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## Objection Sustained: revolutionary pedagogical praxis as an occupying force<sup>[1]</sup>

PETER McLAREN

University of California, Los Angeles, USA, and University of Auckland, New Zealand

On April 9, Condoleezza Rice delivered a talk in San Francisco. Or tried to. The former Secretary of State was interrupted repeatedly by cries from the audience of 'war criminal' and 'torturer'. (For which we can thank our comrades in Code Pink and World Can't Wait.) As one of the protesters was being taken away by security guards, Rice made the kind of statement that has now become standard for high American officials under such circumstances: 'Aren't you glad this lady lives in a democracy where she can express her opinion?' She also threw in another line that's become *de rigueur* since the US overthrew Saddam Hussein, an argument that's used when all other arguments fail: 'The children of Iraq are actually not living under Saddam Hussein, thank God.'

My response to such a line is this: If you went into surgery to correct a knee problem and the surgeon mistakenly amputated your entire leg, what would you think if someone then remarked to you how nice it was that 'you actually no longer have a knee problem, thank God.' ... The people of Iraq no longer have a Saddam problem. (Blum, 2011)

Language is an invention that makes it possible for a person to deny what he is doing even as he does it. (Blum, 2012)

### Panoramas of Decay

Unscrolling before our bloodshot eyes is a vast panorama of decay, as if the sun has been leeches of its radiance and turned into a visual rendition of Bataille's *The Solar Anus* (1996), towards which Benjamin's Angel of History is careening out of control, not so much propelled by a storm from heaven now threatening to capsize the entire planetary system, but sucked back into historical time by a black hole of waste and putridity. Dripping from God's holy arse, the color of a peach stone, are the bloody entrails from endless wars and wars to come. The cosmic toilet has already been flushed, and we are circling around and around the bowl, riding the dregs on fetid surfboards, skimming over the factory effluents and waving our cowboy hats Slim Pickens-style, and remembering how we learned to love the bomb. Living within the state of planetary eco-crisis so aptly characterized by Richard Kahn as constituting 'geographies of genocide, ecocide, and zoöcide' (and, I would add, epistemicide, the wholesale 'disappearance' of indigenous knowledges and practices by the guardians of Eurocentric knowledge production), we cannot experience our self-presence except through the anamorphically distorting mirror of capital.

The problems associated with global capitalism are not self-standing – they form an organic unity. In capitalist societies such as ours, self-alienating subjectivity is always already social alienation linked to the social relations of production, to racialized and gendered antagonisms, and to the normative constraints of the global 'power complex' that reduces everything to production

and consumption – and it is this alienation that generates the self which remains isolated from its Other.

Motivated by the sustainability crisis and emboldened by the courageous activities of the Occupy movement, eco-pedagogues have not only developed a powerful argument about how to deal with the crisis of sustainability, but also offer a very timely and important contribution to critical pedagogy and community action at a time of resource shortages, climate change, economic instability and ecological breakdown. While the USA successfully exports its pollution southward and maintains an unshirkable responsibility to ‘civilize’ the global commons through deeply engrained notions of American exceptionalism, a ‘humanitarian’ despotism and a war machine unthinkable in terms of its uniformly high-caliber capacity for death and destruction, critical educators have been emboldened to fight back.

Critical pedagogy is becoming more committed to speaking to issues of socio-ecological sustainability and to sustainability-oriented social change. With contributions from authors such as Richard Kahn, Tina Evans and David Greenwood, we are now witnessing a profound demonstration of an efficacious integration of the social and ecological justice movements. In this sense, *Occupy Education*, a forthcoming book by Tina Evans, is very much a critical pedagogy of convergence and integration, as the work of European sustainability scholars and activists is brought into dialogue with powerful emergent voices from *las Americas*, both to interrogate the rust-splotched and steampunk metropolises and tumbleweed hinterlands of neo-liberal capitalism and to work towards a vision of what a world outside of the menacing precincts of neo-liberal capitalism might look like. What initially strikes the reader as a key theme of Evans’ project is the way she establishes the wider context of her point of departure, where the author utilizes place-based sustainability theory and action in the varied and multiple contexts of practical lived experience – experience that has been inestimably impacted by the ravages of neo-liberal capitalist globalization and sustained opposition to it. Evans’ point of departure emerging from this context is precisely the suffering of the planetary oppressed nimbly braiding together progressive and radical theories of education, a departure she makes under the penalty of losing herself to the very system which she has been trying so valiantly to overcome. Evans rejects a reformist discourse and its hegemonic apparatuses and instead chooses to construct a pedagogy of sustainability that can be used as a strategic instrument for liberation, one that is education-oriented but nonetheless maintains a position of extraordinary political effectivity. The upshot of this is the creation of what Richard Kahn in his excellent afterword calls a ‘counterhegemonic bloc of ideological alliance’ among environmental educators, indigenous scholars, non-academic knowledge workers, and political activists of various and sundry stripe – or what Kahn in his own path-breaking work has called ‘the ecopedagogy movement’. Evans’ work is built upon in-depth theories about the nature and purposes of sustainability itself, and Evans is acutely aware that the politics of sustainability is not a pitch-perfect love story and can easily be co-opted by the guardians of the state, who make empty promises to manage the crisis in the interests of the public good (really in the interests of private greed). The politics of sustainability is a discourse that can be hijacked by the very interests that Evans is out to unmask. Understanding how such hijacking takes place and how the imperial instinct remains alive and well among progressive educators, and comes with a fixed-rate and non-negotiable commitment to reform over revolution can be brilliantly assisted by engaging with the works of the decolonial school. Exponents of this school have charted out the conflictual terrain known as the ‘coloniality of power’ (*patrón de poder colonial*), and ‘the Eurocentric pattern of colonial/capitalist power’ (*el eurocentramiento del patrón colonial/capitalista de poder*) whose scholars and activists working in the areas of decolonizing epistemologies and praxis include Ramón Grosfoguel, Anibal Quijano, Linda Smith, Enrique Dussel, Sandy Grande and others. In addition to addressing the coloniality of power, a revolutionary critical pedagogy of sustainability is as much about creating what Kahn calls a ‘revitalized ecology of body/mind/spirit’ and the struggle for ‘planetary’ as it is a praxiological undertaking to achieve specific, cumulative goals.

Asset capitalism and the juggernaut of imperialism that follows in its wake has the potential to wreak further havoc upon the world in terms of imperialist wars, not to mention ecological destruction of the entire planet. Sociologist William Robinson (2008) has discussed the development of a new transnational model of accumulation in which transnational fractions of capital have become dominant. New mechanisms of accumulation, as Robinson notes, include a cheapening of labor and the growth of flexible, deregulated and de-unionized labor where women

always experience super-exploitation in relation to men; the dramatic expansion of capital itself; the creation of a global and regulatory structure to facilitate the emerging global circuits of accumulation; and neo-liberal structural adjustment programs which seek to create the conditions for unfettered operations of emerging transnational capital across borders and between countries.

Oligarchies such as the US power elite benefit from the consolidation of numerous matrices of power, whose generation of surplus value potential is transnational in reach, and whose multifarious and decentralized institutional arrangements are organized around the industrial, bureaucratic and commodity models that have commonly been associated with the military industrial complex. All of these 'power complexes' have intersecting social, cultural and political spheres that can be managed ideologically by means of powerful, all-encompassing corporate media apparatuses and the culture industry in general, including both popular and more traditional forms of religious dogma and practice. Assuming a position of major importance today is the religious industrial complex that provides the moral alibi for acts of war and military incursions throughout the world, so necessary for imperialist expansion. All of these power complexes tacitly and manifestly teach values, and produce ideational schemata that serve as interpretive templates or systems of intelligibility through which the popular majorities make sense of everyday life via the language of technification, corporatization, bureaucratic administration, and commodification knitted together (in the USA) by ideological imperatives of religious ideology, American exceptionalism, and the coloniality of power. These have been easier to consolidate and integrate organically into the fabric of US corporate life during the rise of neoliberal capitalism with its supranational integration of national classes and productive structures and the frenzied dynamics of marketization and the destruction of competing ideologies such as socialism and thus have succeed in becoming integrated into the structural unconscious of the American public more securely than ever before. While national capital, global capital, regional capitals, are still prevalent, the hegemonic fraction of capital on a world scale is now transnational capital. We are witnessing the profound dismantling of national economies, the reorganization and reconstitution of national economies as component elements or segments of a larger global production and financial system which is organized in a globally fragmented way and a decentralized way but in manner in which power is concentrated and centralized. In other words, as Robinson notes, there is a decentralization and fragmentation of the actual national production process all over the globe while the control of these processes – these endless chains of accumulation – is concentrated and centralized at a global level by a transnationalist capitalist class.

While all of these power complexes overlap and interpenetrate each other at the level of capital accumulation and value production, and reinforce the sovereign ideologies of the capitalist state through both new and old media technologies, the production of dominant ideologies is neither lock-step nor harmonious but it does result in an over-determination that enables major 'class' conflicts to be avoided.

Grosfoguel (2007, 2008) reminds us that it is a complicated power complex that we are facing, with an ignominious history. It was not just economic colonization that visited *las Americas* in 1492, but multiple antagonisms, which included: a global class formation where a diversity of forms of labor (slavery, semi-serfdom, wage labor, petty-commodity production, etc.) coexisted and became organized by capital as a source of production of surplus value through the selling of commodities for a profit in the world market; an international division of labor of core and periphery where capital organized labor in the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms; an interstate system of politico-military organizations controlled by European males and institutionalized in colonial administrations; a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European people over non-European people; a global gender hierarchy that privileged males over females and the system of European patriarchy over other forms of gender relations; a sexual hierarchy that privileged heterosexuals over gays and lesbians; a spiritual hierarchy that privileged Christians over non-Christian/non-Western spiritualities, institutionalized in the globalization of institutionalized Christianity; an epistemic hierarchy that privileged Western cosmology and systems of intelligibility over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, institutionalized in the global university system; and a linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileged Eurocentric knowledge as true communication and rational knowledge/theoretical production yet denigrated indigenous knowledges as 'merely' folkloric or cultural and not worthy of being called theoretical.

While, as Grosfoguel points out, the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures, and while the idea of race and racism becomes the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world system (i.e. coercive [or cheap] labor is done by non-European people in the periphery and 'free wage labor' in the core), I would still emphasize that it is the exploitation of human labor in the global capitalist system (i.e. global capitalism's endemic crisis, the social relations of production and the political class conflicts taking place within these relations) which sustains the conditions of possibility of all these other antagonisms, which is not to reduce them all to class.

My approach to revolutionary critical pedagogy is not so much theoretically multiperspectival as it is dialectical, emerging from the Marxist humanist tradition and beginning with the works of Marx himself. While Marxist educators need to include an ecological dimension in their work (in the discourse of 'asset' or predatory capitalism, is not the exploitation of human labor and endless consumption a logical corollary of the extermination of indigenous peoples?), ecology activists need to engage Marx. Marx is mostly known for his critique of political economy, which helped guide his devastating critique of capitalism. But not only can Marx's work reveal to the educational left how attempts to harmonize revolution and reform not only serve to diminish both, but his work can also be used to find some helpful markers for charting out what a post-capitalist future might look like.

As Peter Hudis (in press) formulates it in his path-breaking book, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*, when labor is determined by necessity and external expediency ends – that is, when we exist outside the social universe of value production and are no longer defined by material production, and our tribulations as human beings seeking to survive the world of vampire capitalism are no longer measured by labor time – then, and only then, are we able to take the first real steps towards freedom. This is because production and consumption will be based, according to Hudis, 'on the totality of the individual's needs and capacities'. Drawing our attention to Marx's storied phrase, 'From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs', Hudis corrects those who might interpret this phrase as some kind of a quid pro quo.

Here, we need to understand that Marx is not saying that needs are met only to the extent that they correspond to the expression of a given set of abilities. This is the case because it would mean that human relations are still governed by material production. But the true realm of freedom lies beyond material production. Even when we move from socially necessary labor time to actual labor time, we still are outside of the realm of freedom – entering the realm of freedom only occurs when actual labor time also ceases to serve as a standard measure, and labor serves as an end in itself, as part of an individual's self-activity and self-development. As Hudis makes clear, free development for Marx could not be possible when human activity and products acquire an autonomous power and limits are externally imposed on the range by which individuals can express their natural and acquired talents and abilities. Marx went so far as to stress the elimination of the basis of both modern capitalism and statist 'socialist' alternatives to value production. And Hudis gives us something else to consider. He writes that the subjective development of the individual is, for Marx, a crucial precondition of a truly new society; in fact for Marx it was as significant as such objective factors as the development of the forces of production. Here, he took the position that human subjective activity should never be constrained by the forces of its own making. He went so far as to argue that it is not the means of production that create the new type of man, but rather it is the new human being that will create the means of production. Marx understood that there was no way that progressive political forces could just 'will' a new society into being by a force of the imagination or by interlocking fingers with the capitalists in a toast to avoid the eco-sins of the father. Any new society would have to come into existence imminently from the womb of the old society, with its specific conditions of capitalist production and reproduction and the forces in play that challenge such conditions.

Why, one might ask, did Marx not specify more about the time frame that societies could use as a reference for when they could expect to achieve certain steps in the progress towards freedom? According to Hudis, Marx 'was cautious about getting ahead of what individuals could or could not achieve in the course of their practical history, precisely because he is wary of imposing any conceptions upon individuals that are independent of their own self-activity'. Marx understood that changes would arise from the nature of new forms of production in a post-capitalist society and, as such, he did not feel the need to advocate new forms of distribution. Marx clearly supported the

idea of a non-statist and freely associated form of self-governance that emerged from the Paris Commune. But this was a mediatory stage, in which capitalist social relations had not become fully overcome. He advocated the rule of the proletariat – democratic, inclusive and participatory communities of association – as such rule could work progressively to eliminate the social dominance of capital. While I do not claim the proletariat as the sole subject-agent of revolutionary truth, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, as articulated by Marx, has much value for us today.

Marx stressed the development of the forces of production (in part, because he did not live to witness the most destructive power in the forces of production), whereas, as Hudis notes, we are witnessing today the need to limit the destructive power of many of these forces before they overtake us completely. Time is running out on the effort to save the planet from capital's vicious self-expansive nature, and this is where Tina Evans' timely volume, *Occupy Education*, can provide us with a crucial intervention.

The ecopedagogues are able to accomplish so skillfully the charting out of a comprehensive critical pedagogy of sustainability. The characteristic virtues and underlying tenets of such a pedagogy include trenchancy, a commitment to social and economic justice, a challenge to those who are engrossing disproportionate amounts of surplus value that are immiserating the world's peasants and a rage against those liberals who in their blinkered thinking remain at best dogmatically critical of capital. To this list I would only add that in order to have a critical pedagogy of any kind, we first need to develop a philosophy of praxis, which requires that we recognize that all philosophy is determined by its dialectical relationship to praxis. And I would emphasize that this relationship between philosophy and praxis is *imminently ethical* in that it is manifested in a preferential option and thematic priority to be given to the oppressed to present their counter-stories and testimonies of resistance. It is also *imminently pedagogical* in that it recognizes that the languages and discourses of the oppressed have been domesticated, if not destroyed, by the pedagogical practices of the state and that new languages of resistance are often coded in the interstices of popular struggles. It is *imminently transformative* in that it adopts a class position in solidarity with the oppressed and remains united in popular, ideological, racial, gender and cultural struggles. As a philosophy of praxis, revolutionary critical pedagogy in the service of eco-sustainability will need to remain critical, self-reflexive, ethical and practical. Such a praxis is self-relating, it is immanent, it is an inscription into the order of being, a pulsion towards alterity, and it is also connected to the larger language of multiplicity and the historical traditions that can help guide it. It is an arc of social dreaming, a curvature of the space of the self as it is inscribed in our quotidian being. I emphasize this feature of revolutionary critical methodology, or a set of instructions for effective practice. We know, for instance, that the self is generated by alienation, and that to a large extent we are defined by our own failure to arrive at any fixed identity, as the self returns to itself from the rubble of relations of alienation and in doing so retroactively posits its own presuppositions through the self-sublation of contingency (Žižek, 2012; Žižek & Milbank, 2009). We are, in other words, invented into existence after the fact of existence. But this should not stop us from presupposing a new world, a better world, a less exploitative world, a world that surges forth from the integuments of the old through the expressive revelation of the people, through the practical action of service and through class mobilization.

At this ominous moment of capitalist cholera, I do not know if critical pedagogy is the outcome and expression of historical necessity or a contingent force that will be erased by the sands of empty, unproductive time – that is, it is unclear whether critical pedagogy is the result of the constitution of a deeper historical praxis needed at this historical moment or is merely the contingent construction of such a praxis. Surely, critical pedagogy is the externalization of an idea – the construction of a contingent singularity that can only be comprehended retroactively. Thus, we can never offer any guarantees as to the way people will be attracted to its principles and its 'truth effect'. And we must live with this realization, as difficult as it might be, in the future anterior. In truth, we have no choice but to live with it.

Eco-pedagogy carries with it the implicit but powerful lesson that we need to talk about the future and to ignore those who tell us that normative considerations and utopian thinking are inappropriate for revolutionary critical pedagogues. This would be, in Marx's view, a self-refuting statement as 'what will be' is always inscribed within the 'what is'. Marx tells us that all transformation must begin in the crumbling edifices of the old society, cobbled together by the smoldering debris left by the laws of motion of capitalist social relations – or, if you prefer

something more messianic, by Benjamin's Angel of History. To talk about different futures is desirable as long as such reflection is grounded in reality. Normative statements about the future are inescapable for any revolutionary. The elements of the future are contained within the very structure of the present. But we need to have more than a vision of the future – we need to be committed to a vision that arcs towards the justice that eludes us under the ironclad thrall of capitalism. The rise to power of Reagan and Thatcher is often traduced for being the midwife to neoliberal capitalism, but the horror of neoliberalism was well established long before their violent attacks on miners and air traffic controllers.

Our return to our humanity requires that we posit a new world outside of the well-worn path of US custodianship, and this is a retroactive process in which our presuppositions occur after the event. We do not overcome our alienation by recognizing ourselves as active agents because we presuppose our agency retroactively, after we act. We act from our self-immobility in a trans-subjective abyss, from a substanceless void that needs to be discovered, in order to map out the lineaments of our social universe, which is contingent to our imagination, to what is real and what is possible. There is no metaphysical springboard from which to propel ourselves into the future; rather, we propel ourselves from where we are, from being energized by the truth effect of our own commitment to a praxis of liberation – what we may consider a concrete universal – and our full fidelity to such a praxis (Žižek & Milbank, 2009). While we have no original source from which to act (we act from a position of exteriority beyond the totality of social relations) and from which to accept the entreaty of the oppressed, that should not stop us from participating in the struggle to build the world anew. We act not from some divine fiat, but from our own compassion, from our love for our brothers and sisters and non-human animals, from our thirst for justice and from our desire to end such needless suffering in the world. Yet the struggle will not be easy. On this path we are threatened by our own human frailty, by those who would betray us and the principles of revolutionary *comunalidad*, by those who would use us for their own ends, and by the faux revolutionaries who wish to be part of the struggle without sacrificing their own positions of power and privilege. It is these individuals who will take us down the path of working in 'collaborative partnerships' with statist institutions all too eager to co-opt limited environmental resources, using what Kahn (forthcoming) calls 'public relations alchemy'.

The biosphere is disappearing into itself, and it is no coincidence that those of us living in regions of the geopolitical center, in the very locations where the forces of exploitation are most acutely developed, will be able to resist (with the help of the arms race and the war economy) this collapse for a longer duration than those laboring in the peripheral countries. This means we are obligated to use this interregnum for political mobilization. And it is here that the work of eco-pedagogy can serve as an important guide.

On a recent trip to the small mountain town of Cheran, one of the eleven Municipios that are officially devoted to Purepecha, I accompanied some educational activists from Morelia to observe attempts by the townspeople to break away from the Mexican state and function as an autonomous community and form its own citizen militia to protect the surrounding forests from illegal loggers armed with automatic weapons and who are protected by the feared drug cartels. Here one could see the casualty of capital's awkward brutality and unprecedented repression as not simply a relationship for export but rather a home ground violence that permeates the unequal societies of the earth, sprouting in the soil of value production. In the days of the Cold War, one vision of capital was enthroned, while the other was ensepulchred. One was touted as bringing about an end to ideology, while the other lay rotting in the post-apocalyptic steampunk debris of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc police states, its red star fading like the lipstick of a cloakroom attendant at a dancehall. And yet capital's structural unconscious was creating its own subjectivity, its own 'bildung' grounded in a meliorist rather than an utopian project of progress, in a seedbed of apodictic knowledge and universal maxims and abstractly grounded cognition linked to positivism and technocratic rationality.

Standing polemically against and serving as a crucial antipode to the narcissistic individualism of the consumer citizen--to a society founded on the commodity form--is revolutionary critical pedagogy, dedicated to the formation of subjects striving to act upon the protocols of transcritique and phronesis and a prudential judgement that is always linked to praxis and practical judgment. Critical pedagogy seeks those spaces where production is not wholly capitalist, and where new subjectivities can be given birth, subjects unsparingly reflective enough to remain at odds with the

consumer subject. The consumer subject, skulking behind the facade of representative democracy, remains bereft of how self-knowledge is tied to the fetishism of the commodity, of how life becomes lumbered with subjectivities that are monomaniacal, ungrateful, intellectually insecure, which are given to Trump-style fantasist ravings, which are at sea in judging the competitive worth of others, which never stint at distributing faults, and which are most comfortable in accepting the patronage of overly corrupt corporate leaders. Here in Cheran, there is a thirst for revolutionary subjectivity. There is no dismal hunger for orthodoxy, nor lofty gestures for revolution. While there is an atmosphere fraught with foreboding, there are increasing occasions for multiple points of dialogue where the inhabitants huddle together in discussions of new vistas of revolutionary consciousness and organization.

We cannot have market freedom, hierarchical harmony or authentic democracy within the social universe of capital – this monstrosity of monopolistic imperialist capitalism – that is unable to distribute overproduction and unable to function even minimally without the extraction of surplus value. We must not be deceived. We must reject liberal pluralism and methodological individualism, as it only serves to bolster neo-liberalism and the capitalist state. With this bold new work by Tina Evans, and new writings by eco-pedagogues, we are provided with important conceptual tools to create a new language out of which new epistemologies of liberation can emerge. These can be connected to new engines of class struggle and new pedagogies capable of addressing the eco-crisis of our era.

As oblivion advances threateningly, and as the profound and irredeemably incoherent discourse of neo-liberal privatization secures itself as the generative grammar of our generation, we need to recognize capitalism as a fundamental structuring barrier to democracy. Critical revolutionary pedagogy, armed with new works by eco-pedagogues such as Kahn, Evans, Greenwood and others, can be used as a pedagogical bandana soaked in water, worn amidst the asphyxiating gasses arising from the neo-liberal dunghills, to buy us crucial time to organize, to use gasoline in the only legitimate way it should be used today – to build Molotov cocktails. I am not here resorting to a call for violence, for Molotov cocktails of the mind are a far better long-term choice to combat neo-liberalism than burning tanks dispatched against the people. But it must be made clear that communities must – and will – stand united against the militarization of the structural violence of the state.

Capitalism has truly become transnational, as it has turned the USA itself (considered by many to be the alpha male of global capitalism) into a vast colony by outsourcing its factories and forcing its workers into low-paying, non-union jobs with little or no social benefits. The hegemony of the transnational capitalist class is totalizing but not total. Genocide, epistemicide, the exploitation of human and non-human labor, the destruction of the biosphere, imperialist wars over resources and geopolitical advantage – all of these assaults are not seamless. The tectonic plates of globalized capital in their historical shifts do create fissures and cracks, and can lead to what David Harvey (2000) and others have called spaces of hope. The contradictory character of neo-liberal forms of capitalism and of capitalism more generally contains the cracks in the urban pavement of social misery out of which roses can grow, as Tupac Shakur might put it.

Resistance is not only possible from an imagined place beyond capitalism, since ‘subaltern’ groups have always resisted, have always fought back with arsenals of non-capitalist understandings and epistemologies – and with physical force – struggles with which critical educators have identified in their service as liminal servants to the people. It is important that critical educators continue to make alliances with indigenous communities and working-class struggles on both local and transnational scales. Together, through collective struggle, a new vision of what a world outside of the social universe of capital could look like can be forged – one that can be seen by the people as a viable alternative to the scourge of neo-liberalism. The socialist universe that I envisage borrows from the knowledges and insights of diverse groups worldwide who are resisting the despotic plan of capital (actually capital has no plan other than to be itself, as it only emerges from the universe of its contradictions as capital retroactively as some kind of ontological plan by positing the ground of its own propositions as if orchestrated by a cabal of Daddy Warbucks types sitting in a boardroom and smoking Davidoff cigars – see Žižek's reading of Hegel on this process, 2012). Our job on the left is to cobble together strategies and tactics from the debris of human suffering that surrounds us and that can unite us in a common cause.

We live in 'un mundo donde muchos mundos coexistan' ('a world where many worlds coexist') and this means that we have an opportunity to resignify the notion of critical agency from the position of subaltern exteriority – that is, from the subaltern side of colonial difference in the spirit of the Zapatista *dicho* ('saying') of *mandar obedeciendo* ('to rule by following') and *andar preguntando* or *preguntando caminamos* ('walking we ask questions'), which means we make our road of liberation by walking (i.e. as we go along). This horizontal approach to organization contrasts with *andar predicando* or *predicando caminamos* ('walking I tell you'), which is a vertical form of organization where one group tells another which way to go (often described as a form of Leninist vanguardism). Of course, this is organizing from a base of affection, or what has been called *política afectiva* ('affective politics') or *horizontalidad* ('horizontalism'), where one organizes at one's own pace: 'caminamos, no corremos, porque vamos muy lejos' ('we walk, not run, because we are going very far').

My own preference is the term, '¡Que se vayan todos!' ('Out with them all!'), as I think that life against and beyond capital requires more than local struggles for self-sustainability, direct democracy and participatory democracy, as important as these struggles are. We need to figure out how to organize the totality of everyday life and, for that to occur, we must first articulate the revolutionary subject. And our struggle must not only be local, to cease creating capitalism as much as resisting capitalism; rather, it must be massively universal – stronger, in fact, than the corporations that have hijacked the state.

As more and more people now exist outside the control of the state, in vast slums and favelas throughout the world, the struggle to bring down capitalism and replace it with a more democratic and sustainable alternative must have a viable vision of what a social universe outside of capitalist value production will look like.

We live in the Golgotha of the planet, in which the global coloniality between Europeans/Euro-Americans and non-Europeans is increasingly organized in a hierarchical division of labor that is nothing less than a massive form of global apartheid. Not only do we need a pedagogy that does not avert attention from contemplating problems of social, political and cultural domination, and does not obfuscate its own complicity with the coloniality of power, we need a mass struggle determined by our collective engagement with the world economy. This will surely require new forms of radical subjectivity and agency. It is to the task of building those new forms of political and pedagogical agency that revolutionary critical pedagogy must dedicate itself.

Moving from an abstract universalism to a pluriversalism (see the work of Ramon Grosfoguel), from modernity to transmodernity (completing the unfinished project of decolonialism), from a vanguardismo to a retoguardismo, from an abstract utopia to a concrete utopia, from 'andar predicando' to 'andar preguntando', from a post-colonial critique to decolonial pedagogy and an appreciation for the *communalidad* of first nations peoples and *pueblos originarios*, and from environmental education to ecopedagogy and the politics of sustainability, revolutionary critical pedagogy is positioning itself for a transnational struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalist value production. In this age where we work within an asset economy that makes profits from fictional investment markets imbued with the stench of greed while much of the world's population suffers, revolutionary critical pedagogy is poised to form transnational alliances with social movements that are working towards a vision of a social universe where labor processes are organized autonomously by the direct producers, where direct and participatory democratic administrative arrangements flourish, and where there exists a strong emphasis on social relations and human development that focus on service to others and the common good. The questions that remain point to an urgent challenge for the left: how extensive should be the uprooting of existing society and what should be the new social relations and new forms of social consciousness that replace current relations of exploitation and alienation. While there is no effective indemnity against failure, we have no choice today than to move forward as concrete utopians workers who refuse to conceal their partisanship for a socialist future. We may not choose to call this future socialist. We might call it instead a global *communalidad*. But whatever we choose to call it, it will be redolent with phronesis, with ideas whose eternality are freighted with truth and whose materialist dialectics proceed forth unabashedly from this seemingly incommensurable situation. It will be a revolution fought with fierceness. And with masks under which the ineffable resides.

## Note

- [1] This is an expanded version of a preface written for *Occupy Education* by Tina Evans, in press, Peter Lang Publishers.

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**PETER McLAREN** is the inaugural recipient of The Social and Economic Justice in Public Education Award by the Marxian Analysis of Society, Schools and Education, The American Educational Research Association, 2012. He is also the recent recipient of the Ana Kristine Pearson Award in Equity in Education and Economy presented by The Center of Education and Work, the University of Toronto. He is an award-winning author whose work has been translated into 20 languages. A political activist, he lectures worldwide and works with community and educational groups around the globe. Peter McLaren is Professor of Urban Schooling, the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. He also teaches part time at the University of Auckland. *Correspondence:* [mclaren@gseis.ucla.edu](mailto:mclaren@gseis.ucla.edu)