething pains of capitalism were over and that liberal capitalist democracy had finally ascended to the zenith of humankind's ideological achievements through its ultimate victory over its conquered rival ideologies of hereditary monarchy, fascism, and more recently communism.[1] Of course, the primary object of attack is Marxist theory itself, which has been making some significant inroads of late within the critical pedagogy literature (thanks to scholars such as Glenn Rikowski, Dave Hill, Ramin Farahmandpur, Noah Delissovoy, Mike Cole, Gregory Martin, Deb Kelsh, Juha Suoranta, and others), more specifically as the central theoretical armature of the critique of the globalization of capitalism and the pauperization of the working masses in the wake of recent 'free trade' agreements and the economic and military imperialism of the Bush Jr. administration. In this chapter, we attempt to discuss critical pedagogy in light of what we perceive to be the importance and efficacy of Marxist theory, particularly within the Marxist humanist tendency. We have chosen to accomplish this as part of a larger discussion of Latina/o education in the United States.

Our central position is that by grounding critical pedagogy in Marx's critique of political economy, educators are better able to challenge not only the exploitation of human labor that is endemic to capitalist society with its

law of value, private property, and production for monetary return but also the assault on civil rights and human dignity that can be traced to the policy-making practices of the Anglosphere, not least of which has been directed at Latina/o populations through institutionalized forms of White supremacy and capitalist patriarchy.

Capitalist society requires that we routinely perform our labor in schools, in factories, in churches, at the voting booth, and on the picket line and that we educate ourselves to enhance our labor power (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; McLaren & Jaramillo, 2002, 2004; McLaren & Martin, 2003; see also Rikowski, 2001a, 2001b). Consequently, we have borrowed the term used by Paula Allman (1999, 2001)—*revolutionary critical pedagogy*—to emphasize critical pedagogy as a means for reclaiming public life that is under the relentless assault of the corporatization and privatization of the life world, including the corporate-academic complex. This is not a reclamation of the public sphere through an earnest reinvigoration of the social commons but its socialist transformation (McLaren, in press). The term *revolutionary critical pedagogy* seeks to identify the realm of unfreedom as that in which labor is determined by external utility and to make the division of labor coincide with the free vocation of each individual and the association of free producers, where the force of authority does not flow from the imposition of an external structure but from the character of the social activities in which individuals are freely and consciously engaged. Freedom as we are conceiving it, is freedom from necessity. Here, the emphasis is not only on denouncing the manifest injustices of neo-liberal capitalism, critiquing the current global crisis of overproduction, stagnation, and environmental ruin and on creating a counterforce to neo-liberal ideological hegemony but also on establishing the conditions for new social arrangements that transcend the false opposition between the market and the state.

Accompanied by what some have described as the "particular universalism" of Marxist analysis as opposed to the "universal particularism" of the postmodernists, critical educators collectively assert—all with their own unique focus and distinct disciplinary trajectory—that the term *social justice* all too frequently operates as a cover for legitimizing capitalism or for tacitly admitting to or resigning oneself to its brute intractability. Consequently, it is essential to develop a counterpoint to the way social justice is conceptualized and practiced in progressive education. This stipulates not only a critical examination of the epistemological and axiological dimensions of social democracy but also a contrapuntal critique of the political economy of capitalist schooling so that teachers and students may begin to reclaim public life from its location within the corporate-academic complex

in particular and the military-industrial complex in general while acknowledging in both cases their violent insinuation into the social division of labor and capitalism's law of value. Amid the Bush regime's star-spangled war on hope, "full spectrum dominance" and freedom, post-Marxists and anti-Marxist educators have intensified their assault on anti-capitalist perspectives within the field of critical pedagogy. It is not surprising that this is the case, especially since Bush has declared the "war on terror" to be a war against regimes under the gnarled thumb of Old Scratch, regimes which the boy emperor has likened to totalitarian (i.e., Marxist) regimes of the Cold War. Consider his commentary during a West Point address in 2002:

> Because the war on terror will require resolve and patience, it will also require firm moral purpose. In this way our struggle is similar to the Cold War. Now, as then, our enemies are totalitarians, holding a creed of power with no place for human dignity. Now, as then, they seek to impose a joyless conformity to control every life and all of life. (cited in Domke, 2004, p. 112)

One wonders how the illegal and murderous deployment of cluster bombs, depleted uranium ordinances, white phosphorous shells, MK 77, SMAW-NE thermobaric urban destruction bombs, and invasions of sovereign countries such as Iraq that kill, by some estimates, in excess of a hundred thousand civilians, contributes to what Bush Jr. refers to above as "human dignity". It has not escaped our notice that once the evil empires of the Cold War fell, new ones were created quickly to fill in the gap. They were created so that the actions of local despots of 'rogue regimes', such as Saddam Hussein and Manuel Noriega, could serve as justification for U.S. military intervention. The real despots are of a much larger scale—Bush, Blair and members of the transnational elite—but you won't find them sitting in the dock for war crimes. You will find them at their vacation villas sunbathing their buffed and thonged consciences in the glare of unreason and imperial arrogance.

J. Martin Rochester's (2003) "Critical Demogogues: The Writings of Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren," published in the Hoover Institute's flagship education journal, *Education Next*, constitutes a representative neoconservative assault on critical pedagogy. Demogoguery apparently is only acceptable when it is practiced by the leader of the world's sole superpower. A pedagogy designed to challenge the lies and deceptions of the U.S. ruling class and to counter the prevailing influence of neoliberal reform efforts (especially given the enfeebling efforts of the National Educational Association and the American Federation of Teachers to redress

standards-based accountability measures) must be denounced in the name of democracy and objectivity by both liberals and neoconservatives.

One of Rochester's (2003) charges against critical pedagogy is that it contributes to the development of a left-wing anti-intellectualism by means of emphasizing ideology over inquiry. For Rochester (2003), critical pedagogy is nothing less than a "chiliastic movement." Instead of participating in what are alleged to be critical pedagogy's pernicious forms of ideological indoctrination, Rochester sets the goal for teaching in terms redolent of a mawkish eulogy, maintaining that teachers must "reaffirm education as that which promotes," in the words of an 1830 Yale University report, "The Discipline and Furniture of the Mind." Rochester contends that it is impossible to teach a social justice agenda and at the same time foster a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding, a love of learning, and the tools for pursuing that learning. The latter, not the former, should be the first principle of education. The debates over values and truths should, Rochester argues, "be guided by a disposition toward objectivity, the spirit of free inquiry, and academic integrity rather than by chiliastic movements." According to this assessment—what some critical theorists might refer to as a suprahistorical ethics of pure intentionality—not even history-shaking movements such as a national literacy campaign can ever be guided by anything but craven self-interest, and therefore, revolution always makes for bad pedagogy. What fails to get explored by Rochester is exactly what is meant by the term *ideology*. As criticalists know, to employ ideologically free research practices is a Tantalusian illusion. The theoretical languages we use in our pursuit of knowledge about the social world become attributes of the actions of that world, they become part of our own self-comprehension. There is no laissez faire, universal-neutral methodology as theory and fact stand in a dialectical relationship to each other. Seemingly objective facts are always already socially and historically produced or mediated (often as the reified thought of the bourgeoisie). Ideology achieves its purpose when it is able to erase evidence of its presence and often we are aware of its presence only retroactively, when it has exhausted its welcome and is replaced with another ideological effect.

Here, we are not claiming that ideology is a purely passive social relation (i.e., determined by the economic base in a linear fashion), because ideological effects may react back on economic forces, reshaping the ideological field in general. What we are claiming is that Rochester lives in a perfumed world of unimpaired optimism where pedagogy is both taught and practiced from the fertile verdure of Mount Olympus, from the lazy sinecure of common sense, from an unsullied world of science where his categories of analysis are grounded in what seems to be the ontologically nec-

essary dimensions of human existence—a perspective that itself is shrouded in a debilitating epistemological positivism. Rochester fails to understand how theory is a type of practice raised to consciousness. The 'theory' known as revolutionary critical pedagogy is both partisan and objective. It is partisan in that it prefigures the end of wage labor, property relations, and the social relations of capitalist exploitation. It is objective in that it addresses the materiality of life produced through human labor. Objectivity, grounded in class struggle, is the material condition of truth (Zavarzadeh, 2003). This insight would be useful for Rochester when attempting to understand critical pedagogy's methodological requirements for a unity of theory and practice. Rochester's own position of research as ideologically disinterested is a fraudulent and irresponsible claim as it assumes that research transcends its institutional technology and distinct historical configurations of power, knowledge, and social relations of production. It represents the methodological practices of specific and historical subjects often in conflict among themselves. His normative epistemological pretensions and disposition towards heteronomy are inescapably illusory and enshrine in the language of objective science the interests of a particular social and political class disguised as general social interests. Inquiry that fails to address the social relations of production and totalizing epistemes that historically mediate the research question itself is not worthy of the name. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Hoover institute would support a critique of critical pedagogy under the banner of an ideologically purged pedagogy, given its own ideological allegiance to the imperialist imperatives of the current White House administration and other neoconservative organizations.

EMPIRE, THE CRUSH OF CIVILIZATION, AND POLITICS OF LATINO/A EDUCATION

> Right-wing pundit Ann Coulter on Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., an African-American: "Congresswoman Maxine Waters had parachuted into Connecticut earlier in the week to campaign against [Sen. Joseph I.] Lieberman because he once expressed reservations about affirmative action, without which she would not have a job that didn't involve wearing a paper hat. Waters also considers Joe 'soft' on the issue of the CIA inventing crack cocaine and AIDS to kill all the black people in America." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>
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> Nationally syndicated radio host Neal Boortz on Rep. Cynthia McKinney's (D-Ga.) hairstyle: "She looks like a ghetto slut. … It looks like an explosion in a Brillo pad factory. … She looks like Tina Turner peeing on an electric

> fence. … She looks like a shih tzu!" Boortz on McKinney's hairstyle (again): "I saw Cynthia McKinney's hairdo yesterday -- saw it on TV. I don't blame that cop for stopping her. It looked like a welfare drag queen was trying to sneak into the Longworth House Office Building. That hairdo is ghetto trash. I don't blame them for stopping her." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

Since September 11, 2001, Bush has arrogated to himself the role of the Grand Panjandrum of the "civilized world" (i.e., the world with the most sophisticated military technology, the most powerful army, and a political administration that possesses the will and the determination to put those assets to use wherever and whenever it feels its national interests [i.e., profits] threatened). The Bush cabal's cunning political prestidigitations enabled it to govern the country with lies under the shibboleth of "exporting democracy" and those who were not hoodwinked and spoke out against such mass deception were labeled enemies of civilization (but why, we ask, did the U.S. not depose the regimes of Spain's Franco, Indonesia's Suharto, or Chile's Pinochet?). Imperialism's grand legacy of racism and White supremacy that has accompanied the virulent backlash against Marxist-driven instantiations of critical pedagogy is also affecting the agonistic terrain of Latina/o education in the United States. Are we not experiencing today the aftershocks of colonialism? And perhaps some new tremors? Ignoring the legacy of colonialism only worsens its effects. Pope Benedict XVI, who as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger headed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (organized much the same way as when it was known as the Holy Inquisition), was a founding board member with "Neilsy" Bush of the Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue that was created in Geneva Switzerland in 1999. Ratzinger, we might recall, made a famous intervention into George Bush's 2004 election, condemning any Catholic who voted for Kerry to having formally cooperated in evil because Kerry supports a woman's right to choose. Now this same Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict XVI, has condemned Marxism and unbridled capitalism for the problems facing Latin America. Recently in Aperecida, Brazil, he again attacked grassroots Catholic activists who were still influenced by liberation theology, a theology he tried to crush when he was a cardinal. While in Brazil, he made the outrageous claim that indigenous populations had welcomed the European priests who had arrived with the conquistadores, claiming that they had been "silently longing" for Christianity. He also said that colonial-era evangelization involving the proclaiming of Jesus and his Gospel "did not at any point involve an alienation of the pre-Colombus cultures, nor was it the imposition of a foreign culture." President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela has joined indigenous groups in con-

demning the Pope's remarks, claiming that Benedict XVI has ignored the enslavement and genocide of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the destruction of their native cultures, and has also ignored what in some cases amounts to the complicity of the Catholic Church in such violence and destruction. President Chavez proclaimed that "the bones of the indigenous martyrs of these lands are still burning." Clearly the legacy of colonial violence lives on, and not only in Latin America, but in North America as well. We see it's offspring today. The existence of racial hierarchies that spill across multiple dimensions of social life is not epiphenomenal to capitalism. That is, it is not derivative from or antecedent to capitalism but constructive of the very process of capitalist accumulation worldwide and the colonial and neo-colonial interaction of Western imperialist powers with non-Western peoples.

The defining principle underlying national policy initiatives (i.e., English-only propositions, anti-immigrant initiatives, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) that both implicitly and explicitly target the education of Latina/o students is what we have termed *the politics of erasure*. Unilaterally designed to erase students' native language, national origin, and cultural formations, these initiatives arise out of an era marked by heightened nationalism and its attendant "fear factor" that views anyone outside of the xenophobic U.S. monoculture as a threat to U.S. citizenship. National policies reflect the larger capitalist ideology that dehumanizes those who do not conform, that disqualifies certain segments of the human race from full participation as citizens and instantiates a rhetoric of depersonalization. As a direct result of their demographic numbers, Latina/os have become both objects of inclusion (through assimilationist efforts) and exclusion (by restricting their access and opportunity to a quality education) in educational politics. On the surface, the politics of erasure seeks to incorporate a burgeoning Latina/o population into the economic, social, and cultural spheres of U.S. society. But the repressed underside of such initiatives is reminiscent of efforts designed to safeguard the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of what Gilbert Gonzalez (2001) has termed the "Ideology and Practice of Empire." Within this framework, education is perceived as the major apparatus of assimilating and acculturating a growing Latina/o population into the economic and social dimensions of an increasingly imperial and militaristic Pax Americana.

Unearthing and naming the ostensibly hidden narratives and ideological underpinnings of education policy is a necessary counterpoint to the reigning initiatives that evoke, at times, the popular support of Latina/os in pursuit of achieving the gross material benefits associated with American nationality. It is essential, therefore, that policy initiatives be understood in

terms of their historical specificity, especially as this affects their functional imperatives for nation-states, which includes administering a commodity-centered economy and its division of social labor (San Juan, 2002). In education policy, the rhetoric of positive nationalism (i.e., equal opportunity for all) occludes both the racialized ideologies and class interests of the political elite who act—either willingly or unknowingly—in the service of maintaining internal cultural homogeneity and an internal colonialism. One need only witness comments made recently by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich about bilingual education, in order to grasp the culture of the Anglosphere: "The American people believe English should be the official language of the government…We should replace bilingual education with immersion in English so people learn the common language of the country and then learn the language of prosperity, not the language of living in a ghetto" (Hunt, 2007, p. A20). When Gingrich said this to an audience of 100 members of the National Federation of Republican Women, the audience burst into wild cheering (Hunt, 2007, p. A20). Especially in light of today's war on terrorism, Latina/o entrepreneurs are needed to legitimize the economic objectives of the capitalist elite and provide ballast to the existing social division of labor, just as the rural and urban poor and middle class are needed as frontline troops in the country's imperialist wars.

As an instructive example, consider the recent arguments set forth by the pugnacious and ideologically repulsive Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington. Huntington's (2004) commentary is predictably aligned to the ideological imperatives of U.S. citizenship. Addressing the issue of Mexican immigrants who have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves, he writes the following: "There is no Americano dream. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican-Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English" (2004, p. 45). In linguistics, we would refer to the aforementioned coupling as cognates, but in Huntington's context, that speaks directly to the reactionary segments of the Anglo-Protestant population that he depicts, they represent two separate and incommensurable worlds divided by language, culture, and values. In his enfeebled defense of the Anglosphere as the sacerdotal eyrie of U.S citizenship, Huntington cites a number of scholars who characterize Latina/os, primarily those of Mexican decent, as a monolithic cultural group that possesses a "lack of initiative, self-reliance, and ambition" and has "little use for education; and acceptance of poverty as a virtue necessary for entrance into heaven" (2004, p. 44). Huntington's nativism is an unholy alliance of xenophobia and racism masquerading as a defense of the cultural identity of the U.S. (not to mention as scholarship). When seen in

the context of critical pedagogy, Huntington's 'patriotism' is anything but a pleasant fiction of creating a vibrant democracy. Huntington's alarmist screed, premised on an unstated fear that Mexican immigrants might one day engage in a reconquest of the U.S. Southwest, betrays at once a fear of the decline of an Anglo-Protestant majority and a defense of free-market capitalism. Such views are neither new nor limited to depicting the Latina/o population. The rise of industrialization, the emergence of world wars, the collapse of statist Communism and reformist Social Democracy and their replacement by "rogue regimes" as ideological counterpoints to "free market democracy", and the creation of the United States as the world's sole superpower has exacerbated an "us versus them" discourse that legitimizes cultural, political, military, and economic domination and mordantly attributes the 'dirt' that is 'out of place' in the living rooms of the ruling class to the immigrant Other. Huntington's work is but an academic gimcrack, the kind of crass racism you might find in a seaport bar only dressed up in the iron breastplate of the Angel of History—acrimonious ignorance disguised as moral profundity blown into our minds by a storm from paradise. It is the scholarly umbrage in which the most vile human sentiments take refuge from the light of reason. This is but a decaffeinated version of the eliminationist fantasy of conservative commentator, William Bennet, dressed up in language of serious scholarship. But we can clearly see the coxcomb pulled over Huntington's furrowed brow.

"LATINA/O": HISTORICAL AND MATERIAL DIMENSIONS

To understand the ways in which the education of Latina/o youth are being affected by what we term a *politics of erasure*, it is necessary to fully define *Latina/o*. We consider it important to highlight the arguments posited by Martha Gimenez (1997), who suggests that ethnic labels such as *Latino* or *Hispanic* work not only to solidify the negative stereotyping associated with that group but also to hide and deemphasize both the differences and similarities across ethnic enclaves. By differences, we are suggesting that Latina/os constitute a population of wide variation—across class and other social dimensions—and that they do not, by any measure, share or ascribe to an organic or pure cultural identity. By similarities, we are also suggesting that Latina/os, when viewed as individuals situated along an historical and material continuum differentiated by class status, share traits, experiences, and values with other "non-Latino" groups. The process of Americanization, acculturation, or assimilation is not a uniform process for Latina/os. Gimenez (1997) is particularly insightful on this point: "Dialectically… culture is not a thing one learns or unlearns (thus becoming accul-

turated): It is the lived experience of people shaped by their location in the class and socioeconomic stratification systems" (p. 231).

In light of Gimenez's observation, it is necessary to view Latina/os as a social group in all of their iterations and to consider the material backdrop of their cultural formations (see Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Here the alienation of Latina/o youth can best be understood by investing the ontological concept of alienation with social, historical, and economic content.

Here, we take the position that although race, class, and gender invariably intersect and interact, they are not coprimary. We conceptualize class antagonism or struggle as one in a series of social antagonisms (race, class, gender, etc.) but argue that class most often sustains the conditions that produce and reproduce the other antagonisms. This is not, however, to argue that we can simply reduce racism or sexism to class. In other words, class struggle is the specific antagonism, the generative matrix, that helps to structure and shape the particularities of the other antagonisms. It creates their conditions of possibility. The material basis of race and gender antagonisms can be traced to the means and relations of production within capitalist society—to the social division of labor that occurs when workers sell their labor power for a wage to the capitalist (i.e., to the ownership of the means of production). Regrettably, class exploitation is a topic that is very often ignored within schools of education. When it is discussed, it frequently deliquesces into a discussion of unequal resource distribution, and this ignores the fact that exploitation is a fundamental character of capitalism, that it is constituent of the labor-capital relation. Class struggle is a determining force that structures in advance the very agonistic terrain in which other political, racial, and gender antagonisms take place. However, we want to underscore that that in no way does this position ignore forms of nonclass domination. John Bellamy Foster (2005) makes an important observation when he writes the following:

> The various forms of non-class domination are so endemic to capitalist society, so much a part of its strategy of divide and conquer, that no progress can be made in overcoming class oppression without also fighting—sometimes even in advance of the class struggle—these other social divisions. (p. 17)

Among U.S. institutions, public schools bear the greatest burden to bring youth and their families into the neo-liberal regime. For educators such as Stanley Aronowitz (2004), schools serve as the primary mechanism to connect children and their families to the full spectrum of social life. Social life, in these terms, includes broad notions of citizenship, but it also, and perhaps most importantly, suggests the cultivation of a laboring citizen body. Aronowitz argues that

> the common school is charged with the task of preparing children and youth for their dual responsibilities to the social order: citizenship and, perhaps its primary task, learning to labor. On the one hand, in the older curriculum on the road to citizenship in a democratic secular society, schools are supposed to transmit the jewels of the enlightenment, especially literature and science. On the other hand, students are to be prepared for the work world by means of a loose but definite stress on the redemptive value of work, the importance of family, and of course the imperative of love and loyalty of one's country. (Introduction, 1.1)

We concur for the most part with Aronowitz's (2004) description of the public school, and we find it particularly relevant for Latina/os and other immigrant groups struggling assiduously on the margins for full incorporation into the dominant landscape of U.S. society. The notion that schools must ultimately shape and form future generations under the mantra of democracy-building or "loving one's country" becomes a necessary tool for policy makers and other members of the capitalist elite to justify pedagogical programs and initiatives designed to homogenize and unify a seemingly varied population. What is often overlooked is the role that schools play in serving as vehicles of profit maximization and in sustaining a commodity-centered economy predicated on the social division of labor. It is here that the linkages between the expansion of capital and schooling become more opaque—in terms of schools becoming transformed into commodities (through increased privatization) and in their role as commodity-producing (human labor power) institutions. Government-sponsored commissions clearly capture the interplay between schools, labor, capital, and citizenship. A report commissioned in 2003 on behalf of the G. W. Bush administration, *From Risk to Opportunity, Hispanics in the U.S.*, outlines these very relations. The report states that

> if the employment picture does not change, the economic consequences of an uneducated workforce will strain the economy of the United States. Hispanics are not maximizing their income potential or developing financial security. This leads to lost tax revenues, lower rates of consumer spending, reduced per capita savings and increased social costs. (p. 3)

This narrative antiseptically reduces the failed economic participation of Latina/os to an itemized list of discrete educational factors (see Miron & Inda, 2000). Against a backdrop of characteristics such as limited parent involvement, poor academic instruction and a lack of English or teacher accountability, an investment in school "improvement" is considered the only viable alternative toward eliminating the fiscal and social "crisis" associated with the Latinization of the United States. The Commission asserts that "school improvement may be an expensive short-term investment, but

the ultimate profit resulting from an educated Hispanic workforce is much greater" (National Council of La Raza [NCLR], 2004, p. 3). When Latina/os' participation in the labor market is contrasted against indicators that measure their integration in education and other aspects of social life, the stage is set to "reform" or "rectify" those conditions associated with what is perceived as "failed assimilation." Across ethnic groups, Latina/os have the highest high school dropout rate, nearly 28%, and for newly arrived immigrants, the dropout rate stands at 40% (NCLR, 2004). Only 1 in 10 Latina/os ages 25 and older have received a bachelor's degree or higher, yet in the year 2002, nearly 1 in 5 of all those incarcerated in the United States were Latino (NCLR, 2004, p. 11). Close to 5 million English-language learners reside in the United States, with the overwhelming majority being Spanish speakers. In the 2000-2001 period, Latina/os represented 10% of the school-aged population in the nation, a number that is expected to increase exponentially in the coming decades. When the "Latina/o experience" is viewed against these statistics, it provides the fuel and impetus for policy makers to create and implement educational initiatives to reverse the trend of so-called Latina/o failure. Such is the rationale behind increased standardization (as a way to equalize educational inputs and outcomes) of curriculum, testing mechanisms, and instructional techniques. For Latina/os and other segments of the population clinging to the rhetoric of positive nationalism, education policies conceived in this vein are configured and ideologically refitted with irresistible appeal. But ultimately, such efforts come at the expense of an often cruel and violent pedagogy of dehumanization that places the burden on the young and "unacculturated" to adopt "ways of being" that are, indeed, foreign and alien.

The very system that incorporates Latina/os and other immigrant groups into the dominant "Whitestream" society is the same system that seeks to alienate them from their local histories, their culture, and the location where their knowledge is most readily inscribed, namely their language (Maldonado-Torres, 2004). Language, which serves to classify, categorize, and label human essence, relies on the process of internalization. Here, we are conceiving the process of internalization largely in relation to the function of language in identity formation. In other words, language represents a core construct of our subjectivity and the bulwark of our modes of self-and-social-identification. In the words of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), "ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (p. 81). With language valorized as the essentialized component of nationality and identity, English-only movements profoundly affect the Latina/o experience in public schools. Starting in California, with Proposition 227, an initiative that

legally dismantled bilingual education instruction, and followed by similar propositions in Arizona and unsuccessful attempts in Colorado and Massachusetts, bilingual education is consistently thrust into politically pernicious and ideologically heated debates that negatively affect language-minority students.

Although language policy has historically been sanctioned at the level of the state, the federal government's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 marked a reversal of language policy by stressing the acquisition of English skills only (Crawford, 2002). By eliminating any reference to the term *bilingual*, by mandating achievement tests that measure the acquisition of English over subject-matter content (Abedi & Dietel, 2004), and by attaching a strict system of punishment and rewards to test results, the U.S. government has solidified a neocolonial model of education that legitimizes the sustained subordination of groups that fall short of gaining full membership into the dominant discourses of U.S. citizenship. Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, and Gotanda (2001) have referred to this phenomenon as "backlash pedagogy" rooted in "backlash politics, products of ideological and institutional structures that legitimize and thus maintain privilege, access and control of the sociopolitical terrain" (p. 337). In a similar vein, Donaldo Macedo (2000) writes that English-only initiatives are present-day forms of colonialism, designed to subordinate groups through the loss of their human citizenship. In conjunction with initiatives that support anti-immigrant hysteria (Proposition 209 in California, the elimination of the Immigrant Education Program in No Child Left Behind 2001) and measures to eradicate affirmative action programs, we are constantly reminded that becoming "American," from the standpoint of education policy, is an atrophic process that denies the full development of human subjectivity. This sentiment is clearly expressed in Gingrich's recent repugnant accusation that bilingualism poses "long-term dangers to the fabric of our nation" and that "allowing bilingualism to continue to grow is very dangerous" (Hunt, 2007, p. A20).

REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS MARXIST HUMANISM

> Nationally syndicated radio host Rush Limbaugh, blaming America's "obesity crisis" on "the left," "liberal government," and "food stamps": "Because we are sympathetic, we are compassionate people, we have responded by letting our government literally feed these people to the point of obesity. At least here in America, didn't teach them how to fish, we gave them the fish. Didn't teach them how to butcher a -- slaughter a cow to get the butter, we gave them the butter. The real bloat here, as we know, is in—is in govern-

ment." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

As critical educators, we reject the notion that Latina/os and other marginalized student groups must selectively choose between the inflexible yet complementary tension of Americanism or un-Americanism, a binary construction that sets up a perfidious false opposition on which to base the concept of U.S. citizenship. We also reject the notion that schools must ultimately service the needs of capital rather than the humanizing needs of children and their families (De Lissovoy & McLaren, 2003). We denounce as well the reorganization of cultural hegemony and symbolic capital through the use of English as the only medium of classroom instruction—a nativist ploy to use monolingual "immersion" English classrooms to delegitimate or erase the daily lived experiences of linguistic minorities who are oppressed by a class-divided, racialized, and gendered social order, and to immure them inside a civic culture predicated upon property rights and the capitalist law of value production. At the same time, we are aware of the complex set of social relations that have compelled millions of working-class and poor people from Latin America to leave their countries of origin in search of a viable alternative. The creation of composite national identities and the lived tensions and contradictions confronted in every aspect of social life in the United States by "immigrants" or "exiles" compels us to articulate a humanizing critical pedagogy that is rooted in the cultural, spiritual, and linguistic dimensions of everyday life. But a humanizing pedagogy is also grounded in a critique of the material social relations and practices associated with contemporary capitalist formations.

We have made an effort to note that the exploitation of our human capacity to labor (labor power) is not limited to regional or national geographical spaces alone. Rather, Latina/os in the United States and abroad are implicated in a web of transnational relations linked to the accumulation of capital and extraction of surplus value. Moving from the center to the periphery, it is instructive for us to engage critically social movements and popular education initiatives in Latin America as illustrative sites toward a humanizing critical pedagogy. Our own work in Venezuela in support of the Bolivarian revolution has taught us some of the promises and possibilities of a people who refuse to become peons within a transnational elite protectorate stage managed by Washington.

Determined to defeat US imperialism and the transnational capitalist class, Bolivarian educators are struggling to expand critical pedagogy throughout the country. President Chavez's own words to us at Miraflores palace—"be inspired by the Bolivarian revolution in your pedagogical work"—is advice we would offer teachers in the United States. Aleida

Guevara March, daughter of Ernesto Che Guevara, offered us similar advice during a recent conversation in Havana, Cuba—to infuse our work with a profound respect for the creative capacity of humanity. In our ongoing work in Venezuela, we have been greatly impressed by the Bolivarian missions and their emphasis on human development and the creative capacity of all individuals to create democratic social formations able to address local needs in the context of a larger project of human emancipation by means of political transformation. These missions consist of anti-poverty and social welfare programs. We were fortunate to be able to visit some of them.

In one year, the Chavez government was able to graduate 1, 430,000 Venezuelans from Mission Robinson, a program launched in June 2003. Volunteers who work for Mission Robinson teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to illiterate adults using the "Yo Si Puedo" ("Yes I can") method developed in Cuba. This method uses a combination of video classes and texts which, in only 7 weeks, bring students to a basic literacy level. Indigenous peoples are taught to read and write in Spanish and in their own languages, in line with the indigenous rights outlined in the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution, Articles 199, 120 and 121. (Mission Robinson International has just been launched in Bolivia). Mission Robinson II provides basic education up to 6th grade, and Mission Robinson III teaches functional literacy and links these efforts to the creation of production units.) Mission Ribas, a two-year remedial secondary school program (that teaches Spanish, mathematics, world geography, Venezuelan economics, world history, Venezuelan history, English, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science), targets five million Venezuelan dropouts. This program has a Community and Social-labor Component, where groups use their personal experience and their learning to develop practical proposals to solve community problems. We were fortunate enough to join in a group discussion of this component of the program in Barrio La Vega, and were especially impressed with the efforts of students there to design a day care center. Unemployed graduates of Mission Ribas (known as "lanceros") are encouraged to enroll in Mission Vuelvan Caras (About Face), where they receive training in endogenous development and are eventually incorporated into the formal economy. Mission Sucre provides a scholarship program in higher education to the most impoverished sectors of Venezuela, graduating university professionals in thee years as opposed to the traditional five years. Our work in an international think tank based in Caracas, Centro International Miranda, has six areas of focus in helping to further the Bolivarian Revolution. One of these areas is critical pedagogy. Whether Venezuela is marching in a truly socialist direction or will remain mired in a sta-

tist, topdown approach like the Lassalleans of the Gotha Program, remains to be seen. We remain optimistic.

A fundamental axiom of a critical humanizing pedagogy is a respect accorded to students' language and cultural identity. It begins, in the words of Antonia Darder (2002), "with the view that all human beings participate actively in producing meaning and thus reinforces a dialectical and contextual view of knowledge" (p. 135). Cultural workers in this tradition ask students to recollect the past; to situate the present socially, politically, and economically; and to strive toward a future built on a utopian universality. Such a utopia (we stress here a 'concrete' utopia built on a deep understanding of the present as distinct from an 'abstract' utopia premised on an idealist reading of the future) has the potential to create the conditions for groups to liberate themselves in their own contextually specific ways from all forms of oppression, exploitation, alienation, and degradation. A pedagogy built upon these perspectives and practices seeks to understand the underlying motives, interests, desires, and fears of draconian shifts in education policy, and it contests ascribed methods of producing knowledge. To challenge the erasure of students' cultural and subjective formations, a humanizing critical pedagogy refashions dialectically our self and social formation by challenging normative notions of citizenship and by underscoring what it means to be the subject rather than the object of history. However, we clearly need more than a new normative foundation for a critical cultural cosmopolitanism; we also need a major shift in the mode of production. In addition to cultural solutions, workers need to seize political power on behalf of workers. Yet—in itself—this does little to eradicate the capitalist law of value. Moving beyond the capitalist law of value is a challenge that can be met by adopting a historical materialist critique and engaging in the struggle for socialism.

Criticizing the model of "cultural schizophrenia" that informs the ideological ambivalence of "Chicana/o literature," Marcial Gonzalez (2004) advances a historical materialist critique that we believe is efficacious for the de-domestication of critical pedagogy. Historical materialism is important for Gonzalez, as it is for us, precisely because it "attempts to understand the dialectical relation between the particularities of existence and the larger social frameworks that give them meaning" (p. 180). It also helps us to grasp more fully and more deeply "the relation between universal processes and their local manifestations" (p. 180) in ways that the puerile prospects of postmodernism cannot. Furthermore, historical materialism provides the means for "understanding the complex categories of identity based on race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, not as autonomous formations but as interconnected processes within the larger dynamics of social

relations" (p. 180), so that we are able to recognize "the particularity and relative autonomy of race without jettisoning the causal character of class relations" (p. 181). From such a perspective, reality is perceived not as an absolute truth but as "a set of processes" (p. 181). The purpose of historical materialist critique is not to "correct faulty ideas" (p. 82) analytically but "to negate them" and demystify them as ideological correlates of real contradictions, and in so doing, "to transform them qualitatively" (p. 182).

REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS A DIALECTICS OF PRAXIS

> Right-wing pundit Debbie Schlussel on Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.: So, even if he identifies strongly as a Christian … is a man who Muslims think is a Muslim, who feels some sort of psychological need to prove himself to his absent Muslim father, and who is now moving in the direction of his father's heritage, a man we want as president when we are fighting the war of our lives against Islam? Where will his loyalties be?" Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

In this section, we attempt to situate further revolutionary critical pedagogy in a Marxist-Hegelian optic, centered on a philosophy of praxis. To perform our revolutionary agency critically is to revisit the dialectical relation of theory and practice. What is important to us are the ideas of social change that are given birth in spontaneous movements and struggles and those developed in theory and made available to the "nonordinary" ordinary people. Raya Dunayevskaya (1973, 1978, 2000, 2002) has rethought Marx's relations to Hegelian dialectics in a profound way; in particular, Hegel's concept of the self-movement of the idea from which Marx argued the need to transcend objective reality rather than thought. Dunayevskaya notes how Marx was able to put a living, breathing, and thinking subject of history at the center of the Hegelian dialectic. She also pointed out that what for Hegel is absolute knowledge, Marx referred to as the new society. Although Hegel's self-referential, all-embracing, totalizing absolute is greatly admired by Marx, it was, nevertheless, greatly modified by him. For Marx, absolute knowledge did not absorb objective reality or objects of thought but provided a ground from which objective reality could be transcended. By reinserting the human subject into the dialectic and by defining the subject as corporal being, Marx appropriates Hegel's self-movement of subjectivity as an act of transcendence and transforms it into a critical humanism. In her rethinking of Marx's relationship to the Hegelian dialectic, Dunayevskaya parts company with Derrida, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, Negri, Deleuze, Mészáros, and others (Hudis, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b). She has given absolute negativity a new urgency, linking it not

only to the negation of today's economic and political realities but also to developing new human relations. She places a special emphasis on the negation of the negation or what she calls the "second negation." The second negation constitutes drawing out the positive within the negative and expressing the desire of the oppressed for freedom. Second negativity is intrinsic to the human subject as an agent; it is what gives direction and coherence to revolutionary action as praxis. A second negation permits abstract, alienated labor to be challenged by freely associated labor and concrete, human sensuousness. The answer is in envisioning a noncapitalist future that can be achieved, as Hudis (2000) notes, after Dunayevskaya, by means of subjective self-movement through absolute negativity so that a new relation between theory and practice can connect us to the realization of freedom.

Of course, Marx rejects Hegel's idealization and dehumanization of self-movement through double negation because this leaves untouched alienation in the world of labor-capital relations. Marx sees this absolute negativity as objective movement and the creative force of history. Absolute negativity in this instance becomes a constitutive feature of a self-critical social revolution that, in turn, forms the basis of a permanent revolution. Peter Hudis (2000) raises a number of difficult questions with respect to developing a political project that moves beyond controlling the labor process. It is a project that is directed at abolishing capital itself through the creation of freely associated labor. The creation of a social universe not parallel to the social universe of capital is the challenge here. The form that this post-capitalist society will take is that which has been suppressed within the social universe of capital: socialism, a society based not on value but on the fulfillment of human need.

For Dunayevskaya (2002), absolute negativity entails more than economic struggle but the liberation of humanity from class society. This is necessarily a political and a revolutionary struggle and not only an economic one. This particular insight is what, for us, signals the fertile and protean power of Dunayevskaya's Marxist-humanism, the recognition that Marx isn't talking about class relations only but human relations. Domesticated currents of critical pedagogy are too preoccupied with making changes within civil society or the bourgeois "public sphere," where students are reduced to test scores and their behavior is codified in relation to civic norms. Marx urged us to push beyond this type of materialism that fails to comprehend humanity's sensuous nature and regards humans only as statistics or averaged-out modes of behavior. We need to move toward a new social humanity. This takes us well beyond civil society and the struggle for what has been called "radical democracy." We need to work toward

the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions that will advance human nature, where the measure of wealth is not labor time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities. This can only occur outside the social universe of capital.

Revolutionary critical pedagogy, built on the concept of absolute negativity, is needed to combat the ideological crisis that has occurred as a result of the defeat of communism, socialism, and national liberation movements and the radical wings of social democracy. Of course, one of the immediate goals of a revolutionary critical pedagogy is to work with social movements to disable the Bush administration from conflating leftist revolutionaries with terrorists. Guided by a cabal-like combination of Christian fundamentalists, global robber barons, far-right neoconservatives, ultranationalists, arms dealers, oil tycoons, and militarists, the U.S. government's pursuit for the role of master and commander of the global capitalist system proceeds apace. Admittedly, it cannot be stopped by a revolutionary critical pedagogy, no matter how powerful its self-reflexive counter performances. But neither can it be effectively challenged without it. Today, it is urgent that we develop a coherent philosophy of praxis, but equally important must be our determination to live in our daily lives, our dialectical self-reflexivity, as we navigate the perils of everyday existence and enact a politics of refusal and transformation.

A true renewal of thinking about educational and social reform must pass through a regeneration of Marxist theory if the great and fertile meaning of human rights and equality is to reverberate in the hopes of aggrieved populations throughout the world. A philosophically-driven revolutionary critical pedagogy, one that aspires toward a coherent philosophy of praxis, can help teachers and students grasp the specificity of the concrete within the totality of the universal—for instance, the laws of motion of capital as they operate out of sight of our everyday lives and thus escape our commonsense understanding. Revolutionary critical pedagogy can assist us in understanding history as a process in which human beings make their own society, although in conditions most often not of their own choosing and therefore influenced by the intentions of others. Furthermore, the practice of double negation can help us understand the movement of both thought and action by means of praxis, or what Dunayevskaya called the "philosophy of history."

The philosophy of history proceeds from the messy web of everyday social reality—from the arena of facticity and the tissues of empirical life—and not from lofty abstractions or idealistic concepts gasping for air in the lofty heights of some metaphysical crow's nest. Revolutionary critical educators engage students in a dialectical reading of social life in which "the

labor of the negative" helps them to understand human development from the perspective of the wider social totality. By examining Marx's specific appropriation of the Hegelian dialectic, students are able to grasp how the positive is always contained in the negative. In this way, every new society can be grasped as the negation of the preceding one, conditioned by the forces of production, which gives us an opportunity for a new beginning. I think it is certainly a truism that ideas often correspond to the economic structure of society, but at the same time, we need to remember that history is in no way unconditional. The actions of human beings are what shape history. Both Freire and Dunayevskaya stress here that the educator must be educated. The idea that a future society comes into being as a negation of the existing one finds its strongest expression in class struggle. Here, we note that dialectical movement is a characteristic not only of thought but also of life and history itself. And here the outcomes are never guaranteed.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

> CNN Headline News host Glenn Beck to Rep.-elect Keith Ellison, D-Minn.: "OK. No offense, and I know Muslims. I like Muslims. … With that being said, you are a Democrat. You are saying, 'Let's cut and run.' And I have to tell you, I have been nervous about this interview with you, because what I feel like saying is, 'Sir, prove to me that you are not working with our enemies.'" Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

If dialectical praxis within the larger project of class struggle is to serve as the centerpiece of critical revolutionary pedagogy, both in its fight against economic exploitation as well as racism and patriarchy, it is imperative that we chart out the lineaments of our anti-capitalist, pro-socialist struggle. Although it is important to acknowledge that the globalization of capital can be resisted, it is equally important to be aware of the strengths and limitations of our counter-hegemonic strategies and tactics. In short, we need a theory of counter-hegemony. William Robinson (2003) expands on this position:

> Globalization is the *resistible* renewal of capitalism. Globalization is always partial and incomplete, although the aspiration is one of universality and generalization. Any theory of historic change must address the question of how alternative projects arise, how resistance is articulated and how dominant structures are subverted. Theories of capitalist hegemony are incomplete without corresponding theories of counter-hegemony. (p. 319)

Here, Robinson (2003) rehearses Gramsci's distinction between a war of manoeuvre (frontal attack) and a war of position (a protracted struggle as in trench warfare, or in a war of attrition) as follows:

> A war of manoeuvre, associated with the traditional notions of revolution, can potentially succeed when the power that sustains the existing system is situated in a limited number of identifiable sites, like the police, military, etc. But the expansion of the state into new "private" and community realms under capitalism that Gramsci theorized, and the rise of a civil society in which the power of the dominant groups is anchored in ideological and cultural processes, implies that power is no longer limited to a number of sites and is more dispersed and multidimensional. The formal distinction between a war of position and a war of manoeuvre is clearly methodological, not real (organic), in the sense that social struggles involve both dimensions simultaneously. Which may be the most salient in strategies and practices of struggle is a matter of historical conjuncture and collective agency. (pp. 319-320)

Robinson (2003) convincingly argues that we must begin our anti-capitalist struggle with a strategic war of position, the exercise of resistance in the sphere of civil society by popular classes who are able to avoid co-optation and mediation by the nation-state—and this means resistance at the points of accumulation, capitalist production, and the process of social reproduction. Robinson revealingly elaborates this position:

> Social conflicts linked to the reorganization of the world economy will lie at the heart of world politics in the twenty-first century. The challenge is how to reconstruct the social power of the popular classes worldwide in a new era in which such power is not mediated and organized through the nation-state. The universal penetration of capitalism through globalization draws all peoples not only into webs of market relations but also into webs of resistance. (p. 320)

Drawing on the work of Kees van der Pijl, Robinson (2003) maintains that all three moments in the process of the subordination of society and nature to the reproduction of capital—original accumulation, the capitalist production process, and the process of social reproduction—generates its own form of "countermovement" of resistance and struggle. Consequently, it is to the social forces from below engaged in resistance at all three of these moments to which we should turn when developing our own counter-hegemonic impulse.

Robinson has established four fundamental requirements for an effective counter-hegemony that are worth repeating here. First, he argues that we urgently need to build a political force on a broader vision of social transformation that can link social movements and diverse oppositional forces. The resistance of popular classes needs to be unified through a broad and

comprehensive "strategy of opposition to the broader structures that generate the particular conditions which each social movement and oppositional force is resisting" (p. 321).

The challenge for popular social movements is how to fuse political with social struggles through the development of political instruments that can extend to political society (the state) the counter-hegemonic space currently being opened up in civil society through mass mobilization. Popular classes have nothing to gain by limiting their struggles to local and isolated "sites" of oppression and forsaking the development of a larger project of transformation, a project which includes a struggle against the state.

Here, it is important to "address how oppression and exploitation, and the immediate conditions around which popular sectors are struggling, are linked to and derive from a larger totality, that totality being global capitalism" (Robinson, 2003, p. 322). The organizational forms of a renovated left must include a commitment to supporting autonomous social movements, to social change from the bottom up rather than the top down, to democratic principles and practices within organizations themselves, and to an abandonment of the old verticalism in favor of non hierarchical practices.

The second requirement for an effective counter-hegemony is building a viable socioeconomic alternative to global capitalism. To this end, Robinson (2003) asserts the following:

> Beyond calling for a mere change in the particular form of accumulation, a counter-hegemonic alternative needs to challenge the logic of the market in its program and ideology. If not, some new ideology and program designed from above by global elites, such as the so-called "Third Way" promulgated in the United States and the United Kingdom in the late 1990's, may well allow the global capitalist bloc to retain the initiative as crises extend and to forestall the possibilities of more fundamental change. An anti-neo-liberal agenda, however important, must develop into an anti-capitalist—that is, socialist—alternative. (p. 323)

The third requirement is that popular classes need to transnationalize their struggles. This means nothing less than expanding transnational civil society, which serves as an effective countermovement to global capitalism. Robinson (2003) further warns that

> the crisis and eventual collapse of neo-liberalism may create the conditions favorable to winning state power promoting an alternative. It is not clear, however, how effective national alternatives can be in transforming social structures, given the ability of transnational capital to utilize its structural power to impose its project even over states that are captured by forces adverse to that project. (p. 324)

The answer, for Robinson, is the challenging of the global elite "by accumulating counter-hegemonic forces beyond national and regional borders; to challenge that power from within an expanding transnational civil society" (p. 324). In the wake of this aim, his fourth requirement calls on organic intellectuals to henceforth subordinate their work to and in the service of popular majorities and their struggles.

In his latest book, *A Theory of Global Capitalism*, Robinson (2004) further elaborates on what a counter hegemonic movement should look like. He importantly notes that fundamental change in a social order becomes possible when an organic crisis occurs but that such an organic crisis of capitalism is no guarantee against social breakdown, authoritarianism, or fascism. What is necessary is a viable alternative that is in hegemonic ascendance—an appealing alternative to the existing capitalist social order that is perceived as preferable by a majority of society. Although the socialist alternative is unlikely to be considered a viable alternative by the majority of society any time soon, this should not dampen our efforts to bring us closer to that goal.

It is precisely an unyielding commitment to the Other that gives revolutionary critical pedagogy—nourished by Marxist roots—its ethical exigency and its affirmative starting point. Furthermore, it prevents critical educators from being caught in an endless vortex of negativity that previously trapped many critical theorists. In the language of dialectics, revolutionary critical educators negate the negation inflicted on the oppressed. They do so from the perspective of the affirmation of the oppressed. Not only does this negation of the negation have a roborant effect on critical praxis, it is the very bulwark of revolutionary activity.

As long as critical educators ignore the strategic centrality of class struggle (see Scatamburlo-D'Annibale & McLaren, 2003), the more difficult it will be for critical pedagogy to become a powerful catalyst in the ongoing struggle for a socialist democracy. Thus, we argue that a radically rearticulated revolutionary critical pedagogy needs to return to its Marxist roots; we do not use the concept of "returning" in the sense of going back to some prior or originary moment of a linear sequence in time. To return is not to regress but rather to move forward in awakening ourselves to our relationship with living history, which is both the source and destiny of the human subject: the self-transcendence of our species being.

Our pedagogical project is directed toward a journey of self-discovery mediated by an infinite hope. Here, hope's infinite movement does not transcend human history but is embodied in finite, sensuous human beings struggling for freedom. As in the case of Hegel's true infinity, critical pedagogy's subject of history moves in and through otherness in the direc-

tion of a circle, a movement that returns into itself in its journey of self-awareness. Bad infinity, on the other hand, is a movement lost in the externality of the infinite, one of endless repetition and alienation. It is represented by a straight line in which experiences are never reconciled, in which the historical subject is endlessly lost and never reaches self-recognition and the basis for a return to the self is, like in the case of Tantalus, forever out of reach (see McNally, 2004).

Critical pedagogy, as we envision it, avoids the bad infinity of mainstream pedagogy in which truth and justice are sought outside of living history in the precincts of a mystical otherness. In contrast, we underscore our conviction that the subjunctive world of the "ought to be" must be wrought within the imperfect, partial, defective, and finite world of the "what is" by the dialectical act of absolute negation. It is the search and struggle for a utopia in which the future is inherent in the material forces of the present. It is given birth out of the existing contradictions of the present moment. The critical pedagogy we are struggling to build works toward a transformation of the established mode of social metabolic reproduction through a form of concrete as opposed to metaphysical transcendence, through entering into the subjunctive mode of "what could be."

But in moving the struggle forward, we must not extend the concept of "what could be" to some ethereal hinterland beyond the reach of "what is" (Gulli, 2005). This is because we do not look to the externality of the infinite but rather to the infinite within ourselves, within our own pedagogical project, within our own acts of laboring, that we can describe our pedagogy as concrete utopian rather than abstract utopian.

To avoid falling into the pit of abstract utopianism, the realm of the "what is" must be inclusive of the "what could be" (Gulli, 2005)—which is, we maintain, the struggle for genuine universality (when history itself becomes a conscious and self-mediating process, that is, when history can unfold outside of the value form of labor under capitalism) rather than for an abstract universality (that exists outside of the historical time of real, sensuous human struggle in which concrete acts of labor are left behind). Here, our self-activity and subjective self-awareness recognizes humankind's global interdependence and that only in our being for others can our own self-understanding be achieved. And even if the times are not propitious, we must nevertheless undertake an arduous and perhaps even harrowing journey in and through difference and return to a very different place from which we started out.

NOTES

This is a revised chapter that first appeared as McLaren, P., and Jaramillo, N. (2006). Critical pedagogy, Latino/a education and the politics of class struggle. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies, 6*(1), 73-93.

[1] A defense of a Marxist-driven critical pedagogy against such attacks can be found in Peter McLaren's (in press) "Let Them Blister Paint: Response to Rebecca Martusewiczs'; Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale and Peter McLaren's (2004) "Class Dismissed? Historical Materialism and the Politics of 'Difference' "; Peter McLaren and Donna Houston's (2005) "The Nature of Political Amnesia: Response to C.A. Bowers"; Donna Houston and Peter McLaren's (2004) "Education and Environmental Crisis: Ecosocialist Critical Pedagogies in Theory and Praxis"; and in the opening chapter of Peter McLaren's *Capitalists and Conquerors: A Critical Pedagogy Against Empire*.

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With members of a union of educational workers in Monterrey Mexico

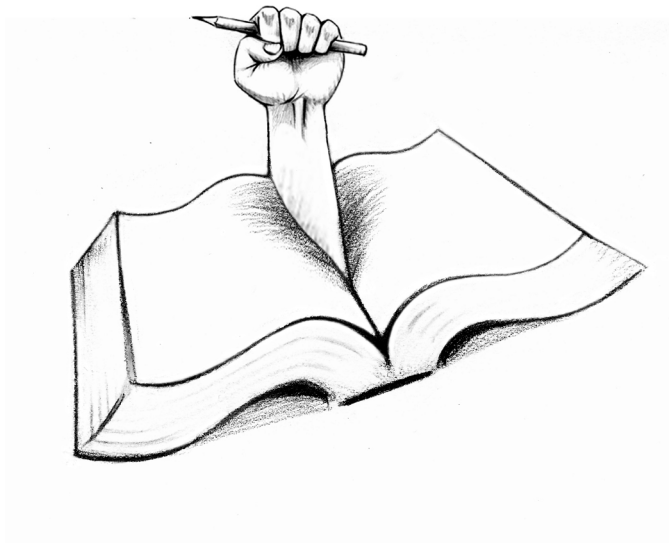


Examining a medical clinic for union workers in Monterrey Mexico

CHAPTER FOUR

GOD'S_COWBOY_WARRIOR_

Christianity, Globalization, and the False Prophets of Imperialism



GOD LOVES OUR EMPIRE AND BLESSES OUR MILITARY BASES AROUND THE GLOBE, AND HE SUPPORTS SLAUGHTERING TERRORISTS, TOO!

> Whose God decides which a "just war" is and which isn't? George Bush senior once said: "I will never apologize for the United States. I don't care what the facts are." When the president of the most powerful country in the world doesn't need to care what the facts are, then we can at least be sure we have entered the Age of Empire.
>
> – Arundhati Roy:

> You recently created a stir when you defended the interrogation techniques at Abu Ghraib. A: Most of the people in Mississippi came up to me and said: "Thank Goodness. America comes first." Interrogation is not a Sunday-school class. You don't get information that will save American lives by withholding pancakes. [Trent Lott]
>
> – Solomon (2004)

UNDER THE SIGN OF THE STARS AND STRIPES, the war against terrorism unchains the attack dogs of the New World Order in defense of civilization. In the process, the United States has crossed the threshold of militant authoritarianism and goose-stepped onto the global balcony of neo-fascism, befouling the Constitution along the way. As long as the nation keeps cheering, and Bush's impish jaw juts ever forward, the stench goes unnoticed.

The United States has become recognized as a bona fide torture state, perfecting a form of psychological torture that is one of the most significant scientific breakthroughs in two thousand years of torture. The geneology of CIA torture techniques can be traced to the 1950s. Alfred W. McCoy notes that "a long history of distinctive U.S. covert warfare doctrine has developed since World War II, in which psychological torture has emerged as a central if clandestine facet of American foreign policy" (2006, p. 7). U.S. funded torture experiments included placing victims in drug induced comas for up to 86 days, administering electroshock treatment 3 times daily for 30 days, and clamping a football helmet on the head for up to 21 days with a looped tape repeating messages such as "my mother hates me" up to half a million times. CIA torture in Vietnam as part of the Phoenix program included attaching telephone cables to victims' vaginas and testicles for purposes of electro shocking them into confession, tapping a six-inch dowel into the brain of a prisoner through the ear, and rape. Over 26,000 prisoners were tortured and killed by 1972 and over 80,000 Vietcong were assassinated as part of the Phoenix program. The torture of Iraqi prisoners is a

continuation of the culture of torture nurtured by the U.S. military and CIA. Abu Graib was no aberration. In U.S. prisons, some prisoners have been in solitary confinement for up to 20 years and approximately 25,000 prisoners are currently being held in isolation. Some are held in sound proofed cells and some are kept in tiny cells for 22 and a half hours a day. They are released for exercise for one and a half hours a day that consists of pacing back and forth alone (Monbiot, 2007).

Among the Bush administration, there is a concerted effort to meld political rhetoric and apocalyptic discourse as part of a larger politics of fear and paranoia. Like a priest of the black arts, Bush has successfully disinterred the remnants of Ronald Reagan's rhetoric from the graveyard of chiliastic fantasies, appropriated it for his own interests, and played it in public like a charm. Self-fashioning one's image through the use of messianic and millenarian tropes works best on the intended audience (in this case, the American public) when the performance is disabused of shrillness, and remains unrestrained, confident, anagogic, and sometimes allegorical. Fascist plainspeak is a discursive rendering that is straightforward and unapologetic, and, like an iceberg, does most of the damage beneath the surface. Bush's handlers are masters of the fascist spin, and Bush is a perfect candidate since he hardly needs any ideological persuasion to get on board the imperial bandwagon. He is the perfect host for collapsing the distinction between religious authoritarianism and politics. Bush's defense of the war on terrorism works largely through archetypal association, and operates in the crucible of the structural unconscious. Bush may believe that Providence has assigned him the arduous yet glorious task of rescuing America from the Satanic forces of evil, that are inexorably unfolding towards the Rapture, as if he, himself, were the embodiment of the generalized will and the unalloyed spirit of the American people. Evoking the role of the raging prophet who identifies with the sword arm of divine retribution, Bush reveals the eschatological undertow to the war on terrorism, perhaps most evident in his totalizing and Manichean pronouncements where he likens bin Laden and his chthonic warriors to absolute evil, and the United States to the apogee of freedom and goodness.

Employing war as an instrument of its foreign policy, the Bush administration attacked Iraq to control two-thirds of the known reserves of the world's oil, to strengthen conditions for Israel in the region, to set the stage for a possible attack on Iran, and to build a political beachhead for creating more "democratic" client regimes in the Middle East. In addition, we believe that Bush wants to be seen as offering some kind of divine fuel for the rebirth of the American spirit that had wasted away in a morally comatose state within what is perceived by many conservatives as the debauched in-

terregnum of the Clinton years. Ever since the myth of America as God's chosen nation ingressed into the collective unconscious of the American people, U.S. politics has been primed for the appearance of national saviors and sinners.

Without skipping an opportunistic beat, Bush has assumed the mantle of *jefe* global warlord, taken up the Hammer of Thor, and is continuing to wield it recklessly, in blatant disregard for the court of world opinion. Bush appears to believe that God's elect—the American űbermenschen—in their potent attempt to realize Bush padre's vision of making America the iron-fisted steward of a New World Order—must not be compromised by the liberal ideas of militarily (and by association, morally) weaker allied nations. It is not as though Bush *hijo* is trying to remake the United States into a New Jerusalem. It is more likely that Bush believes unabashedly that the United States is already the New Jerusalem and must be protected by leaders acting as spiritual stewards ordained by the Almighty. Of course, the civilization versus chaos myth is a rewrite of the myth of white racial superiority over people of color. Instead of the echoes of Wagner, we have the music of Rocky, instead of Wotan serving as our favorite media action hero, we have Conan the American chasing Marxists through the jungles of Colombia, instead of Triumph of the Will, we have Fox News shots of Geraldo in Afghanistan fudging locations where certain events were supposed to have occurred (Hess, 2002, p. 4).

The hawks and religious irrationalists around Bush genuflect at the intellectual altar of the late philosopher king and University of Chicago classicist, Leo Strauss, who imperturbably assumed the conviction that only an elite few in the government warrant the sacred custodianship of the truth, and are thereby charged with using "noble lies" to keep the truth from the unwashed masses by preoccupying everyday citizens not only with real or perceived external threats to the nation but also with the task of developing nationalist or militantly religious sentiments fanatical enough to ensure their willingness to die for the nation. Keep them all in the thrall of their self-imposed tutelage! An enemy of reading the meaning of history in context and a champion of using the principle of natural law as the rule of the wise master over the unwise slave, Strauss considered democracy "an act against nature [that] must be prevented at all costs" (Shorris 2004). Earl Shorris (2004) writes: "Seen in this light, the Bush Administration's public claim to be bringing 'democracy' to Iraq, all the while working to ensure that elections do not take place, takes on new meaning" (p. 69). Strauss was a harsh critic of liberalism, and his authoritarian and imperial principles of the right guided this thoroughly reactionary thinker whose antipathy to democracy and justice were well known. His pedagogy demanded that readers

of the classics suspend their own judgment and insisted that they read the classical authors (i.e., Plato, Aristotle, Maimonides) in the same way that those authors understood themselves (Burnyeat 1985.) This meant avoiding contemporary ideas as a critical lens through which to establish a perspective for interpretation.

It was the perfect kind of pedagogy for living in a fascist state and for being ruled by a dictator and/or philosopher king and for fawning aristocratic punditry. As a philosopher who asserted that wisdom was a greater good than justice, who evaluated modernity from the standpoint of a univocal and monolithic antiquity, who distained the canons of critical thought, who arrogantly defended the classical doctrine of natural right, who rejected democratic claims to popular sovereignty as the rule of the unwise over the wise, who doggedly opposed multiculturalism and who was a fierce opponent of universal education, Strauss believed that all and sundry works of modern criticism were so much rot in the support beams of the history of ideas.

Strauss believed in the necessity of making absolute judgements but only in so far as a philosopher is able to conceal from the masses what he or she is actually saying (Xenos, 2004). Rejecting contracts between men as violations of natural law, Strauss elevates writing between the lines to a sacerdotal status, to a necessary means of esoterically speaking wisdom to the cognoscenti and exoterically teaching the masses so as to prevent the unwashed and untutored mob from seeking the foolishness of justice. Coded language and frequent archaisms were the rule of thumb for Strauss. F.M. Burnyeat notes, for instance, that Strauss, an anti-egalitarian conservative, does not believe that Plato is the radical utopian that mainstream scholarship believes him to be. Rather, Strauss believes that in his Republic, Plato means the very opposite of what Socrates says in his speeches. Strauss does this, according to Burnyeat, in order to persuade readers to subscribe to the opposite view of what Plato is thought to have held, according to most literary interpretations. And he accomplishes this through a mode of commentary that enables Strauss (through a "vicious circularity") to presuppose what he seeks to prove, so that Plato effectively becomes someone who does not believe that justice is essential for the happiness of both city and humankind.

Burnyeat reveals the errors of Strauss's reading of Plato, claiming that Strauss, in substituting exegesis for argument, turns the meaning of the Republic upside down. Strauss's concluding insinuation is that "the just city is not possible because of the philosopher's unwillingness to rule," but Burnyeat is able to demonstrate that it is precisely because philosophers are unwilling to rule that a just city is possible because philosophers as devotees

of pure reason are not self-interested, and will therefore adhere to the principles of impartial justice. In his book, *City and Man*, Strauss writes that Plato teaches that "the just city is against nature because the equality of the sexes and absolute communism are against nature" (cited in Burnyeat 1985). Burnyeat sees this as a perverse misreading—both literary and philosophical—of the Republic. Strauss also holds an "eccentric view that Plato's Socrates agrees with Xenophon's in teaching that the just citizen is one who helps his friends and harms his enemies" (Burnyeat 1985; see also Xenos 2004), which pushes Strauss's belief that "civil society must, of necessity, foster warlike habits and make its citizens apply different rules of conduct to one another and to foreigners" (Burnyeat 1985). Of course, a market economy and representative democracy guided by politicians who possess pre-bourgeois aristocratic characteristics such as wisdom, honor, and courage and who work within an optic hospitable to the Machiavellian friends/enemy distinction are essential to the preferred forms of regimes that Straussians wish to see populate the planet. Natural law trumps convention each and every time according to Straussians, as does foreign policy rewritten in the stark moral terms of good versus evil, which is why, according to Shorris (2004):

> The Bush regime violated the contract that was agreed to when the United States joined the United Nations; it flouted the U.S. Constitution, which is also a contract, by attacking without the required declaration of war by the Congress; and it disregarded the Geneva Conventions in its treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and in other secret detention camps around the world. (p. 69)

Bush's galaxy of Straussian advisors who are linked to the American Enterprise Institute and the Project for the New American Century adhere to a concept of natural law that permits them the brutal arrogance to dismiss the laws of mere mortals and to appeal to a higher power. Shorris (2004) notes that:

> The administration's wise men held up Strauss's version of natural law as the model, dismissing contracts as mere laws of men. Natural law, interpreted by Bush's "wise counsels," gave the president permission to launch a preemptive war through an appeal to the higher power. Natural law theory assumes that men seek the good and that by asking perennial questions—What is virtue? What is justice?—they will come to wisdom. Straussians, like Kristol, hold that the Founding Fathers espoused natural law theory, saying that natural law was both divine and self-evident. But the Founders were concerned with inalienable natural rights. After much debate in their convention, they wrote a contract. (p. 70)

Straussians are first and foremost pragmatists who see the unwashed masses as tractable, if not burdensome beasts of nature and will resort to whatever works best to secure control. Preparing for a television interview, former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, one of the primary architects of the Iraq war and disgraced former head of the World Bank, transformed himself into a visual metaphor for his political philosophy when, in the words of Roger Ebert (2004), "he [put] a pocket comb in his mouth to wet it and [combed] down his hair. Still not satisfied, he [spit] on his hand and [wiped] the hair into place." Michael Moore's film *Farenheit 9/11* captured the moment. Another philosopher that presumably has some clout with the Bush administration is Machiavelli. As Robert Scheer (2004) writes in connection to Dick Cheney:

> It was a forewarning of the Machiavellian arrogance that has made him the leading individual in an administration that has consistently believed that self-serving ends—such as helping Enron at the expense of California's energy needs or boosting Halliburton's profits at the expense of American troops—justify lying, secrecy, and pre-emptive war.

Interestingly, Neil Gabler (2004) uses Machiavelli when describing Karl Rove, whom he refers to as "the White House Ayatollah":

> Rovism begins, as one might suspect, from the most merciless of political consiglieres, with Machiavelli's rule of force: "A prince is respected when he is either a true friend or a downright enemy." No administration since Warren Harding has rewarded its friends so lavishly, and none has been as willing to bully anyone who strays from its message.

Whether devotees of the works of Machiavelli, Strauss, or Ayn Rand, the hawks all agree that fighting "preventative wars" requires a flexible fighting force that can establish U.S. military hegemony throughout the world. Chalmers Johnson (2004) writes: "According to the American Enterprise Institute, the idea is to create 'a global cavalry' that can ride in from 'frontier stockades' and shoot up the 'bad guys' as soon as we get some intelligence on them" (p. M6).

Johnson (2004) also notes that most of these stockades "will be what the military, in a switch of metaphors, calls 'lily pads,' to and from which our troops could jump, like well-armed frogs, depending on where they were needed" (p. M6). The Pentagon has bases in every continent except Antarctica, and occupies 702 overseas bases in approximately 130 countries (although the Defense Department does not count huge military installations such as Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo or sizeable outposts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan because it classifies these as only temporary bases). And while the U.S. military employs

71 learjets and other luxury planes to fly generals and admirals to the armed forces' ski and vacation centers at Germisch in the Bavarian Alps or to the 234 golf courses worldwide operated by the Pentagon, life is much harder for the grunts now occupying Iraq, although they are a bit happier now that the first Burger King has just gone up inside the military base at Baghdad's international airport (Johnson 2004, p. M6).

We need to ask ourselves how, exactly, the rhetoric of fascism works, assuming that the infrastructure for a transition to a fascist state is already in place—we have the USA Patriot Act, we have the military tribunals, we have the Office of Homeland Security, we have the necessary scapegoats, we have the Office of Strategic Influence working hand in hand with the U.S. Army's Psychological Operations Command (PSYOPS) operating domestically (actually, its operating domestically is against the law, but we know that during the Reagan administration, PSYOPS staffed the Office of Public Diplomacy and planted stories in the media supporting the Contras, a move made possible by Otto Reich, now the assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs; and we know that a few years ago PSYOPS operatives were discovered working as interns in the news division of CNN's Atlanta headquarters), we have the strongest military in the world, we have testosterone puffed military hawks in control of the Pentagon, we have recently pummeled two 'evil nations' into pre-history, we have turned Central Asia into a zone of containment, and we have shown that we can kill mercilessly and control the media reporting in the theater of operations, as major newspapers regularly bury stories of U.S. air strikes on civilians, such as in the case of Niazi Kala (sometimes called Qalaye Niaze), where the United Nations reported that fifty-two civilians were killed by the U.S. attack, including twenty-five children. According to the UN report, unarmed women and children were pursued and killed by American helicopters, even as they fled to shelter or tried to rescue survivors (Coen 2002, p. 3). And we have a blustering leader who is little more than a glorified servant of the military-industrial complex. And one who is able to admit this publicly and arouse little serious opposition (until recently). In fact, such an admission often wins him the glowing admiration of the American people. The Bush administration's scheduled release of documents under the Presidential Records Act of 1978, which includes Ronald Reagan's papers, has successfully been placed on lockdown. So far Cheney's much publicized legal stonewalling has prevented full disclosure of the extent of Enron–National Energy Policy Development Group contacts. Government secrecy and the withholding of information available to the public by law have become a guiding axiom of government practice. It occurs so often it's become a political bromide.

What a culture this administration has spawned. What in 1995 McLaren labeled as "predatory culture" has transmogrified into a lurid culture of malice that James Wolcott has captured so vividly in the following description:

> It's the phrase "malicious indignities" that arrows to the heart of our heartless time, flash-forwards to the string of shabby degradations that affront us daily, when Vietnam War veteran Max Cleland can be mocked for the loss of his limbs, Christopher Reeve disparaged in death for championing stem-cell research, hostage Kenneth Bigley criticized by conservatives for the "ignoble and unmanly" pleas that his life be spared, 9/11 widows maligned as publicity junkies, George Soros slandered by the editorial-page editor of the *Washington Times* as "a Jew who figured out a way to survive the Holocaust" and Michelle Malkin given generous airtime to defend the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and propose new camps for suspicious Muslims—it just never stops. (2004, p. 26)

What is driving an administration when a Justice Department lawyer writes a secret memo to the White House in 2001 concluding that President George W. Bush has the authority to wage pre-emptive war against terrorists even if they were not linked to the September 11 attacks? What does it mean when there are effectively "no limits" on the president's authority to wage war, even without congressional approval? What does this say about American exceptionalism, about American triumphalism, about the return to frontier-style imperialism? The culture of malice spawned in the putrid swamplands of Bush era morality is not unlike the culture of the battlefield in occupied Iraq. It is a culture of the strong against the weak, of an unrelenting pursuit of the power to dominate others, of contempt for the vulnerable by those with the will, the overwhelming means, and the unrestricted opportunity to obliterate them. Those who carry out the crimes of the state pay a high price. Their acts alone manage to make the familiar strange, to lift the veil of common sense from their eyes and force them to see their deeds in a new, more critical light. Chris Hedges writes:

> These Marines have learned the awful truth about our civil religion. They have learned that our nation is not righteous. They have understood that there are no transcendent goals at the heart of our political process. The Sunday School God that blesses our nation above all others vanishes in war zones like Iraq. These young troops disdain the teachers, religious authorities, and government officials, who feed them these lies. (2004, p. 12)

In the words of one Marine, who was invited to be a guest of honor in a gated community in Malibu, where the tanned and relaxed residents anxiously needed a hero to toast: "I'm not a hero. . . . Guys like me are just a necessary part of things. To maintain this way of life in a fine community

like this, you need psychos like us to go out and drop a bomb on somebody else's house" (cited in Hedges, 2004, p. 12). How appropriate, especially now, is the phrase from the thirteenth scene of Bertolt Brecht's play, *Life of Galileo*: "Unhappy is the land that is in need of heroes."

The fascism that is slowly settling into place was generously assisted by former Attorney General John Ashcroft. Consider his remarks on the struggle against terrorism: "Civilized people—Muslims, Christians and Jews—all understand that the source of freedom and human dignity is the Creator" (Umansky 2000). Ashcroft made these remarks in front of a group of Christian broadcasters. At the same event he proclaimed: "Civilized people of all religious faiths are called to the defense of His creation. We are a nation called to defend freedom—a freedom that is not the grant of any government or document, but is our endowment from God" (Umansky 2000). And while our former Attorney General exiled Orpheus into the political hinterland by covering up the breasts of the statues located in the lobby of his workplace, he offered the wrath of Jehovah as a libidinal replacement to fellow Christian fundamentalists embarking on their torch lit rallies and declaring that "united we stand." Vice President Dick Cheney told Orange County Republicans gathered at the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California, that "the United States must accept the place of leadership given to us by history" (Pasco, 2002, p. B6). Clearly, his peace-through-strength message was a secular rewrite of a divine mandate to destroy the infidel. The recently deceased Reverend Jerry Falwell, who in the 1980s was told by President Ronald Reagan that Armageddon was fast approaching, invoked a God of vengeance and destruction when he blamed feminists, civil libertarians, abortion rights advocates, and gays and lesbians for the terrorist attacks of September 11. His starched bloviations echoed a belief shared by other evangelicals that divine protection is summarily withdrawn from nations who have followed in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and who have irredeemably become steeped in sin.

Essentially George Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, and Falwell express similar sentiments, but Falwell has failed where the others have succeeded because their attack demonizes "them" rather than splitting "us" into an "us and them" (good conservative Americans versus bad liberal and radical Americans). Lynne Cheney can spearhead a report designed to demonize professors who speak out against civilization (read as speak out against Bush's war on terrorism). Further terrorist attacks within the United States will no doubt provoke the general population to feel more comfortable with the idea of eating their own children. If attacks recur, then clearly the stage is set to go after with more vigilance dissenters in the universities. (Of course,

as it is, a right-wing organization has placed one of us—McLaren—at the top of a list of UCLA's most dangerous professors know as "The Dirty Thirty." The same group offered students $100.00 to provide audiotapes of the lectures of these professors—a move which would make Senator Joe McCarthy proud. Denunciations of McLaren's socialist politics have been sent in brochure form to UCLA financial donors). An academic version of the Swift Boat Veterans, the work of the wretched David Horowitz is trying to silence dissenting voices against the Bush administration on U.S. college campuses. So Far, purges against the left─such as the witch hunt against Professor Ward Churchill─have been vicious and could easily escalate. A new attack by al-Qaeda on U.S. soil would ratchet up the attacks on the academic left. For the time being, however the public wants an enemy that remains "out there," one that is easily outsourced, like sweatshop labor by transnational corporations, conveniently externalized and seen as wholly Other to the values of mainstream U.S. society. We are urged to take up the fight against the detritus of global humanity. And anyone not willing to submit to the law of the marketplace, and the desires of its global curate in the White House, is an automatic contender for the label of dregs of the New World Order.

At this particular historical moment, democracy seems acutely perishable. Its contradictions have become as difficult to ignore as sand rubbed in the eyes. While dressed up as a promise, democracy has functioned more as a threat. Spurred on by feelings of "righteous victimhood" and by a "wounded and vengeful nationalism" (Lieven, 2003) that has arisen in the wake of the attacks of September 11, and pushing its war on terrorism to the far reaches of the globe (with what Terry Eagleton [2003] calls a "world-hating hubris" [p. 227]), the United States is shamelessly defining its global empire as an extension of its democratic project. The U.S. National Security Strategy of 2002 states quite clearly that the United States will not hesitate to act alone and will "pre-emptively" attack against "terrorists" that threaten its national interests at home or abroad. And one of its national interests is to bring free-market democracy to the rest of the world. What used to be called gunboat diplomacy is being rewritten as a diplomatic and literal gunning down of any and all opposition to the unfettered movement of finance capital in and out of new markets. Sidestepping the inconvenient probability that Iraq had no connection to al Qaeda, the Pentagon hawks swept through the streets of Baghdad like whirling dervishes on steroids and arrived at the near culmination of their civilizing mission by marching into the very den of the barbarians, enacting a negation as one-sided as the positivity they oppose.

Despite the fact that tens of millions of people—many of whom were presumably within a hair's breadth of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction—marched in the streets of cities on every continent to denounce the U.S. decision to launch an unprovoked invasion of Iraq, the United States pressed ahead with its plan to seize its oil fields, privatize its industries, demonstrate to would-be "evil doers" what was in store for them and secure a strategic geopolitical stranglehold on the Middle East. Those nations that supported its imperial design on behalf of fighting terrorism are now being rewarded with some of the spoils of victory (i.e., subcontracts to rebuild the infrastructure of Afghanistan or Iraq) or at least assurance they will not be invaded. Nearly $5 billion in military aid and training will be distributed to countries that have contributed to the so-called global war on terrorism or to the war in Iraq (a war whose definition remains a known unknown) in the coming months. Human Rights Watch International warns that these same nations have a recent history of committing human rights violations. The Philippines is primed to receive $19 million worth of sniper rifles, mortars, grenade launchers, and helicopters. A broadened U.S. role in Colombia has extended from counter-narcotics to a unified campaign against insurgents. In the case of Colombia, this signals the connivance of U.S. special operations protecting oil pipelines and working side by side with right-wing paramilitaries. Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Republic of Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, will soon profit from the global market for terror—they too will receive millions in military aid from the United States.

But perhaps the most alarming case is that of India and Pakistan. Two nations that have taunted each other with nuclear warfare and have had little success in achieving a modest political rapprochement have had their sanctions lifted and are being provided with millions of dollars worth of artillery for their support to the United States. Rather than trying to quell the possibility of nuclear warfare over Kashmir, the United States has equipped India with $78 million worth of artillery, while Pakistan, a much more visible force post-9/11, stands to gain fighter jets and armored personnel carriers with a price tag of over $1 billion.

In a fit of familiar paradoxical behavior that is consistent with symptoms of clinical paranoia, the United States sought help from countries to contribute troops to Iraq while at the same time threatened countries, including members of the "coalition of the willing"—Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, and Slovenia—who had not signed bilateral agreements exempting U.S. citizens from prosecution by the International Criminal Court. The United States threatened to cut $150 million of the Pentagon's annual aid to Bogota unless Colombia signed the exemption. Not surprisingly, John Bolton, then the undersecretary of state for arms control and

international security explained: "We have not been pressuring countries" (Richter 2003).

With promiscuous persistence, the United States distributes itself around the world in gleeful anticipation of being welcomed with open arms as long-awaited liberators. The problem is that those welcoming arms have been, more often than not of late, severed at the joint by U.S. imperialism's signature cluster bombs, shells of depleted uranium, and cruise missiles. When democracy does announce itself, it arrives under the sign of its own negation. Claiming to bring freedom and liberation to the Iraqi people, the U.S. invasion, according to some estimates, has been responsible for the death of several hundred thousand innocent civilians. The occupying force has prohibited the Iraqi people from forming their own government except in name only, preferring to select its leaders for them from a group of perfumed and pampered exiles, already thoroughly Westernized, and plumping for the creation of an Iraqi neoliberal state. U.S. officials have begun to stage manage the country for democracy's free-market drama: privatization of its oil, agriculture, and just about everything that will put U.S. dollars in investors' pockets. Like drooling hyenas descending on a freshly killed carcass, the trade lawyers, consultants, bankers, and CEOs of transnational corporations are licking their chops in anticipation of the United States fulfilling its mission of opening up Iraq to foreign (mainly U.S. and British) investment, and bringing Washington's neoliberal imperative to the uncivilized territories of the Middle East.

When the Ministry of Oil claimed the dubious status of the only Ministry the U.S. troops deemed worthy of immediate protection after the fall of Baghdad, the Iraqi people should have known at that very moment that America's self-designation as a bastion of freedom was vacuous. By now they should realize that the United States is also a major oil-producing nation since so much snake oil drips persistently from the lips of its politicians and policy makers. It should have been as clear as the business suit on Paul Bremer's back that Iraq was up for sale to the highest foreign bidder, with the United States serving as the Divine Broker.

A sandstorm has erupted in the hourglass of history where the liberators from Fort Hood or Fort Benning squint through steel burkas affixed with turrets and cannons and treads while dreaming they are back home rollerblading down Venice Boulevard, eating Krispy Kremes at the Valley drive-thru, renting the latest Arnold video at Blockbusters and watching The Terminator dunk a woman's head in a toilet bowl; maybe these young recruits are thinking life might be better in the golden state under the terminator's red robotic eye in Sacramento. When the soldiers return to the Homeland after their "tour" of duty in Iraq, they might notice a long list of every-

day consumer items that bear the term "Shock and Awe." The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Washington has recently been hit by an onslaught of trademark applications using "Shock and Awe" in their names for items as various as condoms, coffees, golf clubs, pesticides, dietary supplements, salsa, energy drinks, yo-yos, lingerie, Bloody Mary mix, and "infant action crib toys." This is the commodification of militarism run amok, exactly what will keep adults primed for future offensives and young people socialized to killing as a solution to foreign and domestic "problems."

The accelerating bellicosity of the liberating army can be put in its proper perspective when you recognize that its overall goal is to open up Iraq to the free market. But the end results will not be what the many Iraqis believe them to be. Once the transition to the neoliberal marketplace has been accomplished, the Iraqi business elite will be able to purchase for themselves the best democracy money can buy, and the bogus freedom that goes with it (i.e., the freedom to be rich or poor, to own a palace or to lack shelter, to shop at an upscale supermarket or to starve or get blown up in the streets).

In light of present historical circumstances, it was a bad idea for Iraqis to think that Washington's vision of a post-Saddam Iraq resembled anything like Baywatch reruns. Now that the country lies in tatters, its infrastructure in ruins, its water and electricity supplies failing to meet even the most basic needs of the people, its museums and hospitals looted and destroyed beyond redemption, its Sunni and Shia populations engaged in civil war (although the media still stubbornly describes the condition as 'sectarian conflict'), and its protesters shot like animals, is it any wonder the U.S. occupation has produced such an incandescent anger among the Iraqi populace? Any occupying power that decides in advance who will rule their conquered territories cannot lay claim to being liberators. U.S. forces are currently engaged in Vietnam-style operations eerily similar to the "search-and-destroy" tactics of forty years ago with predictable responses from an increasingly tense civilian population whose anger against the U.S. troops has been growing steadily to a fever pitch.

The United States is following a "carrot-and-stick" approach to occupational warfare. During the summer, the military raids civilian homes and "enemy outposts" at night, before the scorching 120-degree heat begins to set in. Targeted missions are patterned after an occupation of Palestine and are designed to intimidate and frighten an already humiliated and degraded population into acquiescence. However, this is sure to increase resentment and armed reprisals. An Iraqi truck driver captured this resentment following the armed search of his truckload of potatoes. Stoically facing the lens of an American photographer, he asked, "Do they think we are monkeys?"

Some may argue that the Iraqi postwar state (even in its current throes of civil war) is better off than before and that nation-building takes time, perhaps decades. But from where will democracy arise? It failed to take hold with Paul Bremer, the former Iraqi governor who is better known among the ruling elite as a terror expert entrepreneur. Following 9/11 and the subsequent attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, Bremer helped to form Crisis Consulting Practice, a business designed to assist U.S. multinationals in taking advantage of nations newly destroyed on behalf of democracy. Meanwhile, millions of Iraqis remain jobless, without electricity and wondering—when will the occupation end?

The ongoing war in Iraq has signaled to the world that the United States is willing to use any means necessary in its fanatical plight for world dominance. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center unveils the stark reality that a majority of civilians in the predominantly Muslim nations of Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Jordan fear a military strike from the United States. About the only place where people of color do not appear threatened by patterns of merciless war and imperialism is on the moon or other uninhabited celestial bodies, which cautions us about the prospect of interplanetary travel (see "Views of a Changing World" 2003). Citizens of the world have placed their hope in the hands of international organizations such as the United Nations, designated to halt unilateral massacres. However, the UN has proven to be more like a vaudeville stage for the political charades of Powell and Blair than a viable organ for peace. While the Security Council staged a temporary revolt, it has now obediently fallen back into line. No longer content to play Edgar Bergen to the UN's Charlie McCarthy or Mortimer Snerd,[1] the United States recognizes that in a world with only one superpower, it's no longer in need of ventriloquism. If you are in control of the most powerful military force in world history, you can speak directly without a mediator, even if your words ooze from both sides of your mouth.

Having used the Reagan-Shultz doctrine to interpret Article 51 of the UN Charter as giving license to the United States to resort to force in "self defense against future attack" (Chomsky, 2003), the U.S. administration is now transforming itself into the same *junta* it once supported in the person of Saddam (recall the 1983 photo of Rumsfeld and Saddam shaking hands) but later turned against when it was in their best interest to do so. The U.S. administration looks at the Iraqis like Custer's cavalry looked at the Indians: They couldn't possibly be ready for civilization yet. They inhabit a culture so incommensurable with our own that they are not yet able to grasp fully enough the fiscal advantages and moral superiority of global capitalism and free market democracy. It's a democracy that will enable the

United States to raid their raw materials and exploit their labor-power (with all those bid-free contracts awarded to Republican-friendly U.S. corporations). It's a democracy that is designed not for the Iraqi people but so that the United States can ensure its own economy will reap enough oil profits to be able to keep any upstart country (such as China) from challenging its sole military superpower status for another century and beyond (Bush's inner circle of neocon zealots didn't belong to a think-tank called the Project for the New American Century without taking the name seriously). Of course, the United States will make sure that a new class of Iraqi businessmen will become rich beyond their wildest dreams, maybe even as rich as Saddam used to be before the U.S. handed him over to Shias who taunted him as he fell through the trap door of the execution room, his head nearly severed in the process.

The key point to be made is recognizing that the Untied States is out to weaken and cheapen labor in order to compensate for a major loss of profits and dramatic increase in debts over the last several decades. As further evidence one need only witness Bush invoking the Taft-Hartley Act against the West Coast dockworkers' union or his granting of federal aid to failing airlines on condition that management purges the airline unions. How many social services will need to be cut in order to finance Homeland security? How much rebuilding can occur in Iraq in the face of U.S. budget deficits as a result of the current recession? How will tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy help to pay for the war and occupation? Is reducing domestic budget deficits by exclusive U.S. control of Iraqi oil production worth the price of further enraging France, Germany, Russia, and China and making Trotsky's concept of interimperialist rivalry seen tame by comparison? Is it worth increasing dramatically the number of terrorist recruits who will dedicate themselves to eliminating the U.S. military presence in the Middle East? Here it is easy to recognize how capitalism has been turned into a quasi-natural force by the corporatized lawmaking of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank of which workers are the passive, unnamed victims. The United States has successfully alienated much of both the developed and so-called Third World, and has sent an unmistakable message to both Russia and China that Washington's newfound military brinkmanship and aggression are a profound threat to their strategic interests and geopolitical influence. As if the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq were not enough, Washington is now clearly preparing the ground for a possible attack on Iran.

Here at home, the pusillanimity and fecklessness of the Democrats has been as difficult to stomach as Bush *hijo's* bumptious belligerence toward the nation's poor and his failure to recognize how he is in ironic violation

of democracy's own fundamentals. Their integrity addled, the Democrats for the most part remain unwilling to name Bush the liar and deceiver that he is. What worries them is the spin that the media are likely to give their criticisms of Bush; they fear that going too far in attacking a wartime president will condemn them irrevocably in the public eye as unpatriotic.

The relatively compliant U.S. citizenry should have known they were orbiting disaster when, as early as July 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft was warned not to fly commercial airlines due to a CIA threat assessment but did not share with the public what that assessment was, when Bush delayed to release the Reagan presidential papers, violating a post-Watergate law and protecting those in his administration who were involved in the Iran-Contra crimes when they worked for Reagan and Bush *padre*, when the House of Representatives passed the US Patriot Act without reading it or holding a hearing or public debate about it, when Bush and Cheney urged Tom Daschle not to make an inquiry related to 9/11 (when the inquiry finally did take place it was a tragic piece of political obfuscation), when thousands of librarians started destroying records so that federal agents would have nothing to seize under the Patriot Act, when convicted felon Vice Admiral John Poindexter began to run a clandestine new government agency known as the Information Awareness Office, when the government created a no-fly list in order to prevent certain political dissidents (like some members of the Green Party) from using commercial airplanes, when former CIA director Tenet told the country there was no 9/11 intelligence failure, when the U.S. military unveiled the Total Information Awareness System, when FBI director Mueller denied that information related to any aspect of the September 11 plot crossed his desk before that fateful day when the Twin Towers collapsed, when the Pentagon started to consider the creation of execution chambers for Camp Delta detainees in Guantanamo Bay, when Bush *hijo* opposed establishing a special independent commission to probe how the government dealt with terror warnings before 9/11 (he finally consented to a "token" commission after public pressure), when Ashcroft permitted government agents to monitor domestic religious and political groups without advanced approval from superiors, and when Bush unveiled Operation Tips, a program encouraging Americans to spy on each other, and when the U.S. death toll kept mounting in Iraq long after Bush *hijo* appeared (in a flight suit) on the deck of an aircraft carrier, revealing his trademark smirk and a proud set of ungainly gonads, bragging: Mission Accomplished! But these incidents don't seem to phase the American public, partly because they are played down in the news shows and partly because many citizens have become exceptionally adept at hearing only what they want to hear (McLaren, 2003). And that's

really not such a difficult task when the official media are there to nudge you along.

The sheer duplicity and hypocrisy of the Bush administration was in glaring evidence recently, when it allowed three known international terrorists into Florida, to the thronging crowds of a fanatical Miami anti-Castro community. Members of the infamous Posada gang arrived in Miami after being released by Panamanian authorities after serving a short sentence for attempting to assassinate Fidel Castro during a 2000 international summit in Panama. While the most notorious member of this anti-Castro cell, Luis Posada Carriles, who participated in numerous acts of terrorism—among them blowing up an Air Cuban passenger plane in 1976, killing seventy-three civilians—is seeking asylum in the United States (in fact, he has just been released to house arrest before waiting to be tried for illegally entering the United States), his confederates, Guillermo Novo Sampol, Gaspar Jimenez, and Pedro Remon, are in the safe hands of Miami millionaires. Novo once fired a bazooka at the UN building in 1979 and is said to have assassinated former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier and his American colleague, Ronni Moffitt, in Washington. Jimenez was once imprisoned in Mexico for murdering a Cuban consulate official and Remon was imprisoned for conspiring to kill Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations. The Bush administration has not indicated any intention of detaining or deporting Novo, Jimenez, and Remon, even though they have deported hundreds of foreigners on the mere suspicion of having links to terrorists (see Sweig and Kornbluh 2004). God's Holy Warrior, after all, has a brother who is the governor of Florida, and the Posada gang arrived during an election year. And you won't b hearing much about the U.S. support for a Pakistani group, called Jundullah, led by a Taliban which participates in cross-border attacks on Iranian soldiers and officials (Blum, 2007).

On the recent release on bail of Luis Posada Carriles, President Fidel Castro (2007) writes:

> George W. Bush is undoubtedly the most genuine representative of a system of terror forced on the world by the technological, economic and political superiority of the most powerful country known to this planet. For this reason, we share the tragedy of the American people and their ethical values. The instructions for the verdict issued by Judge Kathleen Cardone, of the El Paso Federal Court last Friday, granting Luis Posada Carriles freedom on bail, could only have come from the White House.
>
> It was President Bush himself who ignored at all times the criminal and terrorist nature of the defendant who was protected with a simple accusation of immigration violation leveled at him. The reply is brutal. The government of

> the United States and its most representative institutions had already decided to release the monster.
>
> The backgrounds are well-known and reach far back. The people who trained him and ordered him to destroy a Cuban passenger plane in midair, with 73 athletes, students and other Cuban and foreign travelers on board, together with its dedicated crew; those who bought his freedom while the terrorist was held in prison in Venezuela, so that he could supply and practically conduct a dirty war against the people of Nicaragua, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and the devastation of a country for decades to come; those who empowered him to smuggle with drugs and weapons making a mockery of the laws of Congress; those who collaborated with him to create the terrible Operation Condor and to internationalize terror; the same who brought torture, death and often the physical disappearance of hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans, could not possibly act any different.
>
> Even though Bush's decision was to be expected, it is certainly no less humiliating for our people. Thanks to the revelations of *"Por Esto!"* a Mexican publication from the state of Quintana Roo later complemented by our own sources, Cuba knew with absolute precision how Posada Carriles entered from Central America, via Cancun, to the Isla Mujeres departing from there on board the Santrina, after the ship was inspected by the Mexican federal authorities, heading with other terrorists straight to Miami.

Recently the South Common Market, MERCOSUR (made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela), urged Washington to take Luis Posada Carriles to trial. Posada Carriles was a CIA member linked to the terrorist Movimiento Nacionalista Cubano, which carried out covert actions against Cuba from the United States, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (it has been alleged that Posada Carriles was involved in the 1963 assassination of US President John F. Kennedy) . He is backed by the ultra-right Cuban American National Foundation based in Florida. Posada Carriles created a terrorist organization in 1997 in Central America where he recruited mercenaries who were given 14 bombs to be detonated in Cuba, eight of which exploded in Havana tourists resorts.

Rarely has any country been in such total control by the media. That's why you don't hear much about the U.S. support for terrorists such as Florida's anti-Castro terrorists or the Contra terrorists of Nicaragua. The media turns the other way in deference to its corporate owners. And students are deprived of the real history of its government. A recent opinion poll, conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, found that one third of the American public believed that American military forces had found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Approximately 22 percent said that Iraq had actually used chemical or bio-

logical weapons in the war. Other polls have reported that some 50 per-cent of those questioned believed Iraqi citizens participated in the September 11 attacks, while 40 percent believed that Saddam Hussein directly assisted the hijack-bombers (see Program on International Policy Attitudes, <www.americans-world.org/digest/regional_issues/ConflictIraq/linkstoTerr.cfm>). This reflects the staggering power of the U.S. corporate media as a whole—and not just Fox TV—to distort dramatically the facts in favor of the Bush administration and the business elite.

We are worriedly aware the captains of U.S. media have realized (perhaps more fully than anyone else) that the more pervasive the lie, the more it will be harmonized with everyday common sense. One glaringly inconspicuous manifestation of this ideological process is the way in which the term "democracy" is constantly conflated with the "free market." These two terms are yolked together as frequently as the term weapons of mass destruction is spoken in the same breath as any foreign leader whose national resources we have decided to acquire and whose markets we seek to control. The "free market" is collapsed into exchangeable referents: "jobs," "wealth," "political stability," and "security." Capitalism has always been the "religion" of individualism, of individual rights, of constitutional freedom, and of private property. Given this reading, a successful socialist economy would obviously appear threatening to democracy. Democracy and the free market have struck a sweetheart deal. The capitalist values that adhere to the concept of "democracy" like flies to a sticky tongue of flypaper preclude any real challenge to its sacred resting place in the structural unconscious of the U.S. public. How we are blessed by providence! How we are able to sleep soundly at night! We don't hear the screams of those innocent civilians flayed alive by our iron fragmentation bombs.

Personally, we believe that the Bush *junta* is so self-discrediting that it doesn't need a commentary such as ours to make a case against it. Yet we offer our perspective, nevertheless, if only because of the shameful lack of venues available these days for an analysis of the Bush administration (although the situation has been improving since early 2006). For all his self-inflating rhetoric about cleaning up the Middle East of its freedom-hating terrorists, his stagey relish for challenging evil-doers, and his dyspeptic remarks about his antiwar critics being nothing more than punk ass revisionists, we believe there is a strong case for impeaching our commander-in-chief for using misleading evidence to bring the country into war. The Bush administration's arguments about Iraq's so-called imminent danger to the safety of the United States and world-at-large constituted a flagrant lie to the American people and a shameful abuse of power that would increase terrorist threats. The deployment of America's vast military machine was

undertaken for reasons Bush and his entire foreign-policy apparatus knew to be based on false and falsified information. No government leader in Europe or the Middle East regarded Iraq as a serious threat to their safety (with the exception of the blubbering Blair). The UN weapons inspectors had for months been unable to locate any weapons of mass destruction, despite meticulous searching.

While the White House hawks presented the attack on Iraq as an extension of the "war on terrorism," it was revealed that the Bush administration had drawn up plans to use military force to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein well in advance of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. September 11 was seized upon as a pretext to shape pubic opinion in favor of the war and now the flagrant White House lies about the extent of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction have come to light. Consider the June 15 edition of NBC's Meet the Press. During the show, former General Wesley Clark—himself the ruthless military architect of the destruction of Yugoslavia—told anchor Tim Russert that Bush administration officials had engaged in a campaign to implicate Saddam Hussein in the September 11 attacks on the very day of the attacks. Clark said that he'd been called on by Bush administration officials on September 11 and urged to link the regime of Saddam Hussein to the terror attacks. Clark declined to do so because of a lack of evidence (not surprisingly, there was little media coverage of Clark's remarks during the presidential primaries). Even former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz later admitted that the charge that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction was selected for "bureaucratic reasons"—that is, it was the one allegation that the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA all agreed could provide a workable excuse for a U.S. invasion. The editors of the World Socialist Web site (Editorial Board 2003) captured the essence of this situation with the following remark: "Not since Hitler and the Nazis dressed up storm troopers as Polish soldiers and staged 'attacks' on German positions in 1939 has there been such a flagrant and cynical effort to manufacture a casus belli."

The Bush family ties to the Nazi Party are well known among historians but not the general public. The 1994 book written by Mark Aarons and John Loftus, The *Secret War against the Jews*, uses official U.S. documents to establish that George Herbert Walker, George W. Bush's maternal great-grandfather, was one of Hitler's most important early backers who "funneled money to the rising young fascist through the Union Banking Corporation" (Fitrakis and Wasserman, 2003). Walker arranged to have his new son-in-law, Prescott Bush—father of President George Bush I, grandfather of George Bush II—hired as vice president of W. A. Harriman and Company in 1926. Prescott became a senior partner when Harriman merged

with a British-American investment company to become Brown Brothers Harriman. In 1934 Prescott Bush joined the board of directors of Union Banking and assisted in the efforts to put Hitler and the Nazis into power. It has also been documented that Prescott Bush knowingly served as a money launderer for the Nazis (Fitrakis and Wasserman 2003). The Bush Jr. administration takes pride in having Karl Rove as its primary political strategist. Fitrakis and Wasserman (2003) write:

> The shadowy Rove serves as "Bush's Brain" in the current White House. He is the political mastermind behind the California coup, and is now in the headlines for outing Valerie Plame, the CIA wife of Ambassador Joseph Wilson. A consummate strategist, Rove may have outed Plame in retaliation for Wilson's failure to back up the Bush claim that Saddam Hussein was buying nuclear weapons materials in Africa. According to some published reports, as many as seventy CIA operatives have been put at risk by Rove's retaliatory strike. . . . Rove, who has been based in Utah and associated with the Mormon Church, is widely viewed as the chief engineer of the current Bush administration. He and Tom DeLay are attempting to force the Texas legislature to redistrict its Congressional delegations, adding seven sure seats to the Republican column. By controlling the state houses in New York, Florida, Texas, and California, the GOP would have a lock on the four largest states in the union, and thus the ability to manipulate vote counts and strip voter registration rolls in the run-up to the 2004 election. Rove is a prime behind-the-scenes mover in the Schwarzenegger campaign.

Fitrakis and Wasserman (2003) further note:

> According to Bob Woodward's *Bush at War*, Bush attended a New York Yankees game soon after the September 11 World Trade Center disaster. He wore a fireman's jacket. As he threw out the first pitch, the crowd roared. Thousands of fans stuck out their arms with thumbs up. Karl Rove, sitting in the box of Yankee owner George Steinbrenner, likened the roar of the crowd to "a Nazi rally."

Again, while we recognize that many of the comparisons of the Bush junta to the Nazis are facile and overdrawn, we feel obliged to mention the current use of torture by the U.S. military. According to Ross and Esposito (2005), the CIA have described a list of six "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" instituted in mid-March 2002 and reportedly used on al Qaeda targets incarcerated at secret locations on military bases in regions from Asia to Eastern Europe. A number of CIA interrogators have been trained and authorized to use the following techniques:

1. The Attention Grab: The interrogator forcefully grabs the shirt front of the prisoner and shakes him;

2. Attention Slap: An open-handed slap aimed at causing pain and triggering fear;
3. The Belly Slap: A hard open-handed slap to the stomach. The aim is to cause pain, but not internal injury. Doctors consulted advised against using a punch, which could cause lasting internal damage;
4. Long Time Standing: This technique is described as among the most effective. Prisoners are forced to stand, handcuffed and with their feet shackled to an eye bolt in the floor for more than 40 hours. Exhaustion and sleep deprivation are effective in yielding confessions;
5. The Cold Cell: The prisoner is left to stand naked in a cell kept near 50 degrees (Fahrenheit). Throughout the time in the cell the prisoner is doused with cold water;
6. Water Boarding: The prisoner is bound to an inclined board, feet raised and head slightly below the feet. Cellophane is wrapped over the prisoner's face and water is poured over him. Unavoidably, the gag reflex kicks in and a terrifying fear of drowning leads to almost instant pleas to bring the treatment to a halt. (Ross and Esposito, 2005).

According to Andrew Sullivan (2007), the phrase "enhanced interrogation techniques" was introduced by the Nazis. The German "Verschärfte Vernehmung" is German for "enhanced interrogation", "intensified interrogation" or "sharpened interrogation". According to Sullivan, "It's a phrase that appears to have been concocted in 1937, to describe a form of torture that would leave no marks, and hence save the embarrassment pre-war Nazi officials were experiencing as their wounded torture victims ended up in court." The methods, according to Sullivan, "are indistinguishable from those described as 'enhanced interrogation techniques' " by Bush Jr. The use of hypothermia, like that authorized by Bush and Rumsfeld, was initially forbidden by the Nazis and so was 'water boarding'. Sullivan reports that water boarding was pioneered by a member of the French Gestapo by the pseudonym Masuy about 1943 and the Gestapo authorized its extension from France to at least two places late in the war, Norway and Czechoslovakia. Norway's 1948 war-crimes trials detailed the prosecution of Nazis convicted of "enhanced interrogation techniques" in the Second World War. Sullivan writes:

> Freezing prisoners to near-death, repeated beatings, long forced-standing, waterboarding, cold showers in air-conditioned rooms, stress positions [Arrest mit Verschaerfung], withholding of medicine and leaving wounded or sick prisoners alone in cells for days on end - all these have occurred at US detention camps under the command of president George W. Bush. Over a hundred documented deaths have occurred in these interrogation sessions.

The "stress positions", photographed at Abu Ghraib and used at Bagram to murder an innocent detainee were also used by the Nazis at the Dachau concentration camp. They have been described by Sullivan as follows:

> The hands were tied together closely with a cord on the back of the prisoner, raised then the body and hung the cord to a hook, which was attached into two meters height in a tree, so that the feet in air hung. The whole body weight rested thus at the joints bent to the rear. The minimum period of hanging up was a half hour. To remain there three hours hung up, was pretty often. This punishment was carried out at least twice weekly.

Sullivan concludes his discussion of torture techniques sanctioned by the Bush regime as follows:

> Critics will no doubt say I am accusing the Bush administration of being Hitler. I'm not. There is no comparison between the political system in Germany in 1937 and the U.S. in 2007. What I am reporting is a simple empirical fact: the interrogation methods approved and defended by this president are not new. Many have been used in the past. The very phrase used by the president to describe torture-that-isn't-somehow-torture - "enhanced interrogation techniques" - is a term originally coined by the Nazis. The techniques are indistinguishable. The methods were clearly understood in 1948 as war-crimes. The punishment for them was death.

THE QUESTION OF EMPIRE

> Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and host of the daily Christian radio show The Albert Mohler Program: "Well, I would have to say as a Christian that I believe any belief system, any world view, whether it's Zen Buddhism or Hinduism or dialectical materialism for that matter, Marxism, that keeps persons captive and keeps them from coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, yes, is a demonstration of satanic power." Retrieved from AlterNet, December 28, 2006 at: <http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/45983/>

As we touched upon briefly in chapter two, Peter Hudis (2003) has importantly underscored that which distinguishes today's imperialism from that of previous periods. One factor is that the United States no longer seeks direct territorial control of the rest of the world, in contrast to its behavior during the classic stage of imperialist-colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. After World War II, the United States shifted toward more indirect methods of domination through the creation of local surrogates and by relying on economic compulsion. Whereas imperialism once tried to disguise the tendency in the decline of the rate of profits through the extraction of super-profits from exploited lands overseas, the

tendency of the rate of profit to decline is now what openly drives capital's quest for imperialist expansion. Hudis further notes that the export of capital was once the prime motive for imperialist expansion whereas now capitalist production compels dominant capitals to incorporate and submit to the domination of foreign national capital. The United States, for instance, was once the world's biggest exporter of capital but ever since the Vietnam War it has shifted from a creditor nation to a debtor nation whose importation of surplus capital (mostly from Europe and Asia) has become a defining feature of the world economy. Foreign companies continue to invest in the United States because here wages are low and health benefits are shrinking, and workers are being layed off, which has created a phenomena of rising productivity (production increases while employment decreases—a jobless economic recovery). The militarization of the U.S. economy in its drive for permanent war has also helped to attract foreign capital to the United States since the country that rules the world militarily allegedly provides the most stability for investment.

The vicissitudes and contingencies of imperialism have brought into question the expansion—or impending fall—of what is commonly referred to as the American empire. While Peter Hudis expands on Lenin's view of imperialism as rooted in the notion of state capital, and not only private capital, he argues that the new age of imperialism is at a point of rupture. Hudis remarks:

> Just as the emergence of "classical" imperialism blinded many of its most astute critiques (like Hilferding and Bukharin) into emphasizing its role as "stabilizer" of capitalism rather than that which portends endless, even permanent crises of disequilibrium, so today, the U.S.'s unmatched global dominance has many thinking the same, when in fact the whole edifice is shaky and prone to severe crisis, if not "transformation into opposite." (Author's personal communication with Peter Hudis 2003)

In direct contrast to Hudis, James Petras believes that U.S. imperial dominance is in no danger of immediate or near future collapse. For Petras, two simultaneously existing U.S.-based economies suggest that, in fact, the gluttonous feast is far from over. Rooted in both a domestic and international economy, the U.S. Empire (while on a domestic economic downturn) has demonstrated resilience internationally. In fact, both economies mutually inform one another since "the high profits earned by the MNC's [multinational corporations] relocated throughout the new colonial and semicolonial economies of Asia and Latin America strengthen imperial institutions while weakening the domestic economy, its budget financing and its external accounts" (Petras, 2003, p. 10). According to Petras, U.S.-based multinational corporations (MNCs) represent the impetus of economic empire-

building. Saturating a handful of economic sectors that include, among others, oil and gas, U.S.-owned-and-operated MNCs currently represent nearly half of the top 500 companies of the world while its subservient counterpart, Europe, and eager rival, Japan, lag far behind (Petras, 2003, pp. 3-4). Key to this view is the assertion that "no state can aspire to global dominance if its principle economic institutions do not exercise a paramount role in the world economy" (Petras, 2003, p. 4). In pursuit of increased profit making and control over competitors such as Europe and Japan, U.S. MNCs currently exist in an ascending phase in the global world order. Petras concludes that an increasing share of profits and the exercise of military force places the United States as the dominant empire provocateur.

With a significant portion of the world's wealth tucked neatly under its bedside pillow, the United States shamelessly decides how many lives will be relinquished as "collateral damage," marking it the "most powerful and aggressive superpower" in history (Petras 2003). But the relationship between the military and economic empire builders is far from fluid. Under the Bush regime, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld notoriously exacerbated tensions between those who are in sole pursuit of economic conquest by military means and those who consider themselves military professionals by design. Petras (2003) describes this phenomenon thusly:

> There is no doubt that Rumsfeld has been the controlling figure in the formulation and execution of the strategy of world military conquest—an imperial strategy which closely resembles that of Nazi Germany. Rumsfeld's concentration of power within the imperial elite and the hostility toward the professionals was dramatically expressed by his nomination of retired General Schoomaker, former commander of the Special Forces "Delta," which was described to me by senior military officers at the Delta headquarters at Fort Bragg as a collection of "psychopaths trained to murder." Clearly the ex-Delta general was selected precisely because his ideological and behavioral profile fits in with Rumsfeld's own Nazi propensities. (p. 15)

And while the military professional "intelligentsia" may covertly object to ideological demagoguery lacking sufficient military expertise, it hasn't slowed down the momentum of the empire builders. The fact that economic empire builders are able to secure and expand their economic interests at the expense of an overzealous militant cabal is a small price to pay for the inordinate super profits that will result from obtaining the obvious: control over untapped markets. Key to the expansion of empire is a sophisticated military apparatus that on the surface is seemingly able to "disarm" its host and force it to submit to "economic empire-building" (Petras, 2003, p. 6). All of this leads Petras to the affirmation that "the notion of an 'over-

extended' empire is a piece of a historical speculation . . . the benefits of empire building go to the overseas and domestic corporate elite, the costs are paid by U.S. taxpayers and the low income families which provide the combat and occupation soldiers" (2003, p. 7). And while the U.S. domestic economy is in decline, the general populace up to the moment has showed no signs of mounting an uprising against a bludgeoning domestic deficit, against the thousands of corpses returning from Iraq, or against the eviscerated state capacity to offer social services such as health and education. Rather, as stated by Scheer (2003), "too many Americans betray the proud tradition of an independent citizenry by buying into the 'aw shucks' irresponsibility of a president who daily does a grave injustice to the awesome obligations of the office that he has sworn—in the name of God, no less—to uphold" (p. B11).

Currently the majority of U.S. citizens are enjoying the "empire chic" status of the victor and comforting themselves with the notion that, although no weapons of mass destruction were found, mass graves of Saddam's enemies were. This ignores the whole question of organized deception on the part of the Bush administration and his cabal of hawks and conforms to the fascist vocabulary of the newly minted Bush doctrine of preventative war. Those justifying the war on the basis of Saddam's mass graveyards are all too willing to discount the duplicitous reason for which Bush claims to have gone to war and therefore support the notion that the ends justify the means. Are those people who support the war for humanitarian reasons aware that many of Saddam's victims were the result of his reprisals after 1991, when Bush *padre* exhorted the Iraqis to rise up against Saddam, only to abandon them later on to the ensuing slaughter?

It may seem quixotic for us to remark that we believe another world outside of capitalism's military industrial precinct is possible. We believe that calling for a socialist future is more than a hollow paean to the revolution by cross-grained polemicists but instead constitutes a creditable –and necessary—stance given the crisis of over accumulation and overcapacity that drives capital's endless wars and environmental destruction. Marxists have unpacked the whole discreditable logic upon which capitalism rests, and we would do well to take stock of those arguments today in our struggle to lay the groundwork for a future of peace and prosperity. George Katsiaficas (2003) is correct when he identifies the true "axis of evil" as composed of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Their policies and practices clearly means more poverty for nations on the periphery of the world system, and have led to a dynamic "of increasing political democracy in the North coinciding with intensified exploitation in the South" (Katsiaficas, 2003, p. 348).

GOD'S DOBERMANS

The cameras were rolling last October as Rod Parsley took to the Statehouse steps in Columbus to announce the kick-off of his grassroots group, Reformation Ohio. Bolstered by a bused-in crowd of supporters, Republican gubernational candidate Ken Blackwell, rappers, and a dance troupe, Parsley grabbed the microphone and sounded the call to arms.

"A Holy ghost invasion is taking place!" he called. "Man your battle stations, ready your weapons, lock and load. Let the reformation begin!"

…[A] plea for money is a staple of Parsley's services, with people urged to stand up, raise their hands, or hold their cash in the air. Parsley routinely exhorts church members and viewers of his television show to donate (or "sow a seed") with the expectation that God will bless them 30, 60, or 100 times.

Parsley has written that "the power to create wealth is one of God's gifts under the covenant" and that James 5:3, 7 promises "that in the last days there is going to be a great transfer of wealth [to Christians]."

He is living proof of the "success" of this prosperity gospel. News reports and property records have detailed his 7,000-square-foot home, his San Diego vacation property, and his two $60,000 vehicles. In high demand as a speaker, Parsley travels everywhere by private jet, even to Botkins, a small town two hours by car from his base near Columbus.

--Nate Anderson (November, 2006). Meet the Patriot Pastors. *Christianity Today Magazine*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/november/21.46.html>

Borrowing from Callinicos (2003), we reject the bourgeois anti-capitalism that critiques civil society but ultimately endorses the proposition that market capitalism is the best solution for meeting the overall needs of humankind. We reject, as well, localist anti-capitalism that endorses economic self-sufficiency by means of micro relationships among producers and consumers because this simply paves the way for market efficiency. Reformist anti-capitalism shares a similar problematic solution, the least of which is an endorsement of a more regulated capitalism at the level of the nation-state. The most egregious effects of the capitalist system cannot be eliminated by taming the global corporation or by trying to make their CEOs more socially conscious. Decentralized networks characteristic of autonomist anti-capitalism is illustrative of a type of radical democracy in which decentralization and the deterritorialized multitude replaces the anti-state approach of the proletariat of classical Marxism. We prefer a socialist anti-capitalist approach that is non-sectarian and promotes a conception of the world in which the working-class is still the most important agent of social

transformation (Callinicos, 2003). We adopt a multiracial, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist approach that struggles to bring about a world in which everyone has equal access to the resources that they need in order to live a valuable and worthwhile life. Such an assertion is based on need and not productive contribution (Callinicos, 2003). We do not focus here on the immediate needs of the workers that can be met in a "social partnership" with capital, but on the needs of the global community of immiserated and disenfranchised workers.

The search for social transformation in the form of redistributive justice—that is, striving to equalize material resources under existing conditions of global capitalism—often works to console those who are oppressed rather than to provoke them to rise up against the world of capitalism. It is a way of temporarily seeking relief from capitalism by ultimately adapting to its inevitability through a struggle to create more humane forms of its instantiation. It helps to soothe or console alienated workers by finding temporary relief from their enslavement to capitalism and its attendant suffering. Especially among the privileged strata, the struggle for social justice ultimately rationalizes and thus further integrates their parasitic relationship to the oppressed since they can unknot the tightening noose of capitalism without having to cut the rope that is strangling the disenfranchised. It enables them to cling to power and maintain economic security while having the appearance of being progressive. It affords them the opportunity to advertise their discontent with capitalism without having to root out and transform the social relations of exploitation and property relations in which their parasitism is uncomfortably nested and upon which the scaffold is built to render a final judgement against the propertyless. Often social justice agendas do more for the privileged strata than they do for the oppressed classes because they address the myriad contradictions that surround the lives of the oppressed and alleviate some of the pain and confusion associated with it. In other words, social justice agendas ease the psychological suffering of the privileged strata while at the same time camouflage their complicity in a system that is inextricably bound up with the suffering of the masses, a suffering that can only be alleviated by slicing through the Gordian knot of capital and moving toward a socialist alternative.

For many of us who were part of the burgeoning U.S. antiwar movement, protesting at every turn the Bush administration prior to its invasion of Iraq, hope seemed to be within grasp as momentum against the Bush *junta* was building worldwide. But shortly after the ground invasion began, the antiwar movement began to stagger, as many of the protestors were not prepared to continue their activism once U.S. troops were in the war theater itself. What seemed like a light at the end of the tunnel for the U.S. Left

was really Bush *hijo* igniting a flame-thrower, incinerating the dream of a new revolutionary dawn. With the mighty chains of his Christian faith, Bush has hoisted his conscience onto the biblical back of God, to whose wrath he has faithfully committed himself and his armies of invasion. Bush wraps his depleted uranium shells in the "divine right of kings" and the doctrine of U.S. Manifest Destiny before hurling them into the theater of war with the deftness of a Super Bowl quarterback. As U.S. weapons of mass destruction effortlessly saw through tendon and bone, blast apart organs and incinerate flesh with a vengeful fury, Bush sleeps as soundly as the several hundred thousand innocent Iraqi civilians that he has recently killed, and remains oblivious to the wails and shrieks of the countless numbers that he has left orphaned and crippled. Bush follows the footsteps of those raging prophets of the religious right whose mission is to defeat those "secular jihadists" and members of the "pagan left" who have hijacked America from the Christian ideals of the Founding Fathers. Those liberal "hordes from hell" must be crushed by the "forces of righteousness" in the form of Christian gladiators and prayer warriors who will bring Christian values to the public square. Bush supports organizations such as the Center for Moral Clarity in Ohio that has been set up to defend the American flag from being desecrated and for confirming conservative federal judges.

After his routine three-mile jog and bedtime prayers, the former Governor of Texas who set the record for most executions by any governor in American history has learned to unburden his heart by invoking the *Lord Jesus* for foreign policy direction. His mind unimpeded by the power of analysis, Bush unhesitatingly made his decision to invade and occupy Iraq "because be believes, he truly believes, that God squats in his brainpan and tells him what to do" (Floyd, 2003, p. 4). The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* was given transcripts of a negotiating session between Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and faction leaders from Hamas and other militant groups. In these transcripts, Abbas described his recent summit with Ariel Sharon and Bush *hijo*. During the summit, Bush told Abbas: "God told me to strike at al Qaeda and I struck them, and then He instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me I will act, and if not, the elections will come and I will have to focus on them" (Regular, 2003, p. 1). Bush should consult any standard copy of proverbs, maxims, and phrases where he would likely encounter the following saying: He that preaches a war when it might well be avoided is the devil's chaplain. But perhaps such a maxim doesn't apply to a sitting U.S. president who speaks directly to God.

Meeting privately with a group of Old Order Amish during a visit to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, President Bush asked them to vote for him in November. When told by the Amish that not all members of the church vote but they would pray for him, Bush's eyes reportedly moistened. Brubaker (2004) describes Bush's response as follows: "Bush had tears in his eyes when he replied. He said the president needs their prayers. He also said that having a strong belief in God is the only way he can do his job. . . . At the end of the session, Bush reportedly told the group, 'I trust God speaks through me. Without that, I couldn't do my job."

Like 55 percent of his fellow Americans, Bush *hijo* has been born again. His evangelical Christian perspective converges on the absolute authority and literal truth of the Bible and the redemptive power of Jesus. When asked by journalist Bob Woodward if he had ever doubted his invasion of Iraq, no wonder Bush retorted: "I haven't suffered any doubt" (cited in Steinberg 2004). According to Jonathan Steinberg (2004), "In the president's view, to doubt his policy would be to doubt his God-given calling." Approximately 55 percent of those who voted for Bush in 2000 had placed moral reform as their highest political priority. The vast majority of evangelicals who make up 30 percent of the U.S. population voted for Bush in 2004 since this election represented for them "the ultimate struggle between good and evil in American life" (Steinberg 2004). The view of Republican Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma—who told supporters that a vote against George Bush was a vote for Osama bin Laden and Adolf Hitler—may seem ludicrous to non-evangelicals, but is not particularly disturbing in light of Bush *hijo's* State of the Union message of 2002 in which he called Iran, Iraq, and North Korea "the axis of evil" and threw down the gauntlet of the holy warrior. After his address, Bush proclaimed to an audience in Daytona Beach: "We've got a great opportunity. . . . As a result of evil, there are some amazing things that are taking place in America. People have begun to challenge the culture of the past that said, 'If it feels good, do it.' This great nation has a chance to change the culture" (cited in Steinberg 2004). But what kind of culture is Bush advancing? A culture in which people have no hesitation in invading other sovereign countries who are clearly no immediate threat, and a culture in which violence against "evil-doers" should never be second-guessed.

The jackhammer spiritual logic that is pervasive among the numerous evangelical troops that make up the U.S. occupation force in Iraq equates their mission as a battle waged on behalf of God. Sage Stossel (2004) writes that on Palm Sunday, before a scheduled attack by the United States on an Iraqi target, "a military chaplain issued a blessing in which he reminded them [the troops] that it was Palm Sunday and referred to the task

at hand as 'a spiritual battle' and to the Marines themselves as 'tools of mercy.'" Of course, there are some servicemen who are confused about their role as mercy relief and about killing those branded by Bush *hijo* as "evil-doers." Patrolling Najaf, Iraq, Spc. Joshua Dubois of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment recently confessed: "I'm confused about how I should feel about killing. . . . The first time I shot someone, it was the most exhilarating thing I'd ever felt. . . . We talk about killing all the time. . . . I never used to talk this way. I'm not proud of it, but it's like I can't stop. I'm worried what I will be like when I get home" (Duhigg, 2004, p. A1). Capt. Brandon Payne is similarly worried about killing: "I'm a Christian. I feel I'm saving my soldiers' lives by destroying as many enemy as I can. But at the end of the day, I pray to God. I worry about my soul" (Duhigg, 2004, p. A11). If we are to believe President Bush, he shares no such doubt; however, he has never had to kill anyone in cold blood, having successfully avoided being drafted to Vietnam. Or perhaps Bush just has more Christian faith. No doubt Bush would be proudest of the soldiers who reveal absolutely no ambivalence about exterminating "evil-doers." Duhigg (2004) reports:

> "I enjoy killing Iraqis," says Staff Sgt. William Deaton, 30, who killed a hostile fighter the night before. Deaton has lost a good friend in Iraq. "I just feel rage, hate when I'm out there. I feel like I carry it all the time. We talk about it. We all feel the same way." Sgt. Cleveland T. Rogers, 25, avoids dwelling on his actions. "The other day an Iraqi guy was hit real bad, he was gonna die within an hour, but he was still alive and he started saying, 'Baby, baby,' telling me he has a kid," Rogers says. "I mentioned it to my guys after the mission. It doesn't bother me. It can't bother me. If it was the other way around, I'm sure it wouldn't bother him." (p. A11)

Often critics of the Bush administration will make the point that criticizing Bush Junior is too easy, that the serious problems that need to be addressed are part of wider decisions by his administration and tied to policies, ideologies, and social relations of the U.S. ruling class, whether Republican or Democrat. Of course, this observation is true. But it is also true that Bush, with his "taunting jack-o'-lantern grin" (Wolcott 2004, 23), reflects the spirit of the country, his persona embodies what, idealistically, the country would like to project as its national character, a window into the soul of the country. In short, the president is what E. L. Doctorow (2004) calls the "artificer of our malleable national soul." He writes:

> The president we get is the country we get. With each president the nation is conformed spiritually. He is the artificer of our malleable national soul. He proposes not only the laws but the kinds of lawlessness that govern our lives and invoke our responses. The people he appoints are cast in his image. The

> trouble they get into and get us into, is his characteristic trouble. Finally, the media amplify his character into our moral weather report. He becomes the face of our sky, the conditions that prevail.

What does this say about the country when we have elected somebody of the character and mettle of President Bush, besides an annoying admission that the country has put itself and its national credibility at risk with the rest of the world? It says that, to a large extent, Americans are an insular lot, who are still easy prey for the populist rhetoric (however phony) of someone with whom they can identify as "just folks." They love the I-don't-care-about-what-any-foreigner-thinks-of-this-country temper and rhetoric displayed by its conservative politicians and for the most part are not adverse to a go-it-alone philosophy when it comes to foreign policy. But what is it about this president that especially irks so many of us? Is it that he is so good at playing a Texan that the self-parody is lost on most people, that he manages the art of deception with such characteristic ease that we are willing to enjoy his uncomfortableness with the English language and his petulant smirk? Perhaps. But we believe it has more to do with his hollow sincerity and incapacity to feel empathy and compassion, despite his claims to the contrary. E. L. Doctorow (2004) captures this dimension of Bush when he writes:

> He is the president who does not feel. He does not feel for the families of the dead, he does not feel for the 35 million of us who live in poverty, he does not feel for the 40 percent who cannot afford health insurance, he does not feel for the miners whose lungs are turning black or for the working people he has deprived of the chance to work overtime at time-and-a-half to pay their bills—it is amazing for how many people in this country this president does not feel. But he will dissemble feeling. He will say in all sincerity he is relieving the wealthiest 1 percent of the population of their tax burden for the sake of the rest of us, and that he is polluting the air we breathe for the sake of our economy, and that he is decreasing the quality of air in coal mines to save the coal miners' jobs, and that he is depriving workers of their time-and-a-half benefits for overtime because this is actually a way to honor them by raising them into the professional class. And this litany of lies he will versify with reverences for God and the flag and democracy, when just what he and his party are doing to our democracy is choking the life out of it.

The sight of the Highway of Death (the destruction that took place on the road from Mutlaa, Kuwait, to Basra, Iraq) after the Persian Gulf War, where U.S. forces slaughtered tens of thousands of retreating Iraqi soldiers (and most likely fleeing civilians) in an infamous strike that was described as "shooting sheep in a pen," apparently was not enough for the likes of the hard-line neocon movement around Bush Jr. Nor apparently was the

American-led embargo of Iraq that in over ten years killed half a million Iraqi children (an action of violence that rivaled any committed by the homicidal maniac Saddam). But now that Iraq is in U.S. hands, some of the most fervent warmongers among the Bush advisors—Bush, Rice, and Cheney—for whom brokering a political compromise is tantamount to anti-Americanism, worry that opportunities to use the terror of al-Qaeda to launch a holy war against more evil Islamic nations are perilously waning, and further opportunities to redraw the map of the Middle East through naked military power might be lost (at least until the next major terrorist strike on U.S. soil). When, in 1973, Henry Kissinger (then Nixon's national security advisor) referred to military men as "dumb, stupid animals to be used" as pawns for foreign policy, he was reflecting what is still the prevailing attitude within the U.S. military-industrial complex. One of the most alarming aspects of life in the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, has been the religious punditry that characterizes Bush's claim to be a special Viceroy of God.

In the eyes of many U.S. citizens, this claim has provided Bush *hijo* with the moral authority not only to order the nation's "dumb, stupid animals" into war, but also to turn the carnage inflicted by the world's most fearsome military machine into a mass graveyard for evil-doers who have been designated by his administration as enemies of civilization. Unerring on punctilio when it comes to internalizing the monstrous banality of a Manichean universe of demons and deliverers, Bush has been alarmingly effective in putting God's imprimatur on capitalism as the social structure preferred by goodness.

When a war can be prosecuted against sovereign nations "by the working-class against the working-class, for the rich" (Wypijewski, 2004, p. 291), then it is a win-win situation for God's capitalist militia. After all, trusting in God is the most assured way to become rich, as the evangelical mega-churches so vociferously proclaim in their "prosperity preaching" throughout the country. A recent comment by Jonathan Steinberg (2004) is apposite: "Poverty still exists in America, as Bush argued in the State of the Union address of 2003, because the poor fail to find true Christian charity among their neighbors. Hence, his 'compassionate conservatism' requires 'faith-based initiatives' by local churches and not progressive taxation." And this view pervades the ranks of the U.S. public at a time when the poor are becoming more like contemporary analogates of the Dickensian outcast, the forgotten and the excluded, social excrement that fills the sewers where Marx's reserve army of labor are barracked.

Joe Conason (2003) has compared Bush *hijo's* compassionate conservatism—a sequined idea that allows conservatives to rage against the sins of a

welfare state—to Puritanism and feudalism, contrasting it to modern American values as developed over the last hundred years. Conason notes that public support for the poor and powerless represents for Bush and his evangelical fundamentalist ilk an "affront to God" (although they will tolerate it for temporary partisan expedience). Conason argues further that Bush's evangelical perspective constitutes "an unwholesome stew of libertarian economics and religious orthodoxy" that "exalts church and corporation over the modern democratic state," "condemns democratic initiatives to constrain corporate power or regulate economic activity," and "defines the wealthy as God's elect, even if, like George W. Bush, they have inherited wealth and power that made their lives easy from the beginning" (2003, p. 183). In fact, a case can easily be made that Muslims as a whole have much more favorable opinions about the ideals of democracy than Bush and his cabal of ultraconservative religious sages. Conason writes that Bush's spiritual guru, Marvin Olasky, is financially connected and ideologically aligned to Christian Reconstructionism, which Conason describes as follows:

> The Reconstructionists despise American democracy, the First Amendment, and the separation of church and state. Their ideal society would be ruled by Christians like themselves, according to a literal interpretation of Old Testament biblical law, which prescribes the death penalty for such offenses as homosexuality, abortion, atheism, juvenile delinquency, adultery, and blasphemy. They openly advocate the suppression of other religions, including that of Christians who don't share their interpretation of God's will. (2003, p. 181)

Of course, this version of Christianity benefits the Republican Party as a whole. As Steinberg (2004) notes:

> Large corporations are delighted to accept the evangelical attack on the state. They like to see the Federal Communications Commission relax regulations on media mergers; the Federal Power Commission ease strictures on energy companies; the Environmental Protection Agency modify air pollution regulations; and the Interior Department condone logging in the national parks. Bush easily raises record-breaking sums for his presidential campaigns from all the biggest corporations, even though only a few have evangelical chief executive officers.

JESUS'S GENERAL

While Bush *hijo* has gone out of his way to praise Islam as "a religion of peace" and has invited Muslim clerics to the White House for Ramadan dinners and has publicly opposed labeling Islam a dangerous faith, as is the

wont of some evangelical Christian leaders, it is interesting to note that the Pentagon has assigned the task of tracking down and eliminating Osama bin Laden and other high-profile targets to an army general who characterizes the war on terrorism "as a clash between Judeo-Christian values and Satan" (Cooper, 2003). According to Richard T. Cooper of the *Los Angeles Times*, Lt. Gen. William G. "Jerry" Boykin, the new deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence (whose new high-level policy position at the Pentagon was recently confirmed by the Senate in June) is a celebrated veteran of covert military operations, from the storied 1993 clash with Muslim warlords in Somalia chronicled in "Black Hawk Down" and the hunt for Colombian drug czar Pablo Escobar, to the 1980 failed rescue attempt of American hostages in Iran. He also was an advisor to Attorney General Janet Reno during Waco. What is being studiously avoided by the press is the fact that Boykin, as head of "Delta Force," is presumably implicated in torture at a top-secret prison known as "BIF" (Battlefield Interrogation Facility) at Baghdad airport. The army's elite Delta Force is now the subject of a Pentagon inspector general's investigation into abuse against detainees. According to several top U.S. government sources, BIF is the scene of the most vicious and brutal violations of the Geneva Conventions in all of Iraq's prisons. At this facility the prisoners are allegedly hooded from the moment they are captured, warehoused in tiny dark cells, routinely drugged, and often are held under water or smothered to the point of suffocation. Top Pentagon officials will neither confirm nor deny the existence of Battlefield Interrogation Prison.

Cooper (2003) describes Boykin's new duties as "speeding up the flow of intelligence on terrorist leaders to combat teams in the field so that they can attack top-ranking terrorist leaders." According to Cooper, this former commander and thirteen-year veteran of the army's top-secret Delta Force "is also an outspoken evangelical Christian who appeared in dress uniform and polished jump boots before a religious group in Oregon one mild June day to declare that radical Islamists hated the United States 'because we're a Christian nation, because our foundation and our roots are Judeo-Christian . . . and the enemy is a guy named Satan.'" Last year Boykin is reported to have said: "We in the army of God, in the house of God, kingdom of God have been raised for such a time as this" (Cooper 2003). Boykin has admitted that radical Muslims who resort to terrorism are not representative of the Islamic faith. Cooper reports that Boykin "has compared Islamic extremists to 'hooded Christians' who terrorized blacks, Catholics, Jews and others from beneath the robes of the Ku Klux Klan."

According to military affairs analyst William M. Arkin (2003), Boykin described his battle in Mogadishu, Somalia, as one that pitted the U.S.

forces against a Satanic presence, whose hovering image Boykin claims to have captured in a photograph of the sky over the city:

> In June 2002, Jerry Boykin stepped to the pulpit at the First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and described a set of photographs he had taken of Mogadishu, Somalia, from an army helicopter in 1993. The photographs were taken shortly after the disastrous "Blackhawk Down" mission had resulted in the death of eighteen Americans. When Boykin came home and had them developed, he said, he noticed a strange dark mark over the city. He had an imagery interpreter trained by the military look at the mark. "This is not a blemish on your photograph," the interpreter told him, "This is real." "Ladies and gentlemen, this is your enemy," Boykin said to the congregation as he flashed his pictures on a screen. "It is the principalities of darkness. It is a demonic presence in that city that God revealed to me as the enemy." (Arkin, 2003)

At the pulpit of the Good Shepherd Community Church in Sandy, Oregon, Boykin displayed slides of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and North Korea's Kim Jung II. After posing the question as to why these individuals hate America, he quickly answered his own question: "The answer to that is because we're a Christian nation. We are hated because we are a nation of believers" (Arkin 2003). Boykin also claimed from the pulpit that America's "spiritual enemy will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus" (Arkin 2003). He also proclaimed to the congregation that the faith that the U.S. special operations forces had in God was what gave them victory: "Ladies and gentlemen I want to impress upon you that the battle that we're in is a spiritual battle. Satan wants to destroy this nation, he wants to destroy us as a nation, and he wants to destroy us as a Christian army" (Arkin 2003).

Boykin also sees the actions of providence in the fact that George Bush is now in charge of the White House. While he admits that in the 2000 presidential election "George Bush was not elected by a majority of the voters in the United States," he nevertheless was "appointed by God" (Arkin, 2003). Arkin (2003) recounts a story Boykin told a church congregation in Daytona, Florida. With the fervor of a football player bragging in the locker room that his penis is larger than that of his opponent, Boykin claims that his Christian God is far bigger than that of his Muslim warlord rival:

> "There was a man in Mogadishu named Osman Atto," whom Boykin described as a top lieutenant of Mohammed Farah Aidid. When Boykin's Delta Force commandos went after Atto, they missed him by seconds, he said. "He went on CNN and he laughed at us, and he said, 'They'll never get me because Allah will protect me. Allah will protect me.' Well, you know what?"

> Boykin continued. "I knew that my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol." Atto later was captured. Other countries, Boykin said last year, "have lost their morals, lost their values. But America is still a Christian nation."(Arkin 2003)

Unsurprisingly, Boykin apologized for these comments when they became widely publicized:

> "I am not anti-Islam or any other religion." "I support the free exercise of all religions." "For those who have been offended by my statements, I offer a sincere apology." (Jensen, 2003)

Of course, the statement that he is not anti-Islam is quite absurd. Robert Jensen's (2003) comments are apposite here:

> It seems pretty clear that Boykin is anti-Islam and anti-any-religion-other-than-Christianity, just as are many evangelical Christians who claim a "literalist" view of the Bible. Such folks agree that everyone should be free to practice any religion, but they also believe those religions are nothing more than cults. That's what Boykin meant when he said of the Muslim warlord in Somalia he was fighting, "I knew that my God was a real God, and his was an idol."

Jensen goes on to note the following:

> Idols are false gods, not real ones. To such Christians, who sometimes refer to themselves as "biblical Christians," there is only one religion—Christianity, which is truth. All others are cults. The general can believe in freedom of religion and feel bad when he offends a person with another religion, yet still be convinced that all those other religions are, in fact, false.

Boykin's comments reflect a broadly held Christian dominionist theological perspective whose implications at this present moment have world-historical impact in the context of Bush's so-called permanent war on terror. According to James Carroll (2003):

> The general's offense was to speak aloud the implication of a still broadly held theology. But that theology is dangerous now. A respectful religious pluralism is no longer just a liberal hope but an urgent precondition of justice and peace. In the 21st century, exclusivist religion, no matter how "mainstream" and no matter how muted the anathemas that follow from its absolutes, is a sure way to religious war.

According to Stephen Zunes (2004), right-wing Christian Zionists who have long supported George W. Bush (and who follow a Messianic theology that holds a Manichean belief that reality is divided between absolute good and absolute evil and believe that a hegemonic Israel is a necessary precursor to the second coming of Jesus) feel that an expansionist and mili-

taristic Jewish state is indispensable to bring about Armageddon (the final battle between Christ and Satan) and are, at this point in time, more significant in the formulation of U.S. policy toward Israel than even Jewish Zionists. He illustrates this with three recent incidents in a passage that is worth quoting *in extenso*:

- After the Bush administration's initial condemnation of the attempted assassination of militant Palestinian Islamist Abdel Aziz Rantisi in June 2003, the Christian Right mobilized its constituents to send thousands of e-mails to the Whitehouse protesting the criticism. A key element in these e-mails was the threat that if such pressure continued to be placed upon Israel, the Christian Right would stay home on election day. Within 24 hours, there was a notable change in tone by the president. Indeed, when Rantisi fell victim to a successful Israeli assassination in April 2004, the administration—as it did with the assassination of Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin the previous month—largely defended the Israeli action.
- When the Bush administration insisted that Israel stop its April 2002 military offensive in the West Bank, the White House received over 100,000 e-mails from Christian conservatives in protest of its criticism. Almost immediately, President Bush came to Israel's defense. Over the objections of the State Department, the Republican-led Congress adopted resolutions supporting Israel's actions and blaming the violence exclusively on the Palestinians.
- When President Bush announced his support for the Road Map for Middle East Peace, the White House received more than 50,000 postcards over the next two weeks from Christian conservatives opposing any plan that called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The administration quickly back-pedalled, and the once-highly touted Road Map essentially died.

Any dismissal of the millenarian aspects of Christian Zionism on the impact of White House foreign policy may be much too precipitate in light of the actions of the Bush *hijo* administration. Those who might think that the Democratic Party would be a good counterpoint to the Christian Zionists of the Bush administration would not necessarily be on solid ground to make their case. Zunes (2004) points out a disturbing feature of the Democratic Party by demonstrating that their position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is closer to that of the Christian Zionists than to more liberal church-based organizations:

> The Christian Right has long been a favorite target for the Democratic Party, particularly its liberal wing, since most Americans are profoundly disturbed by fundamentalists of any kind influencing policies of a government with a centuries old tradition of separating church and state. Yet the positions of most liberal Democrats in Congress regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

> are far closer to those of the reactionary Christian Coalition than to those of the moderate National Council of Churches, far closer to the rightist Rev. Pat Robertson than to the leftist Rev. William Sloan Coffin, far closer to the ultraconservative Moral Majority than to the liberal Churches for Middle East Peace, and far closer to the fundamentalist Southern Baptist Convention than to any of the mainline Protestant churches.

When President Bush told Texas evangelist James Robinson that "I feel like God wants me to run for President. I can't explain it, but I sense my country is going to need me. Something is going to happen. . . . I know it won't be easy on me or my family, but God wants me to do it" (Fitrakis 2004), few Americas realized at the time that Bush would become a raving right-wing evangelical prophet who would carefully craft theocratic nationalist rhetoric to advance his standing among the most exploited and powerless in the United States: the working and unemployed poor who have little to share other than their fervent Christian faith. A more tempered view of Bush's Christianity is that Bush is not doctrinally dogmatic and is theologically moderate. He did, after all, say to Laurie Goodstein (2004): "From Scripture you can gain a lot of strength and solace and learn life's lessons. That's what I believe, and I don't necessarily believe every single word is literally true." Bush worships in an Episcopal church in Washington that welcomes gay couples and a Methodist church in Texas where some congregants support abortion rights. Yet, even so, as Goodstein (2004) notes, "When it comes to policy his opponents and supporters agree that he has done more than any president in recent history to advance the agenda of Christian social conservatives." And, clearly, Bush has repeatedly justified the war in theological terms, often drawing upon a favorite axiom: "Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world" (cited in Goodstein, 2004).

Bob Fitrakis (2004) cogently notes that "Bush's assertion that 'I trust God speaks through me. Without that, I couldn't do my job' brings to mind God as a dull-witted, cognitively-impaired nationalist unable to utter a simple declarative sentence who spends his time preaching 'blessed are the warmongers and profit-makers." Even more chilling, as Fitrakis argues, is that the last time a Western nation had a leader so obsessed with the conviction that he was directed by God's leadership, it was Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Far from being "a barbaric pagan or Godless totalitarian," Hitler believed he was chosen by God to lead Germany to victory. Before launching his pre-emptive strikes throughout Europe, Hitler remarked: "I would like to thank Providence and the Almighty for choosing me of all people to be allowed to wage this battle for Germany" (cited in Fitrakis 2004). He further remarked, "I follow the path assigned to me by Provi-

dence with the instinctive sureness of a sleepwalker" (cited in Fitrakis 2004). Fitrakis notes some spine-tingling comparisons between Bush and Hitler on this issue:

> Hitler stated in February 1940, "But there is something else I believe, and that is that there is a God. . . . And this God again has blessed our efforts during the past 13 years." After the Iraqi invasion, Bush announced, "God told me to strike at al Qaeda and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did." Neither the similarity between Hitler and Bush's religious rhetoric nor the fact that the current president's grandfather was called "Hitler's Angel" by the *New York Tribune* for his financing of the Fuher's rise to power is lost on Europeans. Pat Robertson called Bush "a prophet" and Ralph Reed claimed, after the 9/11 attack, God picked the president because "he knew George Bush had the ability to lead in this compelling way." Hitler told the German people in March 1936, "Providence withdrew its protection and our people fell, fell as scarcely any other people heretofore. In this deep misery we again learn to pray. . . . The mercy of the *Lord* slowly returns to us again. And in this hour we sink to our knees and beseech our almighty God that he may bless us, that He may give us the strength to carry on the struggle for the freedom, the future, the honor, and the peace of our people. So help us God." At the beginning of Hitler's crusade on April 12, 1922, he spelled out his version of the warmongering Jesus: "My feeling as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter." Randall Balmer in *The Nation*, noted that "Bush's God is the eye-for-an-eye God of the Hebrew prophets and the Book of Revelation, the God of vengeance and retribution."

Are those of us living in the United States, to borrow a phrase from Dale Maharidge (2004), "heading toward the end stage of a Weimaresque journey" (pp. 13–14)? Clearly, Bush is no Adolf Hitler when you look at the current historical record, but the "anticipative" and "preventative" wars of the current U.S. regime reflect the ambition and quest for global dominance that finds its most recent precedent in the history of the Third Reich. There is a danger in drawing parallels between Nazi Germany and the U.S. under the Bush gang. We do not attempt to draw an equivalence, which would be absurd. At the same time, it is important not to underestimate the means by which Christian fundamentalism (or Islamic fundamentalism, for that matter) can become employed—wittingly or unwittingly—by a national leader as an ideological cover and alibi for laying waste to vast numbers of enemies, often depicted as barbaric or evil (although it must be said that Hitler's religious rhetoric was not strictly Christian, as old heathen Germanic beliefs in the chosen warrior king set the tone, nor were the Germans of his time taken by American-style evangelism or by Christian fundamentalism).

With support for Bush's infinite war against the infidels now the default position of so many white males, and with Bush in the clammy hands of a

fiendishly cunning Karl Rove and under the manic thrall of the Pentagon superhawks, there is reason to be concerned about the comparisons. Fitrakis' comments, while surely seen by many as overdrawn and a manipulative "stretch" of the imagination, deserve to be taken seriously:

> As Bush has invoked the cross of Jesus to simultaneously attack the Islamic and Arab world, Hitler also saw the value of exalting the cross while waging endless war: "To be sure, our Christian Cross should be the most exalted symbol of the struggle against the Jewish-Marxist-Bolshevik spirit." Like Bushites, Hitler was fond of invoking the Ten Commandments as the foundation of Nazi Germany: "The Ten Commandments are a code of living to which there's no refutation. These precepts correspond to irrefragable needs of the human soul."

Fitrakis points out that, like Bush, Hitler was a strong proponent of faith-based initiatives, as evidenced by Hitler's January 30, 1939, speech to the Reichstag when he proclaimed: "Amongst the accusations which are directed against Germany in the so-called democracy is the charge that the National Socialist State is hostile to religion" (cited in Fitrakis 2004). Hitler then expanded upon how much "public monies derived from taxation through the organs of the State have been placed at the disposal of both churches [Protestant and Catholic]" (cited in Fitrakis 2004). If giving nearly 1.8 billion Reichsmarks between 1933 and 1938 directly to the Christian churches was not a faith-based initiative, we don't know what is. Hitler spelled out the intent of his faith-based initiative with the comment "With a tenth of our budget for religion, we would thus have a Church devoted to the State and of unshakable loyalty . . . the little sects, which receive only a few hundred thousand marks, are devoted to us body and soul" (cited in Fitrakis 2004). Back in the days of the war in Vietnam, Bob Dylan's song "With God on Our Side" struck a chord with Americans who decried the influence of the Christian right in conscripting God into America's war against the 'godless' communist Viet Cong. It is time we took that concern to heart.

George W. Bush is clearly out to defeat the Biblical Beast of the Apocalypse. But unbeknownst to Bush, the Beast that so terrifies him and other evangelicals of his ilk does not slither through smoking corridors of fire and brimstone dragging behind it sweat-drenched naked virgins in leather hip boots and wrapped in chains; rather, it gleefully straddles the behemoth of neoliberal capitalism, sporting a Ronald Reagan mask and leather chaps, and digging its spurs into the flesh of the poor as it garrisons capitalism for the benefit of the translational ruling elite. It leaves in its wake worldwide empowerment of the rich and devastation for the ranks of the poor as oligopolistic corporations swallow the globe and industry becomes dominated

by new technologies. It is the very behemoth that was created and is currently supported by those politicians who rule the world from positions of personal delusion, private fear, arrogance, and stupidity. Bush may choose to ride the demiurge like a deputy Sherriff trying to round up a posse to go after a group of evil rustlers, but he must one day wake up to his role in the Manichean battle he so forcefully advocates. While he may feel that his special charismata has given him access to the pleroma, and secured the loyalty of the ecclesia of his base (the haves and have-mores), Bush is determined to play imperialism's New Adam, spreading his own hayseed Philipics through the oracle of Fox News, while unbeknownst to him he has become the Supreme Commodity enfleshed and made human by capital's law of value.

When, on the freshly mopped deck of the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. warrior president emerged in a snug-fitting flight suit from an S-3BViking aircraft, tautened groin-accentuating straps strung salaciously between his legs, and glistening helmet clasped snugly against a proud chest (a brazenly hypocritical move considering his military records reveal that he stopped flying during his final eighteen months of National Guard duty in 1972 and 1973 and was not observed by his commanders at his Texas unit for a year), his trademark swagger and petulant grin were greeted by patriotic cheers from throngs of wild-eyed officers and sailors. The image of our little Odin's bulging male appurtenances (surely there is no undescended Hitleresque testicle here) impudently—and we dare say unpresidentially—well disciplined by diagonal straps, surely serves as a stage-managed challenge to Clinton's reputation as alpha male stud and is about as close to a presidential "money shot" as can be had in the public arena without being perceived as indecent (which is not to say it cannot serve as someone's private pornography with the comforting knowledge that it is not a crime to download images of the testicles of U.S. presidents).

Appearing topside before a bold banner that announced "Mission Accomplished" he declared the "battle of Iraq" a "victory" in the ongoing "war on terror." This event was carefully choreographed by Bush's team of seasoned image makers that included a former ABC producer, a former Fox TV producer, and a former NBC cameraman paid for out of an annual budget of $3.7 million that Bush allots for his media coordinators. (No doubt the same image makers that organized Bush's visit to the NASCAR Daytona 500 on February 15, 2004, where, in the words of Marc Cooper (2004, p. 18), "he buzzed the gathered 180,000 stock-car-racing fans with Air Force One and two streaking F-15s," then "tickled the crowd by running a lap around the legendary 2.5 mile track in his blacked-out motorcade fleet of spiffy SUVs," extending the spectacle with a rendition of "God

Bless the USA" from country singer Lee Greenwood, followed by another over flight from a wedge-shaped B-2 bomber flanked by fighter escorts. When Bush emerged on the speedway stage in a dark NASCAR windbreaker, he announced: "We ask God's blessing," paused, then commanded: "Gentlemen, start your engines!") We do not believe that it's coincidental that a comparison clearly can be drawn between this example of right-wing showmanship on the US Abraham Lincoln and Leni Riefenstahl's infamous propaganda film about the 1934 Nazi Parteitag in Nuremberg, *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*) that displayed Adolf Hitler as the world savior. In the German version, Hitler emerges from a Junker 52 aircraft that had been filmed landing at Nuremberg airport to the lofty strains of a Wagner composition. Thousands of Nazi onlookers chant, "Sieg hiel!" as the musical score builds to a thunderous crescendo. And while the scene was carefully crafted to suggest that Hitler was a modern manifestation of the ancient Aryan deity Odin (see *The Internationalist*, May 2003), the event on the USS Abraham Lincoln was pitching our tumescent boy emperor as a major player in the decidedly Christian drama known as the Second Coming.

Bush's speech on the carrier paraphrased Chapter 61 of Isaiah, the very book that Jesus used when proclaiming that Isaiah's prophecies of the Messiah had come true, suggesting perhaps that Bush believes the Second Coming has begun (Pitt 2003) and that his war on terror is playing an important role in this biblical prophecy. (Interestingly, Eagleton [2003] notes that the book of Isaiah is a revolutionary document in which Yahweh tells his people to seek justice and correct oppression and "is only left in hotel rooms because nobody bothers to read it. If those who deposit it there had any idea what it contained, they would be well advised to treat it like pornography and burn it on the spot" (p. 178)). Leftist commentators have noted that the Pentagon's" Shock and Awe" bombing strategy was copied form the Nazi strategy of Blitzkrieg (lightning war) and the Luftwaffe's doctrine of Schrecklichkeit aimed at terrorizing a population into surrender and that the Bush doctrine of preventative war mirrors the rationale behind Hitler's march into Poland (Hitler had claimed Poland was an immediate threat to the safety of the Reich). Bush padre's vow to establish a New World Order and Hitler's vow to create a *Neue Ordung* have to be seen in their historical and contextual specificity. We do not wish to overdraw the comparison of the Bush dynasty to the Third Reich. It can be seen in the machinations of capital and the role of the military-industrial complex in imperialist acts of aggression disguised as "freedom."

With Hitler, it was the Jews who were subhuman—the untermensch—and with Bush the vermin of choice are the unholy Muslims. Hitler fancied

himself as God's chosen leader of the Aryan Race and was in the thrall of a Volkism that prophesized a mighty God-chosen Aryan leader who would lead the people to their rightful destiny through a bloody conquest of the lebensraum (Paul 2003) while Bush thinks God wears a Stetson hat and speaks in a drawl. Clearing brush from his Texas ranch in Crawford (the ranch is little more than a Hollywood set for Bush to appear macho in jeans and carrying a buzzsaw before the cameras), our defender of the free world appears sublimely content in his role as God's own Texas Ranger. Instead of Chuck Norris's roundhouse kick, he has bunker busting bombs.

In his unconscious attempt to achieve aplótès (simplicity of the soul) over dipsukia (duplicity of the soul), has The Decider forsaken human reason? Has his unwrinkled faith that he is an emissary of God's will placed the world in grave danger of nuclear destruction? These are not unreasonable questions.

Opportunism and hypocrisy are the operative words when it comes to assessing Bush's professed religious beliefs. According to a recent report by John Gorenfeld (2003), Bush *hijo's* Faith Based Initiative has given plenty of financial support to disciples of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. We know that when John Ashcroft was the incoming attorney general, he attended Moon's Inaugural Prayer Luncheon for Unity and Renewal just before Bush took office. We know, too, that Moon's *Washington Times* foundation gave a million dollars to the George H. W. Bush presidential library and has paid the former president large sums as speaking honoraria. We question the so-called "family values" that, according to Bush *padre*, Moon's organization is supposed to support, especially in light of a number of uncomfortable facts, such as Moon's own criminal conviction for tax fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice; his stipulation that his photograph must be placed nearby when spouses have sex; his instructions that spouses wipe their genitalia with the Holy Handkerchief (which is never supposed to be laundered) supplied by Moon's organization; his labelling of gays as "dung eating dogs" and of American women as "a line of prostitutes"; his claim that the Holocaust was payback for the Jews for the crucifixion of Christ; his claim that he will succeed where Christ had failed in attaining worldly power; his illegal funding of the murderous Nicaraguan Contras during the Iran-Contra affair; his claim that spiritual messages from Confucius and former U.S. President James Buchanan have verified that he is the savior of the world; his attack on the crucifix as the final obstacle in keeping Moon from being accepted by the American public as the Messiah; and his instructions to cherish and punish one's sexual organs with pliers, if necessary (Gorenfeld, 2003).

Lacking the enameled self-importance that often accompanies an aristocratic intellect, Bush *hijo* betrays the spittoon arrogance of the tough-talking, God-fearing Texas oil baron, a ghostly veneer of saloon sawdust coating his forked tongue. Bush himself has remarked: "Some folks look at me and see a certain swagger, which in Texas is called walking" (cited in Gourevitch, 2004). His cowboy hauteur affords him a hayseed endearedness among paleocons, radiocons, and loyal viewers of *Fox TV* news. But he positively repulses sober thinkers averse to displays of unvarnished contempt for the world community. Philip Gourevitch (2004) writes:

> He [Bush] has a repertoire of stock poses and expressions, as does any professional performer, but the freedom of his movements is striking. Flip through snapshots of him, and you'll find any number that catch him in a bizarre or comical position. The mobility of his face leaves him open to lampooning, not least because of its simian modeling, which is underscored by his affectation of an equally simian gait—the dangle-armed swagger, like a knuckle-walker startled to find himself suddenly upright. But even when he looks foolish, or simply coarse, Bush is never less than an expressive presence.

But how is it that Bush can command such respect among everyday, working-class Americans? How is it that the policies that he initiates can destroy their jobs, destroy environmental resources, and yet blue-collar workers still vote for him? How is it that the very sector of American society now poised to keep him in the White House—working-class males or what Arlie Hochschild (2003) describes the prototypical "NASCAR Dad" who watches car races on television, who listens to the wretched Rush Limbaugh on the drive home from work, who turns on *Fox TV* at dinner, and who is too tired after working overtime to catch more than the headlines—is the one that stands to lose the most from his antiworker, anti-labor policies? How is it that, as some polls reveal, blue-collar males support massive tax cuts for the rich? Hochschild (2003) put the issue thusly:

> Let's consider the situation. Since Bush took office in 2000, the U.S. has lost 4.9 million jobs, (2.5 million net), the vast majority of them in manufacturing. While this cannot be blamed entirely on Bush, his bleed-'em-dry approach to the non-Pentagon parts of the government has led him to do nothing to help blue-collar workers learn new trades, find affordable housing, or help their children go to college. The loosening of Occupational Health and Safety Administration regulations has made plants less safe. Bush's agricultural policies favor agribusiness and have put many small and medium-sized farms into bankruptcy. His tax cuts are creating state budget shortfalls, which will hit the public schools blue-collar children go to, and erode what services they now get. He has put industrialists in his environmental posts, so that the

> air and water will grow dirtier. His administration's disregard for the severe understaffing of America's nursing homes means worse care for the elderly parents of the Nascar Dad as they live out their last days. His invasion of Iraq has sent blue-collar children and relatives to the front. Indeed, his entire tap-the-hornet's-nest foreign policy has made the U.S. arguably less secure than it was before he took office. Indeed, a recent series of polls revealed that most people around the world believe him to be a greater danger than Osama Bin Laden. Many blue-collar voters know at least some of this already. So why are so many of them pro-Bush anyway? (pp. 1-2)

Part of the answer is that a large percentage of blue-collar workers are evangelical Christians who regard Bush as possessing a direct line of communication to the Man sitting on the pearly throne. And certainly a large majority of working-class Americans are working far too hard for them to have the time to be as politically informed as they could be. They are also in the thrall of right-wing radio and television talk shows that permeate U.S. airwaves. Many are receptive to the messages of the corporate media that refuse to challenge the Bush administration except in mild-mannered ways. Part of the answer is, of course, that Bush reflects the core values of the blue-collar family and his authoritarian father figure image resonates well with male members, especially after 9/11. Another part of the answer is that Bush has been successful for some time in concealing massive unemployment figures while he has been in office. The Bureau of Labor Statistics ended its Mass Layoff Tracking Study on Christmas Eve of 2002, thanks to the Bush administration. Congressional Democrats successfully raised funding so that the study could be restored in February 2003 but the loss of 614,167 jobs in those two months went unannounced to the public (Hochschild 2003). Another explanation is captured by Nelson Peery (2002), who notes:

> The stability of America has always rested upon that huge section of the population that had just enough to give them the hope that they were going to get some more. So long as they had that hope, they wouldn't change the system for love nor money no matter how hard they were hurting. They weren't going to change the system because they believed there was a golden egg up there somewhere. They were the ones who stabilized America. (p. 104)

Equally as relevant is the argument that Bush is following a highly successful Republican strategy—known as the "Southern Strategy"—that began with Nixon and was followed by Ford, which included a deliberate attempt to avoid focusing on the material grievances of the working-class, but rather on the "feeling of being forgotten" among white male workers (Hochschild 2003). Hochschild notes that "Nixon appealed not to a desire for real economic change but to the distress caused by the absence of it."

Citing Norman Mailer, who recently claimed that the war in Iraq rejuvenated white males by returning to them a lost sense of mastery over the world and offered them a feeling of revenge for their perceived loss of power, Hochschild (2003) provides the following statistics:

> In the last thirty years, white men have taken a drubbing, he notes, especially the three-quarters of them who lack college degrees. Between l979 and l999, for example, real wages for male high-school graduates dropped 24 percent. In addition, Mailer notes, white working-class men have lost white champs in football, basketball and boxing. (p. 4)

Bush has clearly filled the void of the great white hero for the angry white working-class American male. Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing the same for the white males of California, who are witnessing large numbers of immigrants from Latin America and feeling overwhelmed by the collapsing economy. But Bush is taking Nixon's blueprint for winning over the white working-class male one step further. According to Hochschild, "instead of appealing, as Nixon did, to anger at economic decline, Bush is appealing to fear of economic displacement." He is also "offering the NASCAR Dad a set of villains to blame, and a hero to thank." In effect, Bush has been "strip-mining the emotional responses of blue-collar men to the problems his own administration is so intent on causing." Hochschild (2003) elaborates:

> Unhinging the personal from the political, playing on identity politics, Republican strategists have offered the blue-collar voter a Faustian bargain: We'll lift your self-respect by putting down women, minorities, immigrants, even those spotted owls. We'll honor the manly fortitude you've shown in taking bad news. But (and this is implicit) don't ask us to do anything to change that bad news. . . . Paired with this is an aggressive right-wing attempt to mobilize blue-collar fear, resentment and a sense of being lost—and attach it to the fear of American vulnerability, American loss. By doing so, Bush aims to win the blue-collar man's identification with big business, empire, and himself. The resentment anyone might feel at the personnel officer who didn't have the courtesy to call him back and tell him he didn't have the job, Bush now redirects toward the target of Osama bin Laden, and when we can't find him, Saddam Hussein and when we can't find him. . . . And these enemies are now so intimate that we see them close up on the small screen in our bedrooms and call them by their first names. (p. 6)

Of course, blame also needs to be placed on the policies of the Democrats, who over the years have abandoned blue-collar workers by "dropping the class language that once distinguished them sharply from Republicans" and by ignoring the advances made by working-class struggles that "were the result of decades of movement-building, of bloody fights between strikers

and state militias, of agitating, educating and thankless organizing" (Frank 2004, p. M6). As a result, Democrats have stood idle while the right has "embraced the task of building a movement that speaks to those at society's bottom" (Frank, 2004, p. A6) through messages spiked with Christian triumphalism and acrimony against liberals. What makes Bush so frightening is that both the Christian Right and the Pentagon hawks have Bush by his Ponderosa belt buckle and are in no danger of losing their central role in leading the march toward empire. Even as the economy takes major hits, Bush still is able to rewrite the losses as a plus for his administration by regulating and channeling the emotions of an angry white male population. Hochschild (2003) writes:

> George W. Bush is deregulating American global capitalism with one hand while regulating the feelings it produces with the other. Or, to put it another way, he is doing nothing to change the causes of fear and everything to channel the feeling and expression of it. He speaks to a working man's lost pride and his fear of the future by offering an image of fearlessness. He poses here in his union jacket, there in his pilot's jumpsuit, taunting the Iraqis to "bring 'em on"—all of it meant to feed something in the heart of a frightened man. (p. 6)

This propaganda approach is decidedly costly, not only in terms of human life, but also in terms of U.S. dollars. Because the only way Bush can pull off his image as the great American protector of the white male is if military spending becomes his major priority. Katsiaficas (2003) reveals that:

> [s]ince 1948, the United States has spent more than $15 trillion on the military—more than the cumulative monetary value of all human-made wealth in the United States—more than the value of all airports, factories, highways, bridges, buildings, shopping centers, hotels, houses, and automobiles. If we add the current Pentagon budget (over $346 billion in fiscal 2002) to foreign military aid, veterans' pensions, the military portion of NASA, the nuclear weapons budget of the Energy Department, and the interest payments on debt from past military spending, the U.S. spends $670 billion every year on the military—more than a million dollars a minute. The U.S. military budget is larger than those of the world's next 15 biggest spenders combined, accounting for 36 percent of global military expenditures. (p. 344)

The U.S. military currently is building its tenth super carrier battle group (no other country possesses even one super carrier), brags the most advanced fighters and bombers than all the other countries of the world combined and possesses the world's only Stealth aircraft, the world's largest aerial tanker fleet, the heaviest bombers, the most advanced tanks, the most deadly air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, and the most sophisticated military electronics, including space satellites and drone airplanes (Baker

2003). And while the United States has no storied class of generals who routinely become the country's president, the military rules by proxy. The United States has now been transformed into a national security state, where the military has become the most revered institution in a country now overpopulated by right-ideologues, overburdened with military solutions, unengaged by democratic dialogue, and in the primal thrall of the military-industrial complex's inexorable logic of empire. James Baker (2003) describes in chilling prose a recent visit by Bush *hijo* to Fort Hood in central Texas on January 3, where the supreme commander addressed the troops:

> "The Iraqi regime is a grave threat to the United States," he told them—and the rest of us. "Our country is in a great contest of will and purpose. We're being tested. . . . We must, and we will, protect the American people and our friends and allies from catastrophic violence wherever the source, whatever the threat."(pp. 35–36)

What was more frightening than Bush's own words was the response of the troops who were listening. Baker continues:

> The soldiers answered their commander-in-chief not with cheers or claps, or any sort of ordinary, civilian applause, but with a sudden, violent roar of "Hu-AH! Hu-AH!" Shouted simultaneously from 4,500 throats, it came across on the evening news as a primal, lusting sound; unexpected and voracious and thoroughly martial, like something one might have expected to hear from the Spartans or a *falangist* street demonstration in the 1930s. It was not anything like I had ever heard at a rally convened by an American president. The chant continued throughout the speech, turning Bush's address into a churchy call-and-response. Individual cries of "Yeah!" and "Let's go!" rose from the crowd when he explained why we would invade Iraq though not North Korea, but again and again there was that same swift chant, sweeping all before it—"Hu-AH! Hu-AH! Hu-AH!"—reverberating around the gym until Bush, who just before the rally had exchanged his dark suit coat for a green waist-length army jacket, held up his left hand, palm out, in grand, imperious acknowledgement. (2003, p. 36)

When, as leader of the most powerful nation that has ever existed, you declare war not only on terrorists but also on those who might one day become terrorists, you are, in effect, declaring war on the structural unconscious of the nation that you are supposed to be serving, nourishing the psychic roots of national paranoia. It is a war of both direction and indirection, a war without limits and without end, a war that can never be won except on the Manichean battleground that exists not in "the desert of the real" but in the maniacal flights of fancy of religious fundamentalism. The powers and principalities that duke it out with flaming swords beyond the

pale of our cynical reason can only be glimpsed in the reverse mirror image of our particular liberties and values that we attribute to the resilience and successes of free-market capitalism. But the issue exceeds that of the role of the United States. The detritus of capitalist security states is growing more and more visible throughout the world, as the poor in numerous developed and developing countries continue to be exterminated by war, genocide, starvation, military and police repression, slavery, and suicide. In a very real sense, capital performs itself through our laboring and toiling bodies. And in the process we become "capitalized," that is, we are transformed into commodities, into human capital. As actors in the labor process, we become machines for capital accumulation, we become the jaws of the hyenas whose driving compulsion is to devour surplus value; we are transformed into the living dead, a personification of dead labor in the theater of the damned. We are being integrated into the system because the social character of our performances appears to be the objective character of the performances themselves. But we are trained not to notice the connection. This misrecognition becomes the necessary condition for our subjection to our own past performances and to the service to capital provided by such performances. The ideological character of our performances can only be understood when we consider our performances to be social relations, alienated expressions of our enslavement to the commodification process that produces our performances. Capital offers hope to humankind but as it fails to deliver on its promise, the search for alternatives to its social universe continues.

While the steely-eyed generals salivate over the next instalment of the military budget, the Bush administration continues to build new military bases throughout the world (the United States has over 250,000 troops in 141 countries), works behind the scenes to support a coup against (and likely the assassination of) President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, stampedes its neo-liberal policies throughout Latin America, and provides funds to so-called "dissidents" in Cuba in an attempt to undermine the Cuban government. In response to a recent criticism by Colin Powell that Cuba sponsors child prostitution as part of its tourism industry, Cuban author and journalist, Rosa Miriam Elizalde, captured the current spirit of U.S. diplomacy when she called the secretary of state "ese comprador de almas que va como Mefistófeles con una mancha de sangre en la solapa del traje, y que quiere hacerno screer a la fuerza que es apenas un clavelito iraquí (a merchant of souls who goes about like Mephistopheles, bearing a blood stain on his attire, but wanting us to believe that it is merely a little Iraqi carnation)" (Rebelde 2003).

How quickly the organized fight against terrorism launched by the United States the day after September 11, 2001, has turned into its opposite: the regime of terror. This is not so difficult to fathom when we consider the blood-soaked history of the U.S. empire. The United States was founded upon the systematic slaughter of its Indigenous peoples. As Katsiaficas (2003) notes, "The dialectical irony of history means that [the U.S.] is simultaneously a white European settler colony founded on genocide and slavery as well as on freedom and democracy" (p. 348). Tens of millions of Native Americans were massacred and between 15 to 50 million Africans were killed in the slave trade (with tens of millions more enslaved).

Perhaps not many people realize that when they dine out at the fancy restaurant, the "Lord Jeff" near Amherst College, that the restaurant's namesake, Lord Jeffery Amherst (of whom entire towns have been named after in Massachusetts, New York, and New Hampshire), was celebrated because he allegedly devised a method of exterminating indigenous people without risking white lives: delivering to Native Americans blankets carrying the smallpox virus (Katsiaficas 2003). Of course, even if the patrons of the Lord Jeff are conscious of this part of U.S. history, it is doubtful that it would ruin the taste of their filet mignon. Nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism involved the slaughter of 600,000 Filipinos on the island of Luzon alone, and this effort was praised not only by the director of Presbyterian ministries (who noted that the murders were "a great step in the civilization of the world") but also by both William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt (Katsiaficas 2003, p. 344). The latter wrote that the slaughter in the Philippines was "for civilization over the black chaos of savagery and barbarism" (cited in Katsiaficas 2003, p. 344). Between 1898 and 1934, the U.S. Marines invaded Cuba four times, Honduras seven times, Nicaragua five times, the Dominican Republic four times, and Haiti and Panama twice each. But we shouldn't overlook U.S. slaughter in Indochina, where between three and five million people were killed in Korea, and two million were killed—many by chemical weapons—in Vietnam. Katsiaficas writes:

> For every man, woman, and child in South Vietnam, the U.S. dropped more than 1,000 pounds of bombs (the equivalent of 700 Hiroshima bombs), sprayed a gallon of Agent Orange, and used 40 pounds of napalm and half a ton of CS gas on people whose only wrong doing was to struggle for national independence. The kill ratio in these two Asian wars [Korea and Vietnam] was about 1,000 times that of wars in Central America and perhaps just as high for the more than 200 other U.S. military interventions during the "Cold War." (p. 346)

While there has been a great deal of discussion linking U.S. imperialism and the bloody path of military intervention, too little has been said about the intentional targeting of civilians by the U.S. military. As Tariq Ali has argued: "The massacre of civilian populations was always an integral part of U.S. war strategy" (cited in Boggs, 2003, p. 207). Boggs describes the matrix of capitalism, imperialism, and racism that led to the systematic extermination of Native Americans and asserts that the American tradition of war was given ideological meaning through Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine. He also points out that the United States has consistently rejected international treaties and protocols for protecting civilians from the carnage of war. Boggs writes:

> Americans have pursued their global ambitions through every conceivable barbaric method: wars of attrition, carpet bombing, free-fire zones, massacres of unarmed civilians, support for death squads, forced relocations, destruction of public infrastructures, the burning down of cities, use of weapons of mass destruction including atomic bombs. Filled with an imperial contempt for others and a sense of moral supremacy, U.S. leaders have predictably established themselves as beyond the reach of international law, immune to any moral or legal rules of engagement. (2003, p. 208)

The Korean War is just one example. In this war, the infamous "search and destroy" missions meant attacking not only combatants but also civilians, animals, and the whole ecology as part of effective counterinsurgency operations. When troops came upon any village, they usually came in opening fire, often with support of helicopter gunships. U.S. troops were rewarded according to the well-known "body count," never limited simply to identifiable combatants. (Boggs, 2003, p. 210)

Of course, the United States has pursued this logic in most of its wars since that time, up to and including the Gulf War and the bombing of Iraq's civilian infrastructure that lasted for years up to the recent invasion. In a capitalist society—especially in the world's most dominant capitalist society and military superpower—this bloody reality cannot be otherwise. This is because those who are invested in protecting capitalist society and who possess the necessary power (including firepower) not only to defend it but expand its global sweep, are those who have benefited most by it and whose stature has been the most elevated because of it. The guardians of capital represent those whose character has been most fully formed by the ruthless imperatives and unquenchable desires of capital. They have embodied those ensembles of social relations that most estrange them from love and distance them from compassion. Joel Kovel (2002) remarks that capitalism cannot be relegated only to the social relations of economic production but also represents a "regime of the ego." He reminds us that:

> Each society selects for the psychological types that serve its needs. It is quite possible in this way to mold a great range of characters toward a unified, class purpose. To succeed in the capitalist marketplace and rise to the top, one needs a hard, cold, calculating mentality, the ability to sell oneself, and a hefty dose of the will to power. (p. 78)

There is little doubt that President Bush believes that he is an avenging instrument of God, perhaps even the sword arm of the most high and holy. Richard Land, a leader of the Southern Baptist Convention, recalls hearing Mr. Bush say in a meeting with close associates on the day of his second inaugural as governor of Texas: "I believe that God wants me to be president" (Stanley 2004). The Bush administration is filled with God-fearing holy warriors who seek to make the presence of God felt in all aspects of public life. When he became president, Bush proclaimed: "We need commonsense judges who understand our rights were derived from God. . . . And those are the kind of judges I intend to put on the bench" (Stanley 2004). Keeping the country's secular barbarians at bay and preventing American interests from being savaged by foreign infidels who are, after all, an obstacle to the Lord's mission to save souls, Bush holds the scales of justice in one hand and a crusader's broadsword in the other. According to a 1993 interview with a reporter for *The Houston Post*, Ken Herman, on the day he announced his intention to run for governor, Mr. Bush asserted that only believers in Christ could go to heaven (Stanley 2004). Furthermore, during the 2000 campaign our "Is Our Children Learning?" education president who reads children's books upside down said that he thought schools should teach both creationism and evolution. Alessandra Stanley (2004) writes:

> The imprint of Mr. Bush's faith can be seen on his appointments to the bench and on his decisions on embryonic stem-cell research and so-called partial-birth abortion. And religion also veins Mr. Bush's discussion of war. Mr. Land describes him as a believer in "American exceptionalism." Jim Wallis, editor in chief of *Sojourners* magazine, a liberal evangelical publication, refers to his talk of a divine mission as the "language of righteous empire."

Referring to President Bush as a "fundagelical," John Sutherland (2004) places Bush among the growing extremists within the evangelical movement. Not without sarcasm, he depicts fundagelicals as follows:

> What do fundagelicals instinctively oppose? Gay marriage, abortion, gun control, taxes, the UN (and the currently top-rated candidate for Antichrist, Kofi Annan), withdrawal from Iraq, Michael Moore, Janet Jackson's left breast. What do they believe in? Christian values and the future as foretold in the Book of Revelation. According to a *Time Magazine* poll (which strains credulity but seems to be valid) 59 percent of Americans trust that St John's

> prophecies will be fulfilled—probably during their lifetime. November could be a last opportunity to vote for God's preferred candidate. Iraq (ancient Babylon) figures centrally in the fundagelist vision of things, as does the Rapture, and the imminent mass conversion of the Jews (hence fundagelist-Zionism). . . . The White House has recently been accused of inveighing (via NASA) against the movie The Day After (May 28, 2005) because it narrates the wrong apocalypse. One caused by man-made global warming, that is, rather than God's white-hot rage against sinners. The apocalypse depicted in Tim LaHaye's Left Behind books is, we assume, the U.S. government-approved version.

If you have watched the 700 Club hosted by Pat Robertson or have heard Jerry Falwell (who blamed 9/11 on a select group of sinners: feminists, gays, lesbians, and members of the ACLU), or are familiar with programming from the Christian Broadcasting Network, or subscribe to the Elijah List where you can get daily messages from Christian prophets, you know a bit about the mindset of President Bush. The Elijah List is based on a literal reading of the scriptures and a logic that would reject as the Word of God alternative gospels (such as the Gnostic gospels of Thomas or Mary Magdalene) through the circular logic of the retrospective illusion whereby nothing other than what is could ever have been—a self-referential loop if there ever was one. Consider the following prophecy by Kim Clement on October 4, 2001, published on The Elijah List: "I am going to change everything for you. It's not going to be a long drawn out war. It's going to be a swift war that I am going to win for you. This is not going to be a drawn out thing, even though it's been prognosticated to be a drawn out thing. You will take a while to find those that are hidden in their holes." Apparently, this "prophecy" supports the claim that God is on the side of the United States, because it predicted the capture of Saddam in his hole in the ground.

The Elijah List provides a template for its readers to ponder apocryphal history that ignores economics, political science, sociology, and historical analysis and provides only a retrospective reading of mainstream historical events through a skewed circular logic aimed at hatred of the other. This logic represents the repressed supplement of the teachings of Jesus. A recent posting by the Elijah List (U.S. War on Terrorism Goes Back to Founding Fathers) claims that the war on terrorism declared by George W. Bush goes back to the eighteenth century when Thomas Jefferson and the United States fought the "Barbary pirates" who, like the "terrorists" today saw themselves engaged in jihad and called themselves "mujahiddin" (Elijah List 2004). Apparently, after three months researching the history of militant Islam, Jefferson urged the building of a navy to rescue American

hostages held in North Africa and to deter future attacks on U.S. ships. In 1792, John Paul Jones was directed by Jefferson to go to Algiers under the guise of diplomatic negotiations, but with the real intent of sizing up a future target of a naval attack. The Elijah List writes that, in the fall 1793, the Algerians seized 11 U.S. merchant ships and enslaved more than 100 Americans—which the Elijah List describes as "America's first September 11." It was only when the United States engaged in what became a four-year war against Tripoli in 1801, followed by the French occupation of Algiers, Tunisia, and Morocco, that the terrorism on the high seas finally ended. However, when France left North Africa in 1962—it quickly became a major base of terrorism once again. The moral of the story, according to the Elijah List prophets, is that appeasement never works, we must fight the ongoing war against the unholy barbarians until the very moment that the "Rapture" takes us into the lap of Jesus or leaves us to fight another day against the forces of the Antichrist. It is interesting to note that conservative Christian schools now represent 15.4 percent of all private school enrolment. One of the country's three major publishers of Christian textbooks, Accelerated Christian Education, produces schoolbooks that define "liberal" as "referring to philosophy not supported by Scripture" and "conservative" as "dedicated to the preserving of Scriptural principles" (Hedges, 2006, p. 152). Another Christian publisher, A Beka, describes African religious beliefs as "false", blames poverty and political chaos in Africa on a lack of Christian faith, condemns Hinduism as "pagan" and "evil", and asserts that Hindus are "incapable of writing history" because of their mental confusion and lack of an intelligent comprehension of events (Hedges, 2006, p. 153). According to the materials published by A Beka, the prophet Muhammed lied about having encounters with angels, while the Buddha is condemned for desiring to leave his wife and newborn son. Catholicism is described as a distortion of the Christian faith and the reason given that Spain and France were never able to colonize the United States is that God "wanted to make America a Christian nation" (Hedges, 2006, p.154). And finally, college professors of the 1960s were pawns of the evil communist conspiracy to take over the world.

One of the most dangerous secretive organizations in the United States is The Council for National Policy, a self-described "educational foundation" which claims it does not support political candidates but in fact virulently does. Founded a quarter century ago by Reverend Tim LaHaye (author of the popular "Left Behind" book series), it now boasts over 600 members that include individuals from the fields of government, business, the media, religion, and various professions. CNP members recently emerged from a private meeting at the Ritz-Carlton on Amelia Island, Florida, dour-faced

and dissatisfied with the Republican presidential field. Members of this group (for whom even George W. Bush is too liberal) include James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Reverend Jerry Falwell, Gary Bauer, Paul Weyrich, beer magnates Holland and Jeffrey Coors, Pat Robertson, John Bolton, Oliver North, the Orlando Magic's owner, John Ankerberg, Tom DeLay, Trent Lott, Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association, and Grover Norquist. This group has strong theocratic leanings and promotes sexual abstinence and a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and is rabidly anti-taxation. Grover Norquist argued that, despite their past records, just as some high school students take abstinence pledges even after having had sex, conservative politicians can redeem themselves in an act of "secondary virginity" despite their past records (cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Trinity Broadcasting Network [TBN] in Tinicum, California, owns numerous Christian television stations whose programs reach millions of Americans each day. The owners and founders of Trinity Broadcasting, Paul Crouch Sr. and Jan Crouch, host the popular nightly two-hour variety show, Praise the Lord. Wearing "gaudy costumes" and sitting "during their popular nightly program in front of stained-glass windows that overlook faux Louis XVI sets awash in gold rococo and red velvet, glittering chandeliers and a gold-painted piano" (Hedges, 2006, p. 170), the Crouches save a lot of souls and make a lot of money. Their network provides shows that give tips on beauty, instruct on lifestyle, offer financial counseling and entertain with gospel music from Nashville. The network broadcasts Dr. D James Kennedy, who heads a movement to create a theocratic America, and offers an outlet to the Christian exorcist Bob Larson and popular healer Benny Hinn. According to Hedges,

> The couple, who collect nearly $1 million a year in salary from the network, also have use of 30 ministry-owned homes, including two sprawling multi-million-dollar oceanfront mansions in the resort town of Newport Beach, California, a mountain retreat near Lake Arrowhead and a ranch in Texas. They travel in a $7.2 million, 19-seat Canadair Turbojet, drive luxury cars, and charge everything from dinners to antiques on company credit cards, according to former employees. They run their empire with 400 employees, out of walnut-paneled offices with plush velvet furniture. The offices occupy half of the top floor of the network's headquarters in Costa Mesa. (2006, p. 170)

Wearing garish outfits and big-hair wigs, Jan talks about how her pet chicken was brought back to life when she was a child. But she and her husband, Jan, are not all sweetness and light. They condemn those who do not support their ministry, claiming that God will turn against them (Hedges, 2006). Paul Crouch has said: "If you have been healed or saved

or blessed though TBN and have not contributed to [the] station, you are robbing God and will lose your reward in heaven" (Hedges, 2006, p. 171). He also proclaims "death" to anyone who might challenge TBN. Crouch once said on the show, Praise the *Lord*: "God, we proclaim death to anything or anyone that will lift a hand against this network and this ministry that belongs to You, God. It is Your work, it is Your idea, it is Your property, it is Your airwaves, it is Your world, and we proclaim death to anything that would stand in the way of God's great voice of proclamation to the whole world" (Hedges, 2006, p. 171). Those sentenced to death by the Crouches could perhaps seek mercy and healing from Benny Hinn, who "says that Adam was a superhero who could fly to the moon and claims that one day the dead will be raised by watching TBN from inside their coffins" (Hedges, 2006, p. 172). Hinn claims that he is a prophet and speaks daily with God. He claims that God teleports him to heaven where he receives visions and revelations. Apparently, Jesus has promised to appear at one of his crusades. He even claims that he once healed himself by watching a previously recorded broadcast of one of his own sermons. Like Paul Crouch, he doesn't take well to his critics. He once lashed out with the words: "Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun. I'd like to blow your head off" (Hedges, 2006). America's new Christian leaders, needless to say, attract the weak-minded and vulnerable. And they are moving large segments of viewers closer to the happy idiocy of their conservative and reactionary and infantile vision of God and politics.

Chris Hedges (2006, p. 174), writes that "Television lends itself perfectly to this world of signs and wonders, to the narcissism of national and religious self-exaltation. Television discourages real communication. Its rapid frames and movement, its constant use of emotional images, its sudden shifts from one theme to an unrelated theme, banish logic and reason with a dizzying perplexity."

There is more than sufficient cause to worry about groups such as these, many of which are populated by dominionists or Christian reconstructionists, individuals who fuse quasi-Christian teachings with American nationalism, neoconservative ideological doctrine and powerful corporate interests. Chris Hedges (2006) describes dominionists as Christian fascists whose collective beliefs and practices constitute a new political religion, one that attempts to take over mainstream denominations. Christian fascists operate out of megachurches in whose precincts a hyper-masculine cult of authority is fostered in which women and children remain subservient to their husbands and fathers and where male leaders speak directly to God. Dominionists control a vast Christian radio and broadcasting empire, with sights ultimately on taking control of the government itself. Many of

them recruit members by taking advantage of feelings of desperation among the dispossessed white working-class, especially during times of economic stagnation. They reject criticism and self-reflection as a weakness that they ascribe to Satan, the Prince of Darkness. Many of the church leaders are involved in shady business enterprises. Pat Robertson, for instance, is allegedly linked to the diamond trade in Sierra Leone, and created a scandal worldwide when he called for the assassination of President Hugo Chavez. A former candidate for President of the United States, and loyal CNP member, Robertson enjoys a cult-like status among Christian dominionists.

According to the award-winning journalist, Chris Hedges (2006), who has written a great deal about Christian fascism, Robertson and the Reverend Jerry Falwell (two very influential religious leaders in the United States) visited Guatemala to give ideological support to the military dictatorship of President Rios Montt that was running death squads that were killing 800 to 1,000 people a month in El Salvador. They also supported the Contras, an anti-Sandinista terrorist group from Nicaragua funded and trained by the US, a group that mercilessly and routinely raped and murdered men, women and children. Christian dominionists see communism as an strategic imperative of the Prince of Darkness, and so they have no qualms about supporting assassination, murder and violence, as long as it is against the evil forces of the left. Christian dominionists believe that they are carrying out the will of Jesus, the King of Kings. In reality they are messengers of aggression, violence and war. They despise the secular world and hold it responsible for all the evil in the world, and hence the secular world must be cleansed—purged—by holy violence. Here we have a perfect merging of capitalism and Christianity. As Chris Hedges (2007) notes, the dominionists haven't brought Christianity to save us from capitalism, they've brought capitalism into Christianity to save us from Christianity's radical message of love and tolerance.

In his book, *The Emperor's God*, a book about and in support of liberation theology, author Michael Rivage-Seul (2007) notes that the Jesus as human being, the Jesus as the man with dark skin, the Jesus who is vulnerable to the instruments of torture of the Roman Empire, the Jesus who is a victim of capital punishment and who expresses solidarity with the victims of torture and capital punishment everywhere—is the Jesus whom Reagan wanted dead, whom John Paul II wanted dead, whom Joseph Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI, wants dead. They all "wanted the poor robbed of their voice and God, so the elite's own God of the rich might hold exclusive sway" (2006, p. 175). While the real God of the United States is violence (it's creed being "violence saves"), the question has been raised: Do Latin

American revolutionaries, like the states that they oppose, use religion (liberation theology) to endorse violence?

According to Rivage-Seul (2006), Dom Helda Camera and Oscar Romero spoke of a "bloody trinity" of three levels of violence: structural violence or first-level violence or violence of the father (social, economic, political, and military systems and arrangements, codified in law and custom that are responsible for tens of thousands of innocent deaths throughout the world each day); revolutionary violence or second-level violence or violence of the son (responses to first-level, structural violence); and reactionary violence or third-level violence or violence of the evil spirit (the state's reply to acts of rebellion against structural violence). While structural violence (i.e., "the economic 'rules of the game' demanding that a world awash with food destroy or warehouse the excess produce rather than share it with the children starving" at the bottom of the economic ladder, the result being that "those children die as surely and predictably as if guns had been placed to their heads, and triggers pulled"), prevails in today's imperial regimes and their client states, revolutionary violence is the only violence condemned by such states (Rivage-Seul, 2007, p. 176). Yet according to Rivage-Seul, revolutionary violence is the only violence that can be theoretically justified, "as peasants and workers [seek] to defend their families from aggressions of the rich represented in the first and third levels" (p. 177).

Even Jesus shows sympathy for the goals of second level violence (although probably not himself a Zealot, he very likely was sympathetic to the insurgency against the Roman occupation). Jesus uses the term "Son of Man" to refer to himself, which Rivage-Seul points out was taken from the Book of Daniel, "a virulent anti-imperial tract penned during the occupation of Palestine by the Seleucid forces of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, in the middle of the second century B.C.E." (p.178). A figure "like a Son of Man" is identified there as "the judge of all of history's empires, not only of the Greek Seleucids, but of all the bestial powers that came before and that will arise in the future" (2006, p. 178). While clearly this indicates that Jesus was an anti-imperialist, Jesus nonetheless, "distanced himself from second-level violence, as well as from the first as represented by the Roman Empire" (2006, p. 178).

Jesus understood that second-level violence would provoke a reactionary third-level violence and nothing would be changed (as his parable about the absentee landlord and his tenants illustrated). He ultimately rebuked the worship of a divinized violence. And while structural violence in and by the United States "often goes unnoticed and unaddressed, it is common practice to reject revolutionary violence out of hand." Yet according the Rivage-

Seul (2007), "the reality is, however, that violence at this level is the most understandable and even the most justifiable, at least from the viewpoint of American history, Just War theory, and perhaps even in the light of Jesus' own sympathies" (p. 181). However clearly the practice of Jesus "challenges Christians to implement the practice of non-violent resistance, both as a matter of practicality and spiritual conviction", it nonetheless, according to Rivage-Seul

> …seems inappropriate for First World Christians to insist that Third World resisters adopt strategies and tactics of non-violent resistance in situations where they must actually defend the 'least of the brethren' in contexts shaped by extremely violent structures financed by U.S. tax dollars. In any case, Christians living comfortably in the U.S.A. must overcome the impulse to condemn second-level violence while excusing systematic aggression in service to U.S. corporate interests. Perhaps Philip Berryman says it best, "I would assert that people who have not actively opposed the violence of the powerful against the poor, at some cost to themselves have no moral authority to question the violence used by the poor" (p. 181).

While Bush Jr. may be currently out of favor with some members of the Council on National Policy, having not adhered strictly enough to all the political positions of this group, Bush clearly is in the main camp of the Christian dominionists. Further, he clearly supports structural violence when it is practiced by the United States, and decries revolutionary violence when it is used to defend groups and peoples from structural violence. And without question, his use of reactionary violence is unparalleled in viciousness, power and destruction.

George Monbiot (2004) helps set the stage for helping us to understand what is at stake in Bush's embrace of Christian fundamentalism, especially as it pertains to his foreign policy initiatives and his support among the American people. Monbiot notes:

> In the United States, several million people have succumbed to an extraordinary delusion. In the nineteenth century, two immigrant preachers cobbled together a series of unrelated passages from the Bible to create what appears to be a consistent narrative: Jesus will return to Earth when certain preconditions have been met. The first of these was the establishment of a state of Israel. The next involves Israel's occupation of the rest of its "biblical lands" (most of the Middle East), and the rebuilding of the Third Temple on the site now occupied by the Dome of the Rock and al Aqsa mosques. The legions of the Antichrist will then be deployed against Israel, and their war will lead to a final showdown in the valley of Armageddon. The Jews will either burn or convert to Christianity, and the Messiah will return to Earth.

According to this scenario, all "true believers" (i.e., those who believe what the evangelicals believe) will be "lifted out of their clothes and wafted up to heaven during an event called the Rapture." Those who miss out on the Rapture (who would want to miss out on being among all those glorious naked bodies rising to the heavens in ecstasy?) will be plagued by boils, sores, locusts, and frogs during the seven years that follow, a time known as the Tribulation. True believers who hope to bring about Armageddon and the defeat of the Antichrist (some evangelicals think it's Kofi Annan but our bet is on Dick Cheney) are now taking action. Monbiot explains that, among other things, such action mandates "staging confrontations at the old temple site (in 2000, three U.S. Christians were deported for trying to blow up the mosques there), sponsoring Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, demanding evermore U.S. support for Israel, and seeking to provoke a final battle with the Muslim world/Axis of Evil/United Nations/European Union/France or whoever the legions of the Antichrist turn out to be." What this also means is that there exists enormous pressure on the Bush administration to support Israel at any cost, despite Israel's brutal treatment of the Palestinians. True to Christian evangelical form, Bush supported Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and had given this war criminal a free hand in punishing the Palestinians. Monbiot elaborates:

> For 15 percent of the electorate, the Middle East is not just a domestic matter, it's a personal one: if the president fails to start a conflagration there, his core voters don't get to sit at the right hand of God. Bush, in other words, stands to lose fewer votes by encouraging Israeli aggression than he stands to lose by restraining it. He would be mad to listen to these people. He would also be mad not to.

It is important to remember that President Bush is an aristocratic evangelical. It is likely that his faith helps to rationalize his wealth and power, and justifies the consequences of his domestic and foreign decisions. In this sense he is little different from generations of evangelical imperialists that went before him. John Blunt (2004) reminds us that:

> George Bush is not just an evangelical, born again Christian, and a reformed 12-step alcoholic; he's also a Yalee and a Harvard business graduate, a prodigy of an elite and protected childhood, the inheritor of a family history steeped in war profiteering, banking scandals, Texas Oil Wildcatting and awesome political power. The norm in that culture is to leverage all the wealth and might at your disposal, crush your adversaries, take deep profits, then smile and go to church on Sunday. It is, in part, the American way. Unfortunately, peoples of the Arab world, the Asian world, the African world, and the Latin American world have seen these men march in and out of their countries, waving the flag, thumping the good book, filling their pockets and

> leaving a trail of disease, slaughter and ruin behind them for centuries. Many of them preached a better world, and a divine inspiration, but betrayed them nonetheless. Most of them turned out not to be accountable to their various gospels, and created the cruel, hypocritical reputation of the West—which is how we grew to be so envied, mistrusted, and despised.

Appealing to evangelical Christians during a National Day of Prayer ceremony broadcast coast to coast by religious networks on Thursday, May 6, 2004, President Bush brought his electioneering to a shameful new low point when he recognized Oliver North, the notorious Iran-Contra figure turned radio talk-show host who was serving as the honorary chairman of the National Day of Prayer. Bush left little doubt that he considered God to be backing his foreign policy when he remarked:

> We cannot be neutral in the face of injustice or cruelty or evil . . . God is not on the side of any nation, yet we know that he is on the side of justice. And it is the deepest strength of America that from the hour of our founding, we have chosen justice as our goal. . . . Our greatest failures as a nation have come when we lost sight of that goal: in slavery, in segregation, and in every wrong that has denied the value and dignity of life. Our finest moments have come when we have faithfully served the cause of justice for our own citizens and for the people of other lands. (cited in Riechmann, 2004, p. A6)

In this national broadcast our Holy Ghost Warrior President, to his credit, left room for some reflective criticism of the United States, with the understanding that admitting some faults actually strengthens his hand at convincing the public that America has stayed the course for God. Yet Bush glaringly failed to recognize in his address that the very founding moment of the United States as one indivisible nation under God was the unimpeachably loathsome practice of settlerism and the unconscionable acts of genocide against indigenous peoples. And given that the National Day of Prayer broadcast percolated with references to the U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, there was little doubt that Bush made a convincing case that his war on terrorism was a signal moment in the campaign to carry out God's holy plan of world salvation through war.

Lewis Lapham (2004) has observed that "Bush prefers the secular forms of escape to unreality, and so instead of appealing to the spherical predominances found in the realm of policy, he transfer[s] the reason for the American presence in Iraq to a heavenly compulsion" (p. 13). At a March 2004 news conference, Bush remarked: "Liberty is not America's gift to the world: it is God's gift to each and every person. . . . I believe that when we see totalitarianism, that we must deal with it" (cited in Weiss, 2004, p. H1). At his press conference in April of the same year, Bush exclaimed: "Freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world.

And as the greatest power on the face of the earth, we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom" (cited in Lapham, 2004, p. 13). These remarks prompted Lapham (2004) to respond: "Also the obligation to remember that what is real is the theory of war that appears on the maps and the computer screen, not the experience of war that blots the flow charts with the smudges of human suffering, mutilation, and death" (p. 13).

Robert Scheer (2004) criticizes Bush for shredding the U.S. Constitution when describing himself as a "messenger of God" who was "praying for strength to do the *Lord*'s will" (p. B15) by waging war on Iraq. Contrasting Bush with his "more worldly and cautious father," Scheer writes:

> Asked by Woodward, an assistant managing editor at the Washington Post, if he had ever consulted the former president before ordering the invasion of Iraq, Bush replied that "he is the wrong father to appeal to in terms of strength; there is a higher father that I appeal to." Reading the elder Bush's books and even his speeches before the latest Iraq war, one finds that the former president at least seems to understand that diplomacy, international cooperation and patience are not just the tools of naïve do-gooders but in fact are far more effective at advancing global stability and American aims than reckless adventures like the current quagmire in Mesopotamia. Religious crusades are often counterproductive; they tend to end up in unsustainable occupations of people who—surprise!—believe they have their own pipeline to the Almighty.

Steinberg (2004) minces no words in evaluating the dire impact of Bush *hijo's* evangelical Christianity on the U.S. electorate. His expostulations are worth repeating in full:

> Just as the president sees nothing wrong with his Iraq policy, he can't accept the view that his tax cuts are immoral. Bush is not disturbed by the huge transfer of wealth from poor to rich. He believes that returning moral choice and economic liberty to individuals matters more than any obligation of the rich to help the poor. He was entirely consistent when he urged his fellow citizens to react to the 9/11 attacks by going shopping. When the president repeats the mantra, "It's your money," he reiterates that very American, individualistic morality that makes each of us the architect of our own salvation. The state stands for alien power and, in the black-and-white morality of conservative Christians, it—together with the United Nations—shows the power of the Antichrist.

U.S. administrations have had a storied history of justifying the mass slaughter of enemies, but they also are adept at justifying the deaths of U.S. soldiers. It is enough, apparently, to declare all lives as "precious" and then intimate that God would have approved of their deaths in light of the larger

victory for capitalism and democracy. Bill Blum (2007) provides the following illustration:

> After he ordered the bombing of Panama in December 1989, which killed anywhere from 500 to a few thousand totally innocent people, guilty of no harm to any American, the first President George Bush declared that his "heart goes out to the families of those who have died in Panama."
>
> When asked by a reporter: "Was it really worth it to send people to their death for this? To get Noriega?", Bush replied: "Every human life is precious, and yet I have to answer, yes, it has been worth it."
>
> Speaking in November 1990 of his imminent invasion of Iraq, Bush, Sr. said: "People say to me: 'How many lives? How many lives can you expend?' Each one is precious."
>
> While his killing of thousands of Iraqis was proceeding merrily along in 2003, the second President George Bush was moved to say: "We believe in the value and dignity of every human life."
>
> In December 2006, the White House spokesman for Bush, Jr., commenting about American deaths reaching 3,000 in Iraq, said President Bush "believes that every life is precious and grieves for each one that is lost."
>
> Both father and son are on record expressing their deep concern for God and prayer both before and during their mass slaughters. "I trust God speaks through me," said Bush the younger in 2004. "Without that, I couldn't do my job."
>
> After his devastation of Iraq and its people, Bush the elder said: "I think that, like a lot of others who had positions of responsibility in sending someone else's kids to war, we realize that in prayer what mattered is how it might have seemed to God."
>
> God, one surmises, might have asked George Bush, father and son, about the kids of Iraq. And the adults. And, in a testy, rather ungodlike manner, might have snapped: "So stop wasting all the precious lives already!"
>
> In the now-famous exchange on TV in 1996 between Madeleine Albright and reporter Lesley Stahl, the latter was speaking of US sanctions against Iraq, and asked the then-US ambassador to the UN, and Secretary of State-to-be: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And—and you know, is the price worth it?" Replied Albright: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price -- we think the price is worth it."
>
> Ten years later, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, continuing the fine tradition of female Secretaries of State and the equally noble heritage of the Bush family, declared that the current horror in Iraq is "worth the investment" in American lives and dollars.

The Christian right has its own army. It's called Blackwater, and it's a private army. It's run by Erik Prince, a mega-millionaire Christian evangelical extremist who hires out his mercenary company to the United States government which deploys its forces often secretly in international war zones. Prince's mission is to wage a theoconservative holy war against the enemies of the United States in accordance with a biblically-driven interpretation of history, and the functional imperatives of the Republican Party and the U.S. military and the intelligence agencies. Blackwater's fanatical role, to defend Christendom and carry out a neo-Crusader agenda, has made its integration into the military-industrial complex more sinister than even President Eisenhower could have foreseen (Scahill, 2007).

How was Bush able to subordinate the national trauma over 9/11 to his religious triumphalism and, with the help of his policy makers, reignite the mythological mission of the United States as securing the world order for Christ by waging war against the infidels? In other words, how did the Bush administration so effectively manage to rewrite the securing of U.S. strategic interests such as oil and natural gas reserves in Afghanistan and Iraq as the battle of Christian civilization over the barbarism of the infidel? The answer, according to Donald Pease (2004), can be found in recognizing that, on September 11, 2001, the trauma of America's founding moment—the genocide of Native Americans—returned with a vengeance after centuries of repression. Furthermore, this birth-of-a-nation trauma—repressed by the myth of the United States as an unsullied land whose redemptive role is to prepare the nations of the world for democracy and reactivated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11—has been cathected to the image of a wounded nation, one in which the narrative of America as an unsullied Virgin Land could no longer be sustained once the airplanes crashed into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. The reaction of the Bush gang to the terrorist attacks against the United States—attacks that exiled the American people from their dream of being part of an innocent redeemer nation and that needed to be punished by preventative strikes—recalled at the same time the repressed historical memory of genocide against native peoples.

Pease compellingly argues that the zealous reaction of the Bush administration to the attacks of September 11, 2001—the bombing of Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq, the Patriot Act, and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security—makes visible the very violence that characterized the founding moments of U.S. history with the genocide of its native peoples. Such violence had been repressed, according to Pease, in part through the creation of master narratives of America as the Virgin Land, Redeemer Nation, American Adam, Nature's Nation, and Errand into the Wilderness that, "freighted with metaphorical significance and possessed of performa-

tive force," have been sedimented into the structural unconscious of the nation. The claim that the master narrative of the United States as the world's peacekeeper and ambassador of democracy has overdetermined the American public's view of themselves as a national people cannot be easily dismissed. This master narrative has been secured for centuries through the ideological state apparatuses, most particularly through public education, the media and the culture industries. Slavoj Žižek (2004a) contends that "Americans have historically seen their role in the world in altruistic terms" and maintains that movies such as John Ford's *The Searchers* and Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* or books like Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* help shed important light on what he calls "the naive benevolence of Americans." Žižek (2004a) has elaborated on what he refers to the good intentions underlying the ideological dream of America:

> The supposition underlying these good intentions is that underneath our skins, we are all Americans. If that is humanity's true desire, then all that Americans need to do is to give people a chance, liberate them from their imposed constraints, and they will embrace America's ideological dream.

The mythological themes that help to construct the ideological dream known as America provide, in Pease's (2004) terms, "the transformational grammar through which the state attempts to shape the public's understanding of contemporary political and historical events" (p. 1). Bush's policymakers have reinscribed such themes through a relay of signifiers between 9/11 and the security state that Pease refers to as a "regulatory intertext that transmits a normative system of values and beliefs from generation to generation" (p. 1), subordinating the terrorist attacks of 9/11 to these mythological themes and then fashioning imaginary resolutions to them. In his addresses to the nation, Bush and his administration have been able to use phrases and discursive strategies that, in the words of Pease, "inaugurated a symbolic drama that would subsequently transform the primary integers in the narrative the nation has formerly told itself with the aid of a new lexicon—with terms such as Ground Zero, Homeland, Operation Enduring Justice, Operation Iraqi Freedom—that authorized the Bush administration's state of emergency" (p. 2). In the end, the Bush administration was able to effect "a shift in the nation's governing self-presentations—from secured innocent nation to a wounded, insecure emergency state" (Pease 2004, p. 3) and established a "newly formed structure of governmentality." Playing on the notion that America was a Virgin Land that had never before been subjected to foreign violation, the Bush administration supplied this myth with a moral rationale. It utilized both historical as well as mythological regis-

ters, by describing, as Bush did, the attacks on 9/11 as a "wound to our country" (Pease, 2004, p. 3). Pease is worth quoting at length:

> The wound was directed against the Virgin Land as well as the U.S. people's myth of themselves as radically innocent. The state of emergency Bush erected at Ground Zero was thereafter endowed with the responsibility to defend the Homeland because the foreign violation of Virgin Land had alienated the national people from their imaginary way of inhabiting the nation. This substitution anchored the people to a very different state formation. It also drastically altered the national people's foundational fantasy about their relationship to the national territory, redefining it in terms of the longing of a dislocated population for their lost homeland. (p. 3)

Not only did the state of emergency erected by Bush trouble the fantasy of the United States as a nation unstained by the violence of the Other, but recalled from the pit of the structural unconscious the horror that had been disavowed and suppressed when the myth of the Virgin Land was first constructed over the killing fields of native peoples.

As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2003) notes, "the very origin of the United States is fundamentally imperialist" as the quest for empire driven by white supremacist thinking has been a fundamental way of rationalizing American "civilization" since its beginnings. She elaborates as follows:

> "American" supremacy and populist imperialism are inseparable from the content of the U.S. origin story and the definition of patriotism in the United States today. And it began at the beginning, even before the founding of the United States, not as an accident or aberration in the progression of democracy. The founding of the United States marked a split in the British Empire, not an anti-colonial liberation movement. The very term "frontier," used to define the border between independent Native American nations and the United States, implies a foreign country on the other side of a demarcation line—a country to be invaded, its inhabitants controlled and then expelled, while settlers move in protected by the army. Everything accounted for in the first hundred years plus as "movement of the frontier" was plain and simple imperialism, fitting all the definitions thereof. (p. 90)

In Pease's (2004) terms, the myth of the Virgin Land after 9/11 was "demetaphorized into the actuality of the state's violence" (p. 9). Pease (2004) writes that the "violation of the land's inviolability not only disinhibited the state of its need to mask its history of violence but also required the state to bring the event which the public had formerly disavowed—the forcible dispossession of national peoples from their homelands—into spectacular visibility" (p. 7). Pease elaborates:

> After they were figured in relation to the Homeland Security Act, the unprecedented events that took place on 9/11 seemed familiar because they re-

> called the suppressed historical knowledge of the United States' origins in the devastation of Native peoples' homelands. The sites of residence of the Paiute and the Shoshone had more recently been destroyed as a result of the state's decision to turn their tribal lands into toxic dumps for the disposal of nuclear waste. The events also appeared familiar, as the signifier Ground Zero attests, because the unimaginable sight of the crumbling Twin Towers recovered memories of the fire bombings of civilian populations over Dresden and Tokyo as well as the unspeakable after-effects of the atomic fallout on the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki . . . Ground Zero evoked the specter of the nation-founding violence out of whose exclusion the fantasy of radical innocence on which the nation was founded encountered the violence it had formerly concealed. (p. 5)

The term "Homeland"—the name of a prior state of unity achieved through decades of overt and subliminal indoctrination by the ideological state apparatuses and overdetermined by the imperatives of the military industrial complex and what Pease terms the "global biopolitical settlement"—is now one of forced unity under conditions of exile where all of us have been turned into insecure and displaced "minorities" in need of protection by the security state. At the same time, we are all potential terrorist surrogates who recklessly place the Homeland in danger by speaking out, by organizing dissent, by encouraging civil disobedience against the government's foreign and domestic policies. Pressure to join the legions of Homeland tipsters and civilian snitches and government informants is, for some, irresistible (Valentine 2003). Valentine writes that "[a]s in Vietnam, only five percent of the people need to be organized in this fashion in order to wield control over the indifferent ninety percent, and defeat the five percent that form the resistance" (2003, p. 11).

What we are left with is a spectacular space where citizens are more easily refigured as patriots willing to defend the security state as they become more and more enraged at being exiled from their erstwhile providential image of the United States as a Virgin Land, an image that Pease claims is dependent upon the dismembering of homelands elsewhere, homelands that are least like ours. In other words, we are in the process of being reterritorialized by the lexicon and figurative meanings of freedom and democracy adopted by the Bush gang who equate democracy and freedom with the "free market" and who demonize as barbaric, any feudal state or country that refuses to allow takeovers of its natural resources by more developed (and hence more civilized) nations—the United States in particular.

The Bush *junta* infantilizes the collective political unconscious of the United States (what Bush refers to as "Joe public") by resignifying its space of violent contradictions with tropes, motifs and conceits of danger that "correlate[s] this repression in political standing with the re-enactment of a

formerly suppressed prehistoric event" (Pease, 2004, pp. 8–9). The Homeland is redescribed as a space to which the U.S. citizenry could one day return, once the war on terror abated and the "thugs" and "enemies of freedom" have been exterminated. According to Pease (2004), "The Homeland Security State constructed the pre-emptive strikes against others' homelands as a spectacular form of domestic defence against foreign aggression" (p. 10). The spectacles of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, freighted with historically venerated significations of the United States as the world's liberator,

> invited their audiences to take scopic pleasure in the return of the traumatic memory of the unprovoked aggression that the colonial settlers had previously exerted against Native populations. These massacres, which could not be authorized or legitimated by the Virgin Land narrative, became the foundational acts that inaugurated the Global Homeland as a realm outside the law. (Pease, 2004, p. 10)

In effect, forms of civil and political life through which the majority of the American populace recognized themselves as redemptive descendents of the Founding Fathers were replaced by a biologically vulnerable body politic. The loss of the Virgin Land myth has to be compensated for by the pleasures of shock-and-awe—in legal, military, and political registers. Žižek (2004a) points to another layer of this mythology of vengeful benevolence that became unchained from the caverns of the structural unconscious of the United States when Bush made the following remark in his January 2003 State of the Union message: "The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity." For Žižek (2004a), "this apparent burst of humility, in fact, concealed its totalitarian opposite." Žižek explains:

> Every totalitarian leader claims that, in himself, he is nothing at all: His strength his only the strength of the people who stand behind him, whose deepest strivings only he expresses. The catch is, those who oppose the leader by definition not only oppose him, but they also oppose the deepest and noblest strivings of the people. And does the same not hold for Bush's claim? It would have been easier if freedom effectively were to be just the United States' gift to other nations; that way, those who oppose U.S. policies would merely be against the policies of a single nation-state. But if freedom is God's gift to humanity, and the U.S. government sees itself as the chosen instrument for showering this gift on all the nations of the world, then those who oppose U.S. policies are rejecting the noblest gift of God to humanity.

In other words, to reject the actions of U.S. policies is to reject God. Here, the United States appeals to the authority of God to legitimize its actions as God's chosen empire, symbolically usurping the authority of the Pope.

(Maybe a good idea would be to move the Vatican to Crawford, Texas, and let Bush run it. No, not enough night life and those Swiss Guards would not take kindly to wearing Stetson hats. How about Nashville?) Of course, further giving lie to the notion that the United States is saving the world from evil-doers (especially by citizens of other countries who know more about the history of U.S. war crimes than most of the U.S. public) are the recent revelations about the treatment of Iraqi detainees by the U.S. military in the prisons of Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. We are all too familiar with the images of leering U.S. soldiers torturing naked Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison. William Rivers Pitt (2004) captures the situation as well as any other reporter when he writes:

> We are awash in photographs of Iraqi men—not terrorists, just people—lying in heaps on cold floors with leashes around their necks. We are awash in photographs of men chained so remorselessly that their backs are arched in agony, men forced to masturbate for cameras, men forced to pretend to have sex with one another for cameras, men forced to endure attacks from dogs, men with electrodes attached to them as they stand, hooded, in fear of their lives. The worst, amazingly, is yet to come. A new battery of photographs and videotapes, as yet unreleased, awaits over the horizon of our abused understanding. These photos and videos, also from the Abu Ghraib prison, are reported to show U.S. soldiers gang raping an Iraqi woman, U.S. soldiers beating an Iraqi man nearly to death, U.S. troops posing, smirks affixed, with decomposing Iraqi bodies, and Iraqi troops under U.S. command raping young boys. George W. Bush would have us believe these horrors were restricted to a sadistic few, and would have us believe these horrors happened only in Abu Ghraib. Yet reports are surfacing now of similar treatment at another U.S. detention center in Iraq called Camp Bucca. According to these reports, Iraqi prisoners in Camp Bucca were beaten, humiliated, hogtied, and had scorpions placed on their naked bodies. In the eyes of the world, this is America today.

The torture at Abu Ghraib prison was not an aberration but rather a continuation of the legacy of the treatment of prisoners throughout the United States, the most brutal of which occurred under Bush *hijo's* watch in Texas when he served as governor. It is extremely unlikely that Governor Bush was unaware that female prisoners were regularly kept in portable detention cells in the summer heat for hours with no water so that they would more easily submit sexually to their oppressors; there is little reason to believe that Governor Bush did not see the tape of prison guards in the Brazoria County Detention Center in Angleton, Texas, forcing inmates to crawl while kicking them and poking them with electric prods. Surely he heard the remarks of attorney Donna Brorby, who described the super-max prisons as "the worst in the country, where guards reportedly gas prisoners and thrown them down on concrete floors while handcuffed" (Office of the

Americas 2004). But many teachers and students remain unaware that the type of torture that occurred in Abu Ghraib, is similar to the type of torture inflicted upon Indigenous and Third World peoples by the U.S. military and the CIA.

Such torture, like forced masturbation, was copied from the Nazis and it was further developed by the U.S. military to the extent that its psychological torture is much worse than physical infliction of pain using invasive instruments. The 1983 Honduran Interrogation Manual and the 1984 Contra Manual remain as powerful evidence of a long-standing practice of torture by the U.S. military. More recently, a CIA torture manual used to instruct five Latin American nations' security forces was revealed to the public in January 1997 by a *Baltimore Sun* report (Matthews 1997). A year earlier, a U.S. government investigation into the U.S. Army School of the Americas (renamed in 2001 as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation [WHISC] in Ft. Benning, Georgia, led to "the release of no less than seven training manuals used at the school which taught murder, torture, and extortion as a means of repressing so-called subversives, according to a Congressional report" (Office of the Americas, 2004, p. 2). That the U.S. military and its "independent contractors" teach and participate in torture and offer advice on how to circumvent laws on due process, arrest, and detention should come as no surprise to observers of the current conflict in Iraq. Critical educators have condemned not only the 665,000 innocent casualties to date in this war, but also the hypocrisy that underlies the claims by the United States that Iraq is on its way to becoming a sovereign democracy.

Yoshie Furuhashi remarks that the American men and women who had themselves photographed while torturing Iraqis presented themselves in a "mythical All-American sort of way, with big grins and thumbs up." Further, she asks: "Where does their apparent enjoyment come from?" To answer this, she draws on a quotation by Žižek, in her explanation of the dominant ideology of "totalitarian democracy" in a seemingly "permissive" society such as the United States:

> The superficial opposition between pleasure and duty is overcome in two different ways. Totalitarian power goes even further than traditional authoritarian power. What it says, in effect, is not, "Do your duty, I don't care whether you like it or not," but: "You must do your duty, and you must enjoy doing it." (This is how totalitarian democracy works: it is not enough for the people to follow their leader, they must love him.) Duty becomes pleasure. Second, there is the obverse paradox of pleasure becoming duty in a "permissive" society. Subjects experience the need to "have a good time," to enjoy themselves, as a kind of duty, and, consequently, feel guilty for failing to be

> happy. The superego controls the zone in which these two opposites overlap—in which the command to enjoy doing your duty coincides with the duty to enjoy yourself. (Žižek 1999, cited in Furuhashi 2004)

Furuhashi notes that the territory in which "the command to enjoy doing your duty coincides with the duty to enjoy yourself" is as "potentially all-encompassing as global capitalism itself" and is the prevailing social drama that underlies U.S. consumer-driven, self-help capitalism. She writes:

> Americans, trapped in the land of vanguard capitalists (who ceaselessly command them to enjoy doing their duty) and self-help handbooks (which endlessly teach them the duty to enjoy themselves), appear to obey both the command to enjoy doing their duty and the duty to enjoy themselves more readily than any other people. The grins and thumbs up in the photographs of torture are not so much evidence of character flaws of particular individuals as social tableaux of the American tragedy, i.e. the tragedy of "totalitarian democracy" in a seemingly "permissive" society. (Furuhashi 2004)

For Furuhashi, these photos represent "the social laws" under which the soldiers are acting—and in Furuhashi's mind they are ominously reminiscent of Brecht's concept of "social guests" or "scenes where people adopt attitudes of such a sort that the social laws under which they are acting spring into sight" (Brecht, 1964, p. 86). Žižek (2004b) reflects a similar sentiment himself when he observes that what we see when we examine the photos of humiliated Iraqi prisoners is not, as Bush proclaims, the isolated acts of a few, but rather "a direct insight into 'American values,' into the core of an obscene enjoyment that sustains the American way of life" (p. 31). As Žižek (2004b) reports:

> To anyone acquainted with the reality of the American way of life, the photos brought to mind the obscene underside of U.S. popular culture—say, the initiatory rituals of torture and humiliation one has to undergo to be accepted into a closed community. Similar photos appear at regular intervals in the U.S. press after some scandal explodes at an Army base or high school campus, when such rituals went overboard. Far too often we are treated to images of soldiers and students forced to assume humiliating poses, perform debasing gestures and suffer sadistic punishments. The torture at Abu Ghraib was thus not simply a case of American arrogance toward a Third World people. In being submitted to the humiliating tortures, the Iraqi prisoners were effectively initiated into American culture: They got a taste of the culture's obscene underside that forms the necessary supplement to the public values of personal dignity, democracy and freedom. (p. 31)

CONCLUSION: PARADISE REGAINED

We have to come to terms with the politics around the issue of strategies of resistance if we are to stop today's corporate, military, religious, and individual terrorists. Arundhati Roy (2004) writes that, "There is no discussion taking place in the world today that is more crucial than the debate about strategies of resistance. And the choice of strategy is not entirely in the hands of the public." Attempting to understand terrorism's root causes—religious, cultural, and economic—is not the same thing as condoning terrorism. We ask the American public to take the first step toward such an understanding not by listening to the White House administration (Republican or Democrat) who are in bed with the fundamental economic interests of the corporate media, but by engaging in a public debate in the churches, the schools, the factories, and the public arenas of struggle. If governments want oppressed and aggrieved communities to exercise non-violent as opposed to violent resistance, then they will need to honor and respect such resistance. Roy (2004) makes our argument with devastating effectiveness and she is worth repeating in full:

> [W]hen the U.S. invades and occupies Iraq in the way it has done, with such overwhelming military force, can the resistance be expected to be a conventional military one? (Of course, even if it were conventional, it would still be called terrorist.) In a strange sense, the U.S. government's arsenal of weapons and unrivalled air and fire power makes terrorism an all-but-inescapable response. What people lack in wealth and power, they will make up with stealth and strategy. In this restive, despairing time, if governments do not do all they can to honor non-violent resistance, then by default they privilege those who turn to violence. No government's condemnation of terrorism is credible if it cannot show itself to be open to change by . . . non-violent dissent. But instead non-violent resistance movements are being crushed. Any kind of mass political mobilization or organization is being bought off, or broken, or simply ignored. Meanwhile, governments and the corporate media, and let's not forget the film industry, lavish their time, attention, technology, research, and admiration on war and terrorism. Violence has been deified. The message this sends is disturbing and dangerous: If you seek to air a public grievance, violence is more effective than non-violence.

Roy understands that terrorism is exacerbated by the global needs of capital and the blood of the poor that is spilled in order to feed its unquenchable thirst. As economic globalization increases, and as the United States continues to be guided by officers and ex-officers of Goldman Sachs investment bank and others within the financial oligarchy of the ruling class, we will see the battle lines being even more firmly drawn. The difference is that the weapons of mass destruction that the transnational ruling class is

willing to unleash are more terrifying than at any time in the history of class struggle. Roy (2004) asserts:

> As the rift between the rich and poor grows, as the need to appropriate and control the world's resources to feed the great capitalist machine becomes more urgent, the unrest will only escalate. For those of us who are on the wrong side of Empire, the humiliation is becoming unbearable. Each of the Iraqi children killed by the United States was our child. Each of the prisoners tortured in Abu Ghraib was our comrade. Each of their screams was ours. When they were humiliated, we were humiliated. The U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq—mostly volunteers in a poverty draft from small towns and poor urban neighborhoods—are victims just as much as the Iraqis of the same horrendous process, which asks them to die for a victory that will never be theirs. The mandarins of the corporate world, the CBOs, the bankers, the politicians, the judges, and generals look down on us from on high and shake their heads sternly. "There's no alternative," they say. And let slip the dogs of war. Then, from the ruins of Afghanistan, from the rubble of Iraq and Chechnya, from the streets of occupied Palestine and the mountains of Kashmir, from the hills and plains of Colombia and the forests of Andhra Pradesh and Assam comes the chilling reply: "There's no alternative but terrorism." Terrorism. Armed struggle. Insurgency. Call it what you want. Terrorism is vicious, ugly, and dehumanizing for its perpetrators, as well as its victims. But so is war. You could say that terrorism is the privatization of war. Terrorists are the free marketers of war. They are people who don't believe that the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Human society is journeying to a terrible place. . . . The urge for hegemony and preponderance by some will be matched with greater intensity by the longing for dignity and justice by others.

The longing for dignity and justice for others, as well as for ourselves, has been a primary motivation for critical educators worldwide to engage in the politics and practice of critical pedagogy. Critical educators have not inherited a certain gene for making revolution; they do not bless us with their presence every hundred years or so, like a Ché Guevara or an Emiliano Zapata; rather, they are forged in the crucible of class struggle and critical consciousness. They live every day with a mindful eye to history, to past and present and future.

Die-hard exponents of revolutionary critical pedagogy do not seek capital's self-expansion at the expense of ecologies but rather the emancipation of labor and the creation of a social universe "in which humanity is restored to ecosystemic differentiation with nature" (Kovel, 2002, p. 210). This does not imply the transfer of ownership from the expropriators of surplus value to the expropriated, but the rejection of the very idea of ownership. Kovel uses the term "usufructuary" to describe this relationship, a term used by

Marx in *Capital, Volume 3,* which referred to the gratification expressed in freely associated labor beginning with the free association of producers. Kovel (2002) importantly notes that "the whole making of the human world is to be taken into account rather than just that which contributes or controls exchange value" (p. 241). This will require a total break with capitalism's law of value.

The greatest challenge to the United States is itself. It is a country that fully supports the merging of national security and technology. It is a country that panders to its banks and investment houses by means of war and fear. It is a country where the National Security has reportedly inserted special "keys" into Windows operating systems, most likely to make it easier for the US government to access your computer (Blum, 2007). Is it any wonder that the Pentagon and the Israeli Defence Forces are among Microsoft's biggest customers? Is it any wonder that in 2002, Microsoft created huge billboards in Israel (that bore the Microsoft logo) that read: "From the depth of our heart─thanks to the Israeli Defence Forces" (Blum, 2007). The United States is advertised as a secular democracy, which it is, but in name only. While its leaders claim to be inspired by providence or guided by the Almighty, the U.S. culture industry continues to profit mightily from the sexualization and sacralization of violence. Thousands of young Americans, thrilled by newspaper accounts of Arnold Schwarzenegger's alleged "gang bang" of an African American woman during his "pumping iron" days, were only too eager to cast their votes for "The Terminator" for governor of California. When Schwarzenegger told assembled U.S. troops that they are "the real terminators," thousands of young people couldn't wait to sign up for the next war. Imperialism has been made sexy by the editors of *People Magazine* who voted former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as one of the sexiest men in the United States. Apparently, many Americans are libidinally aroused by the ruthless way he wielded war and slaughtered the innocent.

Veining our discussion of critical pedagogy has been a commitment to socialism. There is little evidence to indicate that the United States is prepared to consider a socialist alternative to its imperialist democracy anytime soon. Freely associated labor can't compete in a capitalist society with the promise of endless shopping adventures in Planet Mall or with being free to conquer and plunder on a scale never imagined by the rulers of ancient Rome. As long as exploitation remains gratifying and continues to accumulate value, there is little motivation for U.S. citizens to create a world outside of capital's value form. Even when it becomes obvious that troop "surges" in Iraq are meant to protect the fruits of the new Iraqi "hydrocarbon law" that will reap decades of obscene profits for American

banks and investment houses through production sharing agreements that allow Iraq's oil to be exploited, the American public continues to support a U.S. troop presence in Iraq so as not to dishonour the troops that have yet to die!

We clearly live in a divided nation, a divided world. If we are to make inroads that will transcend this divide, our discourse of critical pedagogy must shift into another register, forming itself around new axes of commitment and solidarity and understanding. If it is to open up possibilities in the world beyond the scope of pre-existing conditions and commonsense assumptions, it needs to confront the issue not of how to address the exploited but how they can address us; not how to create a discourse of desire to grant the Other recognition, but rather of how to respond to challenges that the Other has posed to the politics of what we regard as recognition. We need to be oriented to the world of the Other not in order that the Other recognize us in terms that we provide, but in order to express and disclose what is at stake in the terms that we use in the dialogue between us, and what is at risk in signifying across a class divide, across a chasm of silence that is produced by the discourse and practice of class exploitation.

The discourse of critical pedagogy must not take an enigmatically risky path, relentlessly pursuing the intangible, a path lit with intricate theoretical coruscations but bereft of praxis. We are not seeking a new critical pedagogy salon in pursuit of some celestial, light-filled critics' utopia, rather we wish to travel down the more well-trodden path of what Gramsci called the pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will. Here, critical discourse does not function as a medium for universal harmony but cuts like a sword into the entrails of the social rendering an interpretation of the real in such away as to invite rejoinder and dialogue. The discourse of critical pedagogy needs to make clear what it means to interrogate meanings signified in the gap between class relations that has become the prime intermediary in how we understand and participate in our struggle for justice and freedom.

If we shift our discourse of critical pedagogy into a new signifying space, into a new nexus of social relations, that speaks to the encroachment of silence upon the current shape of our daily life, that more clearly and powerfully discloses the political order within the capitalist law of value, then our challenge to transform the social fate of the victims of capital must be presented in a language with a corporeal surface. It should be a surface that has receptors for generating intentionality, that makes a provision for a radical intercorporeity, for speaking to other bodies rather than presenting abstractions devoid of feelings, thoughts, and histories. We need to be able to speak our struggle not just in abstract terms, but in ways that touch hearts and minds. Thus, we must move outside the legacy of colonialism, of em-

barking upon the salvation of Others, and engage in finding ways of recognizing points of commonality, of mutual interest, where our own struggle for liberation intersects with the struggles of others, where we can begin to transcend the limitations of what is, in the struggle for what could be.

That is why any revolutionary struggle must be dedicated to educating the emotions as much as the intellect and why anti-imperialist struggle must be waged on the triple continents of reason, passion, and revolution. It must take place not only on the picket line or protest march, but also in the schools, places of worship, libraries, shop floors, and corporate offices—in every venue where people come together to learn, to labor, and to love. Here we wish to underscore that we adopt a critical revolutionary pedagogy that examines abstract relations in so far as these relations inform the concreteness of material reality. We seek the objective class interests that enable us to struggle collectively against existing social relations of exploitation and the means of production. We see objectivity as an ontological issue, not an epistemological one (Zavarzadeh, 2003). Objectivity is a knowable structure of reality—not a discourse of unknowability or undecidability. The basis of objectivity is human labor, the historically conditional effect of labor relations. Class struggle, therefore, becomes the "truth" of the social totality (Zavarzadeh, 2003).

In order to shift critical pedagogy into a new register, we need to rethink the very premises of critical pedagogy, not as some grand contemplative act, but as part of a philosophy of everyday life. It is a philosophy that links truth to the knowability of the material world but a truth that is always partial due to the historical limits placed on our ability to appropriate it. This challenge has to do with creating a living Marxism, a way of negotiating the reality of a racist and class society on a daily basis so as to transform such a society.

We take our cue here from Peter Hudis, one of the leading exponents of Dunayevskaya's work. Hudis (1983, 2000a, 2000b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, forthcoming) advocates for the capacity in all human beings to become philosophers. As a philosopher, Marx was able to transcend the separation between the subjective and the objective and to concretize its dialectical relationship. A philosophy of praxis approaches dialectical cognition as a means of engaging life in all of its hydra-headed manifestations, in short, as a way of life. We do not distance ourselves from everyday life by living a philosophy of praxis, rather, we are able to concretely grasp how human sociality needs to change in order to free us from capitalism's law of value.

Hudis describes philosophy as something that can actually free thought from a formalist or contemplative relation to reality by posing, as Marx did, the reunification of mental and manual abilities in the individual, that is, by

living a philosophy of praxis that permeates all dimensions of social life and all facets of existence. We need to grasp not only the construction of the subject using sociologically established fixed premises or truths (a mainly theoretical endeavor) but also the relationship between the subject and the social context and totality in which the subject is embedded while at the same time seeking to move beyond appearances to grasp the "thing" in itself (a mainly philosophical enterprise). This does not mean becoming inkhorns armed with philosophical formulae, but being able to penetrate beneath the façade of appearances that constitute everyday life in order to grasp the interwoven structures beyond the surface. It means changing the structures of the social relations of production that produce poverty and all wage labor determined by necessity. Part of the problem, notes Hudis, is the confusion between theory and philosophy. Hudis (2004) remarks that:

> [t]he thing itself refers not only to external objects but also to the categories which underlay human cognition. Philosophy is different from theory as it is traditionally understood in that it does not take its premises for granted. Philosophy is not about "accepting" certain fixed truths which one then simply projects without further self-examination. Philosophy subjects everything to self-examination, including its own premises—not for the sake of just tearing these things down (that would be sophistry) but as part of creating something new. As Raya [Dunayevskaya] said, theory is about tearing down the old, philosophy is about creating the new.

But because, as Marx maintained, the practice of philosophy is itself theoretical (Hudis 2004), we can't dispense with theory since philosophy necessarily includes theoretical discussion. However, Hudis (2004) argues that philosophy engages in discussion and debate in a fundamentally new way:

> The new way is that when theory becomes infused with philosophy, thought ceases to take its premises for granted. Theory is urgently needed because it's only through theoretic work that philosophic conclusions can be justified. But while theory is necessary, it is not sufficient. It is not sufficient because cognition isn't only about justifying certain assumptions and claims; our assumptions and claims also have to be critically examined. In a word, when theoretic work becomes infused with philosophy, "projection" no longer gets reduced to propagating fixed conclusions; it becomes a process of creating something new by developing ideas to their logical conclusion.

In effect, philosophy changes the way that we think. According to Hudis (2004), it renews the "image of thought." Marxist-Humanism, in particular, "has freed thought from a contemplative or formalist relation to reality by posing the reunification of mental and manual abilities in the individual." When theory is left out of philosophy, philosophy often becomes reduced to a contemplative act that "fails to connect with your inner life," which is

why Marxist-Humanism unites philosophic discussions and voices from below in a way that does not cleave theory from practice, but unifies them "in living individuals so that we can concretize the dialectic of second negativity in both theoretical and practical realms" (Hudis, 2004). Which is why the negation of the negation as a function of philosophy is always the seedbed of the new. In this way Marxist dialectics is always in tune with the historical moment, always shifting in concert with living human beings struggling to reshape social existence. Where we go, and how we get there will depend not upon the automatic self-activity of the oppressed. It will demand that we all become dialecticians, philosophers of praxis armed not with formulaic answers but with an openness of mind and spirit and a creative vision of what we can—and must—achieve. Rethinking theory and practice in the context of becoming philosophers of our daily lives is one of the challenges of critical educators today. But such a challenge only becomes salient for a politics of liberation when our pedagogical possibilities are directed toward the creation of another world outside the precincts of imperialist war, ecological violence, and the capitalist law of value.

The guiding maxim of the past 3,400 years of recorded human history appears to have been *pax paritur bello* (peace is produced by war) since there have been approximately 3,170 years of war and those years absent of war were spent preparing for war. Those of us who seek a new dialectic of freedom refuse to be obedient to this history. Our struggle is for a social universe of peace and prosperity that will allow us one day to name our three millennia of blood as the prehistory of the new universal citizen. Remember: *Mereces lo que sueñas. El maestro enseñando tambien esta luchando. Larga vida a la resistencia educativa! Que saquen fuerzas para las luchas que se aproximan*. (You deserve what you dream. The teacher teaching is also fighting. Long life to educational resistance. Draw strength from the coming struggles). We end our book with the words of Che Guevara:

> In these circumstances one must have a large dose of a sense of justice and truth in order to avoid dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force (2005, p.166).

NOTES

This chapter is a revised version of McLaren, P., and Jaramillo, N., God's cowboy warrior: Christianity, globalization and the false prophets of imperialism. In P. McLaren, *Capitalists & conquerors: A critical pedagogy against empire* (pp. 261-333), Landham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

[1] The names of famous puppets that were made popular on U.S. television in the 1950's.

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TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context *Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education* provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy's (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity—youth identity in particular—the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some "touchy-feely" educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in

the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.

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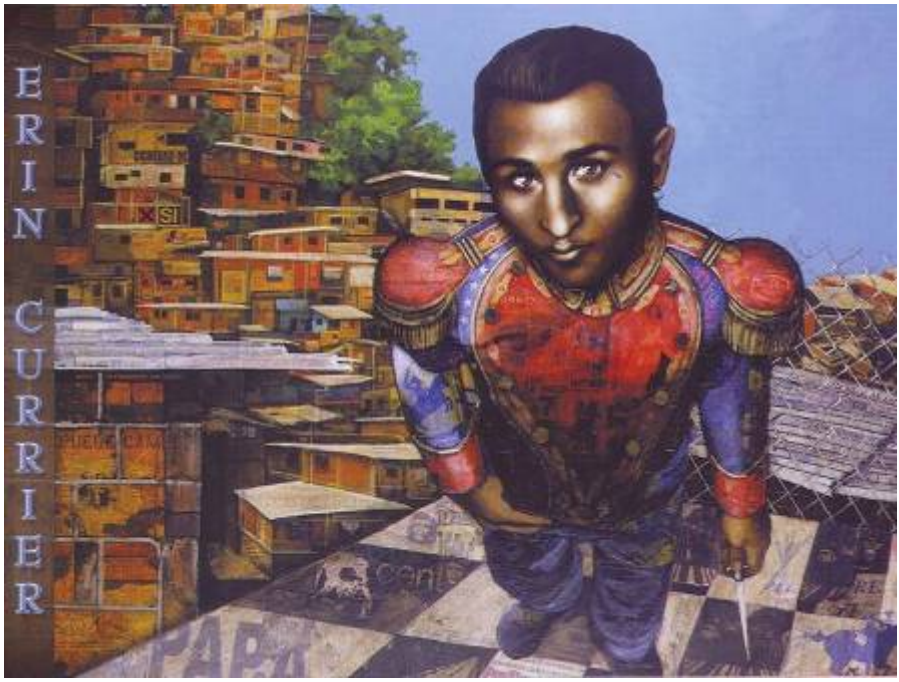
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Erin Currier was born on January 10, 1975 in Massachusetts. She left New England for Northern New Mexico in 1993. Erin earned her BFA in Costume Design from the College of Santa Fe in 1997. She began her formal career as a fine artist when she moved to Taos, New Mexico in 1998. Since then, she has built a reputation for innovative assemblages composed of recycled materials from all over the world, and has been represented in exhibitions and galleries in the Taos area and in California. Her work is in private collections internationally. She currently has a solo exhibition at the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Illustrations

Front Cover: Me, Myself and I, in Solidarity With Venezuela
Back Cover: Hugo Chavez
Above: Simón Bolívar
Inside: Manuela Sáenz y Sus Compañeras
Tania (Tamara Bunke)
Sandino and Zapata
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TRANSGRESSIONS - CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION

Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire

Towards a New Humanism

Peter McLaren
University of California Los Angeles

Nathalia Jaramillo
Purdue University



Written by two leading international exponents of critical pedagogy, this book is a pioneering attempt to create a Marxist humanist and feminist pedagogy for the new century. Critical pedagogy is discussed as an important revolutionary act in bringing about a socialist future.





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