

The Tasks of the Critical Scholar/Activist in Education: the Contribution of José Gimeno Sacristán

Las tareas del académico y activista crítico en educación: la contribución de José Gimeno Sacristán

Michael W. Apple

University of Wisconsin. Madison, Wisconsin, EE.UU.

Traducción de Fernando Marhuenda Fluixá

Abstract

The article provides the background (globalization) where critical education scholarship and activist is necessary to advance progressive educational theories and practices. The author portrays José Gimeno Sacristán as a living example of the struggles he is arguing for, based upon his entire work.

On the nature of critical educational studies, the author supports the need for critical scholars and, furthermore, he argues on the relevance of a long tradition of radical sociologists as well as educationalists, in favor of counter-hegemonic educational as well as political practices.

He points to the risks of perverting issues like social justice, economic equality, human rights and sustainable environments as they are becoming increasing currency among scholars and politically correct speech. These risks are larger nowadays when universities are adopting and embracing meritocratic aspirations and when they detach from real life problems of large amounts of the population. While there is a worsening of living conditions and indeed of progressive education practices; educational scholars tend to focus on socially irrelevant issues.

He then moves onto the nine tasks in which critical analysis in education must engage: 1) bear witness to negativity; 2) point to contradictions and to spaces of possible action; 3) a broadening of what counts as research; 4) not to throw-out 'elite knowledge' but to reconstruct its form and content in order for it to serve to genuinely progressive needs; 5) keeping traditions

of radical and progressive work alive; 6) criticizing such traditions, in a supportive way, when they are not adequate to deal with current realities; 7) act in concert with the progressive social movements against hegemonic policies; 8) to act as a deeply committed mentor demonstrating being both an excellent researcher and a committed member of society; 9) using the privileges one has as a scholar and activist.

Key words: critical education studies, critical education practices, scholarship and activism in education, hegemony and counter-hegemony, politics of knowledge.

Resumen

Comienza con el contexto de globalización en el que la educación crítica, en el pensamiento y en la práctica, resulta necesaria para alentar teorías y prácticas educativas progresistas. Nos presenta a José Gimeno Sacristán como un ejemplo vivo, por toda su obra, de estos argumentos.

Apoya la necesidad de una postura académica en los estudios críticos en educación, en el seno de la cual es relevante la larga tradición de sociólogos y educadores radicales que apoyan prácticas políticas y educativas antihegemónicas.

Apunta los riesgos de corromper nociones como justicia social, igualdad educativa, derechos humanos y entornos sostenibles, las cuales a medida que devienen tópicos en los discursos académicos políticamente correctos quedan vacías de potencial transformador. Estos riesgos son mayores hoy día, porque las universidades se entregan a la meritocracia y se alejan de los problemas reales que afectan a gran parte de la población. En tanto que empeoran las condiciones de vida y las prácticas educativas alternativas, los académicos en educación tienden a centrarse en cuestiones socialmente irrelevantes.

El artículo finaliza con una exposición de las nueve tareas en las que debe implicarse el analista crítico de la educación: (1) dar testimonio contra la negatividad; (2) señalar las contradicciones y las brechas para la acción posible; (3) ampliar el espectro de la investigación; (4) no desprenderse del «conocimiento elitista» sino reconstruir su forma y contenido al servicio de demandas progresistas; (5) mantener vivas las tradiciones del trabajo progresista y radical; (6) criticar estas tradiciones allí donde no se adecuan a las realidades actuales; (7) actuar de acuerdo con los movimientos sociales progresistas contra las políticas hegemónicas; (8) actuar como tutores profundamente comprometidos que demuestren ser capaces de realizar investigación excelente al tiempo que son miembros comprometidos en la sociedad; (9) hacer uso de los privilegios de que uno dispone en tanto que académico y activista.

Palabras clave: Estudios de educación crítica, prácticas de educación crítica, académicos y activistas en educación, hegemonía y contra-hegemonía, políticas del conocimiento

I need to begin this article with a personal story. A considerable number of years ago, I was invited to give a lecture to a very large group of teachers and other educators and activists in Porto Alegre, Brasil. After a series of delayed flights, I arrived there. I was exhausted; but the international seminar had started already. I was immediately taken to a large and completely filled auditorium and given a head set so that I could listen to the translation of the speaker who was just about to begin his lecture.

To be honest, given my exhaustion, the last thing I wanted to do at that time was to listen to a lecture. But out of a sense of solidarity and responsibility, I put the headset on and listened, hoping that I would somehow manage to pay attention. Within the first few moments, it was clear to me that I was hearing someone who had important things to say, someone who had much to teach me. You will not be surprised when I tell you that the person who was presenting that lecture was Jose Gimeno Sacristán. His critical analyses of the attacks on public education and his eloquent defense of an education that was truly responsive and democratic were well known in Spain, Portugal, and throughout Latin America. But this was the first time I was present when he spoke.

Over the years as we met at other conferences in Brasil and elsewhere, it became even clearer to me why his work was so widely cited and respected. Here was a committed scholar who understood the dangers of neoliberalism, marketization, and privatization in education. Just as clear were his nuanced theoretical approaches to making these attacks meaningful in their larger context of the reconstruction of teaching, pupils, what counted as “official knowledge,” and the very nature of democracy itself, among so many other things. Indeed, I can think of few scholars whose work is as rich and varied as Jose Gimeno Sacristán.¹ He is a truly global scholar, not only because of the breadth of his concerns and his ability to speak to audiences at multiple levels, but also because he understands better than many other people what it means to think both globally and contextually at one and the same time. Let me say more about the issues surrounding globalization and the global and where Jose fits into this arena.

⁽¹⁾ The list of books on these and other topics is extraordinary. See, for example, among many others, Gimeno Sacristán 1981; 1988; 1998; 2000; 2001a; 2001b; 2005; 2008). They cover an impressive range: the politics of education, the relationship between theory and practice in education, globalization, cultural diversity, school reform, the nature of democracy in education, action research, curriculum theory and policy and their relationship to other disciplines and issues, school autonomy, the nature of teachers lives and work—and the list could go on. There are few scholars in education who have contributed to debates across such a wide range of areas.

Understanding Globalization

If one were to name an issue that has come to be found near the top of the list of crucial topics within the critical education literature, it would be *globalization*. It is a word with extraordinary currency. This is the case not only because of trendiness. Exactly the opposite is the case. It has become ever more clear that education cannot be understood without recognizing that nearly all educational policies and practices are strongly influenced by an increasingly integrated international economy that is subject to severe crises, that reforms and crises in one country have significant effects in others, that immigration and population flows from one nation or area to another have tremendous impacts on what counts as official knowledge, what counts as a responsive and effective education, what counts as appropriate teaching, and the list could continue for quite a while (see Dale and Robertson, 2009; Burbules & Torres, 2009; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Peters, 2005). Indeed, as I show in *Educating the "Right" Way* (Apple, 2006) and *Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education* (Apple, 2010), all of these social and ideological dynamics and many more are now fundamentally restructuring what education does, how it is controlled, and who benefits from it throughout the world.

While localities and national systems inflect the processes of globalization differently and provide different contexts for struggles, convergences and a homogenization of educational policies and practices, driven by what Santos (2003) calls "monocultural logics", are very clearly evident within and between settings. These logics are very visible in current education policies which privilege choice, competition, performance management, individual responsibility and risk management, as well as a series of attacks on the cultural gains made by dispossessed groups (Apple, Ball, & Gandin, 2010). Neoliberal, neoconservative and managerial impulses can be found throughout the world, cutting across both geographical boundaries and even economic systems. This points to the important "spatial" aspects of globalization. Policies are "borrowed" and "travel" across borders in such a way that these neoliberal, neoconservative, and managerial impulses are extended throughout the world and alternative or oppositional forms and practices are marginalized or attacked (Gulson & Symes, 2007, p. 9). Jose's understanding of the ways in which these policies have such effects in numerous countries and his ability to clarify to people in these nations what these effects will be are more than a little evident to anyone who knows his work and/or has had the benefit of listening to him in the many places in Spain and Latin America

where he has been invited to share his ideas (as well as in several of his publications: see, e.g., Gimeno Sacristán, 2001a).

The insight that stands behind the focus on globalization in general can perhaps best be summarized in the words of a character in a novel about the effects of the British Empire (Rushdie, 1981). If I may be permitted to paraphrase what he says, “The problem with the English is that they don’t understand that their history constantly occurs outside their borders.” We could easily substitute words such as “Americans”, “Spanish”, and others for “English”.

There is a growing literature on globalization and education. This is undoubtedly important and a significant portion of this literature has provided us with powerful understandings of the realities and histories of empire and postcolonialism(s), the interconnected flows of capital, populations, knowledge, and differential power, and the ways in which thinking about the local requires that we simultaneously think about the global.² But a good deal of it does not go far enough into the realities of the global crises so many people are experiencing or it assumes that the crises and their effects on education are the same throughout the world. Indeed, the concept of globalization itself needs to be historicized and seen as partly hegemonic itself, since at times its use fails to ground itself in “the asymmetries of power between nations and colonial and neocolonial histories, which see differential national effects of neoliberal globalization” (Lingard, 2007, p. 239).

This is not only analytically and empirically problematic, but it may also cause us to miss the possible roles that critical education –and mobilizations around it in general– can play in mediating and challenging the differential benefits that the crises are producing in many different locations. Any discussion of these issues needs to be grounded in the complex realities of various nations and regions and of the realities of the social, cultural, and educational movements and institutions of these nations and regions. Doing less than that means that we all too often simply throw slogans at problems rather than facing the hard realities of what needs to be done –and what is being done now. But slogans about globalization and what is needed to help governments, researchers, and our current and future teachers understand its nature and effects are certainly not sufficient given current realities. Jose has never been satisfied with easy slogans or with rhetorical “solutions” that are exactly that –rhetorical. Just as importantly, he realizes that solutions cannot be found unless those people intimately

² The journal *Globalization, Societies, and Education* is a particularly valuable resource in this regard.

involved in the educational process –especially teachers and communities– are deeply involved in the creation of these solutions and in the struggles that may bring them about. This is more than a little visible, for example, on his important work on action research, the working conditions of teachers (like his prologue (Gimeno, 1984) introducing the work of Stenhouse in Spain), school reform, and school autonomy, writings that once again have had an impact well beyond the borders of Spain (Gimeno, 1988, 1998, 2006). It is just as visible in his influential work on what it means to be critical in an age when conservative and elitist positions have infected educational discourse, policy, and practice (Gimeno, 2000, 2001b, 2005, 2008).

The Nature of Critical Educational Studies

Jose's place in expanding the dynamics that are essential for critical education–and for establishing “legitimate” spaces to publish research that explores these dynamics theoretically, historically, and empirically–is secure. He has become an exemplar of how one's writing and editing talents, creative generation and use of resources that others would not have been able to find, ability to create alliances across traditional (and at times nearly deadly) academic and geographical borders, and so much more, can push the boundaries of the meaning of critical education and critical research. And much of my thinking about possible alliances across epistemological divides owes a debt of gratitude to Jose Gimeno Sacristán. I am not alone in appreciating the extent of his influence and the power of his committed and insightful analyses that draw from multiple traditions. Indeed, I am certain that similar comments would be heard from socially conscious educators in an entire range of nations and regions.

The Tasks of the Critical Scholar/Activist

But our task is not simply to be mere followers of scholar/activists such as Jose Gimeno Sacristán –or of any one person for that matter– no matter what we might owe to

him, as I certainly do with Jose. We can stand on his shoulders in many areas. But we must go further, collectively walking through the doors that he and others opened and then defended—and then opening and defending new doors. Here I am reminded of the radical sociologist Michael Burawoy's arguments for a critical sociology. As he says, a critical sociology is always grounded in two key questions: 1) Sociology for whom? and 2) Sociology for what? (Burawoy, 2005). The first asks us to think about repositioning ourselves so that we see the world through the eyes of the dispossessed. The second asks us to connect our work to the complex issues surrounding a society's moral compass, its means and ends. (Jose's work as a writer, editor, and editorial board member on many journals that served as spaces for the debates over these questions is nearly unparalleled in critical studies in education in Spain and elsewhere.) In what follows, I want to suggest a range of activities –many of which are embodied in Jose's efforts over the years– in which critical educators should engage if they are indeed to stand on his shoulders and continue to walk through the doors he both opened and defended.

For many people, their original impulses toward critical theoretical and political work in education were fueled by a passion for social justice, economic equality, human rights, sustainable environments, an education that is worthy of its name –in short a better world. Yet, this is increasingly difficult to maintain in the situation in which so many of us find ourselves. Ideologically and politically much has changed. The early years of the 21st century have brought us unfettered capitalism which fuels market tyrannies and massive inequalities on a truly global scale (Davis, 2006).

“Democracy” is resurgent at the same time, but it all too often becomes a thin veil for the interests of the globally and locally powerful and for disenfranchisement, mendacity, and national and international violence (Burawoy, 2005, p. 260; Jessop 2002). The rhetoric of freedom and equality may have intensified, but there is unassailable evidence that there is ever deepening exploitation, domination, and inequality and that earlier gains in education, economic security, civil rights, and more are either being washed away or are under severe threat. The religion of the market (and it does function like a religion, since it does not seem to be amenable to empirical critiques) coupled with very different visions of what the state can and should do can be summarized in one word –neoliberalism (Burawoy, 2005)–, although we know that no one term can actually totally encompass the forms of dominance and subordination that have such long histories in so many regions of the world (Apple, 2010; Gillborn, 2008).

At the same time, in the social field of power called the academy (Bourdieu, 1988) –with its own hierarchies and disciplinary (and disciplining) techniques, the pursuit of academic credentials, bureaucratic and institutional rankings, tenure files, indeed the entire panoply of normalizing pressures surrounding institutions and careers– all of this seeks to ensure that we all think and act “correctly.” Yet, the original impulse is never quite entirely vanquished (Burawoy, 2005). The spirit that animates critical work can never be totally subjected to rationalizing logics and processes. Try as the powerful might, it will not be extinguished –and it certainly remains alive in a good deal of the work in critical education, or as some prefer to call it “critical pedagogy” since for many people the words have become synonymous.

Having said this –and having sincerely meant it– I need to be honest here as well. For me, some of the literature on critical education and especially “critical pedagogy” is a vexed one. Like the concepts of postcolonialism and globalization that have increasing currency as well, it now suffers from a surfeit of meanings. It can mean anything from being responsive to one’s students on the one hand to powerfully reflexive forms of content and processes that radically challenge existing relations of exploitation and domination on the other. And just like some of the literature on postcolonialism and globalization, the best parts of the writings on critical pedagogy are crucial challenges to our accepted ways of doing education (see Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009).

But once again, there are portions of the literature in critical pedagogy that may also represent elements of conversion strategies by new middle class actors who are seeking to carve out paths of mobility within the academy. The function of such (often disembodied) writing at times is to solve the personal crisis brought about by the “contradictory class location” (Wright, 1985, 1998) of academics who wish to portray themselves as politically engaged; but almost all of their political engagement is textual. Thus, their theories are (if you will forgive the use of a masculinist word) needlessly impenetrable, and the very difficult questions surrounding life in real institutions –and of what we should actually teach, how we should teach it, how it should be evaluated, and how the physical environment might be rebuilt to make all this responsive to the vast array of people who refuse to accept that they are the constitutive outside, the Other, against which normality will be judged– are seen as forms of “pollution”, too pedestrian to deal with. This can degenerate into elitism, masquerading as radical theory. Or as Terry Eagleton puts it in his usual biting way, in many ways such work is the “center masquerading as the margins” (Eagleton, 2009, p. 9). This too is what Jose Gimeno Sacristán has had little patience with as well. Indeed, the way

he has lived his life as a critical educator stands in stark contrast to the disembodied nature of too much of the literature in critical education.

For him, serious social and cultural theory and research about policy, curriculum, and pedagogy needs to be done in relation to its object. Indeed, this is not only a political imperative but an epistemological one as well. The development of critical theoretical resources is best done when it is dialectically and intimately connected to actual movements and struggles (Apple, 2006; Apple et ál., 2003; Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009).

Once again, what Michael Burawoy has called “organic public sociology” provides key elements of how we might think about ways of dealing with this here. In his words, but partly echoing Gramsci as well, in this view the critical sociologist:

[...] works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local, and often counter- public. [She or he works] with a labor movement, neighborhood association, communities of faith, immigrant rights groups, human rights organizations. Between the public sociologist and a public is a dialogue, a process of mutual education... The project of such [organic] public sociologies is to make visible the invisible, to make the private public, to validate these organic connections as part of our sociological life. (Burawoy, 2005, p. 265)³

Burawoy could have been describing Gimeno Sacristán. But this act of becoming (and this is a *project*, for one is *never* finished, *always* becoming) a critical scholar/activist is a complex one (see Jacoby, 2000, 2005). Because of this, let me extend my earlier remarks about the role of critical research in education. My points here are tentative and certainly not exhaustive. But they are meant to begin a dialogue over just what it is that “we” should do.

(3) Burawoy's inclusion of “faith communities” is an important addition here. It connects to the arguments I have made elsewhere about decentered unities and the importance of alliances. As I argue in the revised 2nd edition of *Educating the Right Way* (Apple, 2006), alliances with religious activists on issues of mutual concern –even at times when there may be serious differences on other issues– can play a part in creating counter-hegemonic movements and in interrupting significant parts of, say, neoliberal agendas. Having personally worked with progressive religious movements both nationally and internationally, recognition of the liberatory potential of a number these movements has become clear to me. See as well the discussion of the liberatory tradition within the African American religious movements in West (2002).

The Tasks of the Critical Scholar/Activist in Education

In general, there are nine tasks in which critical analysis (and the critical analyst) in education must engage.

- It must “bear witness to negativity”⁴. That is, one of its primary functions is to illuminate the ways in which educational policy and practice are connected to the relations of exploitation and domination –and to struggles against such relations– in the larger society⁵.
- In engaging in such critical analyses, it also must point to contradictions and to spaces of possible action. Thus, its aim is to critically examine current realities with a conceptual/political framework that emphasizes the spaces in which more progressive and counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, go on. This is an absolutely crucial step, since otherwise our research can simply lead to cynicism or despair.
- At times, this also requires a broadening of what counts as “research.” Here I mean acting as “secretaries” to those groups of people and social movements who are now engaged in challenging existing relations of unequal power or in what elsewhere has been called “nonreformist reforms,” a term that has a long history in critical sociology and critical educational studies (Apple, 1995. See also Smith, 1999). This is exactly the task that was taken on in the thick descriptions of critically democratic school practices in *Democratic Schools* (Apple & Beane, 2007) and in the critically supportive descriptions of the transformative reforms such as the Citizen School and participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see Gandin, 2006; Apple et ál., 2003; Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009; see also Apple, 2010). It is also much in evidence in Jose’s analyses

⁴) I am aware that the idea of “bearing witness” has religious connotations, ones that are powerful in the West, but may be seen as a form of religious imperialism in other religious traditions. I still prefer to use it because of its powerful resonances with ethical discourses. But I welcome suggestions from, say, Muslim critical educators and researchers for alternative concepts that can call forth similar responses. I want to thank Amy Stambach for this point.

⁵) Here, exploitation and domination are technical not rhetorical terms. The first refers to economic relations, the structures of inequality, the control of labor, and the distribution of resources in a society. The latter refers to the processes of representation and respect and to the ways in which people have identities imposed on them. These are analytic categories, of course, and are ideal types. Most oppressive conditions are partly a combination of the two. These of course can largely map on to what Fraser (1997) calls the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition.

of powerful progressive practices in curriculum and teaching (Gimeno, 1976, 1982, 2000, 2010).

- When Gramsci (1971) argued that one of the tasks of a truly counter-hegemonic education was not to throw out “elite knowledge” but to reconstruct its form and content so that it served genuinely progressive social needs, he provided a key to another role “organic” and “public” intellectuals might play. Thus, we should not be engaged in a process of what might be called “intellectual suicide”. That is, there are serious intellectual (and pedagogic) skills in dealing with the histories and debates surrounding the epistemological, political, and educational issues involved in justifying what counts as important knowledge and what counts as an effective and socially just education. These are not simple and inconsequential issues and the practical and intellectual/political skills of dealing with them have been well developed. However, they can atrophy if they are not used. We can give back these skills by employing them to assist communities in thinking about this, learning from them, and engaging in the *mutually* pedagogic dialogues that enable decisions to be made in terms of both the short-term and long-term interests of dispossessed peoples (see Burawoy, 2005; Freire, 1970; Borg & Mayo, 2007).
- In the process, critical work has the task of keeping traditions of radical and progressive work alive. In the face of organized attacks on the “collective memories” of difference and critical social movements, attacks that make it increasingly difficult to retain academic and social legitimacy for multiple critical approaches that have proven so valuable in countering dominant narratives and relations, it is absolutely crucial that these traditions be kept alive, renewed, and when necessary criticized for their conceptual, empirical, historical, and political silences or limitations. This involves being cautious of reductionism and essentialism and asks us to pay attention to *both* the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition (Fraser, 1997; see also Anyon, et ál., 2009). This includes not only keeping theoretical, empirical, historical, and political traditions alive but, very importantly, extending, expanding, and (supportively) criticizing them. And it also involves keeping alive the dreams, utopian visions, and “non-reformist reforms” that are so much a part of these radical traditions (Apple, 1995; Jacoby, 2000; Jacoby, 2005; Teitelbaum, 1993; Williams, 1989). In Spain and elsewhere, this preservation of the “collective memory” of critical traditions and the development of intellectual resources to defend and extend them has found in Gimeno Sacristán a champion.

- Keeping such traditions alive and also supportively criticizing them when they are not adequate to deal with current realities cannot be done unless we ask “For whom are we keeping them alive?” and “How and in what form are they to be made available?” All of the things I have mentioned above in this taxonomy of tasks require the relearning or development and use of varied or new skills of working at many levels with multiple groups. Thus, journalistic and media skills, academic and popular skills, and the ability to speak to very different audiences are increasingly crucial (Apple, 2006). This requires us to learn how to speak in different registers and to say important things in ways that do not require that the audience or reader do all of the work. It is clear from the range of Jose’s work and the multiple audiences to which it is aimed that here too he has played a crucial role.
- Critical educators must also *act* in concert with the progressive social movements their work supports or in movements against the rightist assumptions and policies they critically analyze. This too is something that Jose Gimeno Sacristán has consistently made clear through his own actions. And this is another reason that scholarship in critical education implies becoming an “organic” or “public” intellectual. One must participate in and give one’s expertise to movements surrounding efforts to transform both a politics of redistribution and a politics of recognition. It also implies learning from these social movements (Anyon, 2005) and being expressly open to criticism of one’s taken for granted perspectives from movements outside of one’s national or identity boundaries. This means that the role of the “unattached intelligentsia” (Mannheim, 1936), someone who “lives on the balcony” (Bakhtin, 1968), is not an appropriate model. As Bourdieu (2003, p. 11) reminds us, for example, our intellectual efforts are crucial, but they “cannot stand aside, neutral and indifferent, from the struggles in which the future of the world is at stake.”
- Building on the points made in the previous paragraph, the critical scholar/activist has another role to play. She or he needs to act as a deeply committed mentor, as someone who demonstrates through her or his life what it means to be *both* an excellent researcher and a committed member of a society that is scarred by persistent inequalities. She or he needs to show how one can blend these two roles together in ways that may be tense, but still embody the dual commitments to exceptional and socially committed research and participating in movements whose aim is interrupting dominance. That this means that all of this must be embodied in one’s teaching should go without

saying. The role that Gimeno Sacristán has played in serving as a model for others, for defending and expanding the spaces within universities for serious progressive teaching and research, is notable.

- Finally, participation also means using the privilege one has as a scholar/activist. That is, each of us needs to make use of one's privilege to open the spaces at universities and elsewhere for those who are not there, for those who do not now have a voice in that space and in the "professional" sites to which, being in a privileged position, you have access⁶. This can be seen, for example, in the history of the "activist-in-residence" program at the University of Wisconsin Havens Center for Social Structure and Social Change, where committed activists in various areas (the environment, indigenous rights, housing, labor, racial disparities, education, women's struggles, and so on –but not yet disability rights, thereby demonstrating the work that still needs to be done–) were brought in to teach and to connect our academic work with organized action against dominant relations. Or it can be seen in a number of Women's Studies programs and Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nation Studies programs that historically have involved activists in these communities as active participants in the governance and educational programs of these areas at universities.

These nine tasks are demanding and no one person can engage equally well in all of them simultaneously. What we can do is honestly continue our attempt to come to grips with the complex intellectual, personal, and political tensions and activities that respond to the demands of this role. Actually, although at times problematic, "identity" may be a more useful concept here. It is a better way to conceptualize the interplay among these tensions and positions, since it speaks to the possible multiple positionings one may have and the contradictory ideological forms that may be at work both within oneself and in any specific context (see Youdell, in process). And this requires a searching critical examination of one's own structural location, one's own overt and tacit political commitments, and one's own embodied actions once this recognition in all its complexities and contradictions is taken as seriously as it deserves.

This speaks to the larger issues about the politics of knowledge and people. The concepts that many of us employ –concepts such as "critical education", "critical pedagogy", "identity politics", "hybridity", "marginalization", "subaltern", "cultural politics", "hegemony and counter-hegemony", "globalization", and the entire panoply of post-

⁶ I want to thank Luis Armando Gandin for suggesting this additional point.

colonial and critical sociological and pedagogic vocabulary- can be used in multiple ways. They are meant to signify an intense set of complex and contradictory historical, geographic, economic, and cultural relations, experiences, and realities. But what must *not* be lost in the process of using them is the inherently *political* nature of their own history and interests. Used well, there is no “safe” or “neutral” way of mobilizing them –and rightly so. They are meant to be radically counter-hegemonic and they are meant to challenge even how we think about and participate in counter-hegemonic movements. How can we understand this, if we do not participate in such movements ourselves? Paulo Freire certainly did. So did E. P. Thompson, C. L. R. James, W. E. B. DuBois, Carter Woodson, Angela Davis, bell hooks, and so many others including the person I wish to honor in this essay: Jose Gimeno Sacristán. Can we do less?

References

- ANYON, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities: public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. New York: Routledge.
- ANYON, J., ET AL. (2009). *Theory and educational research*. New York: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W. (1995). *Education and power*. New York: Routledge.
- (2006). *Educating the “right” way: markets, standards, god, and inequality* (2nd Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W. (Ed.). (2010). *Global crises, social justice, and education*. New York: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W., AASEN, P., CHO, M. K., GANDIN, L. A., OLIVER, A., SUNG, Y. K., TAVARES, H. & WONG, T. H. (2003). *The state and the politics of knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W., AU, W. & GANDIN, L. A. (Eds.). (2009). *The Routledge international handbook of critical education*. New York: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W., AU, W. & GANDIN, L. A. (Eds.). (2010). *The Routledge international handbook of sociology of education*. London: Routledge.
- APPLE, M. W., & BEANE, J. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Democratic schools* (2nd Ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- BAKHTIN, M. M. (1968). *Rabelais and his world*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. PRESS.
- BORG, C. & MAYO, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Public Intellectuals, Radical Democracy and Social Movements*. New York: Peter Lang.

- BOURDIEU, P. (1988). *Homo academicus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- (2003). *Firing back: Against the tyranny of the market 2*. New York: New Press.
- BURAWOY, M. (2005). For public sociology. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 56, 259-294.
- BURBULES, N. & TORRES, C.A. (Eds.). (2009). *Education and Globalization: Critical Analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- DALE, R. & ROBERTSON, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Globalisation and Europeanisation in education*. London: Symposium.
- DAVIS, M. (2006). *Planet of slums*. New York: Verso.
- EAGLETON, T. (2009). Urban sprawl. *The Guardian*, June 27, p. 9.
- FRASER, N. (1997). *Justice interruptus*. New York: Routledge.
- FREIRE, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- GANDIN, L.A. (2006). Creating real alternatives to neoliberal policies in education: The Citizen School project. En APPLE, M. W. & BURAS, K. L. (Eds.), *The subaltern speak: Curriculum, power, and educational struggles*. (pp. 217-241). New York: Routledge.
- GILLBORN, D. (2008). *Racism and education*. London: Routledge.
- GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. (1976). *Una escuela para nuestro tiempo*. Madrid: Fernando Torres.
- (1981). *Teoría de la enseñanza y desarrollo del currículum*. Madrid: Anaya.
- (1982). *La pedagogía por objetivos, obsesión por la eficiencia*. Madrid: Anaya.
- (1984). Prólogo a la edición española. En L. STENHOUSE, *Investigación de la enseñanza y desarrollo del currículum*. Madrid: Morata.
- (1988). *El currículum: Una reflexión sobre la práctica*. Madrid: Morata.
- (1998). *Poderes inestables en educación*. Madrid: Morata.
- (2000). *La educación obligatoria*. Madrid: Morata.
- (2001a). *Educación y convivir en la cultura global*. Madrid: Morata.
- (2001b). *Los retos de la enseñanza pública*. Madrid: Akal.
- (2005). *La educación que aún es posible*. Madrid: Morata.
- GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. (Comp.). (2006). *La reforma necesaria: Entre la política educativa y la práctica escolar*. Madrid: Morata.
- GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. (Comp.). (2008). *Educación por competencias*. Madrid: Morata.
- GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. (Comp.). (2010). *Saberes e incertidumbres sobre el currículum*. Madrid: Morata.
- GRAMSCI, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.

- GULSON, K. N. & SYMES, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Spatial theories of education: policy and geography matters*. New York: Routledge.
- JACOBY, R. (2000). *The last intellectuals: American culture in the age of academe* (2nd ed). New York: Basic Books.
- (2005). *Picture imperfect: Utopian thought for an anti-utopian age*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- JESSOP, B. (2002). *The future of the capitalist state*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- LINGARD, B. & OZGA, J. (Eds.). (2007). *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Education Policy and Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- MANNHEIM, K. (1936). *Ideology and utopia*. New York: Harvest Books.
- PETERS, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Education, globalization, and the state in the age of terrorism*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- RHOADS, R. A. & TORRES, C. A. (Eds.). (2006). *The university, state, and market: The political economy of globalization in the Americas*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- RUSHDIE, S. (1981). *Midnight's children*. London: Jonatan Cape.
- SANTOS, B. S. (2003). *Towards a counter-hegemonic globalization*. XXIV International Conference of the Latin American Studies Association. Dallas, Marzo (en papel).
- SMITH, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies*. New York: Zed Books.
- TEITELBAUM, K. (1993). *Schooling for good rebels*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- WEST, C. (2002). *Prophecy deliverance*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press
- WILLIAMS, R. (1989). *Resources of hope*. New York: Verso.
- WRIGHT, E. O. (1985). *Classes*. New York: Verso.
- WRIGHT, E. O. (Ed.). (1998). *The debate on classes*. New York: Verso.
- YOUDELL, D. (in progress). *After Identity: Power and Politics in Education*. London: Routledge.

Dirección de contacto: Michael W. Apple. Teacher Education Building Rm: 528E-225N. Mills Street Madison, Wisconsin 53706, EE.UU. E-mail: apple@education.wisc.edu