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Recommended Citation

McLaren, P., & Bosio, E. (2022). Revolutionary critical pedagogy and critical global citizenship education: A conversation with Peter McLaren. *Citizenship Teaching & Learning*, 17(2), 165 - 181. https://doi.org/10.1386/ctl_00089_1

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Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy and Critical Global Citizenship Education: A Conversation with Peter McLaren

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1 Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy and Critical Global Citizenship Education: A Conversation with 2 Peter McLaren

3 Pater McLaren and Emiliano Bosio

4 5 Abstract

6
7 This article presents a remarkable conversation on Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy and Critical Global
8 Citizenship Education between Peter McLaren, one of the leading scholars of contemporary Critical
9 Pedagogy and Emiliano Bosio, Guest Editor of *Citizenship Teaching & Learning*. McLaren's copious work
10 as a Distinguished Professor in Critical Studies at the Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies
11 (Chapman University), Co-Director and International Ambassador for Global Ethics and Social Justice
12 (Paulo Freire Democratic Project), Co-Founder of the Instituto McLaren de Pedagogía Crítica, Ensenada
13 and Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) offers insights, perspectives,
14 concerns, and outlooks that bring to the centre of international educational debates relevant thoughts
15 through which we can better understand the complex roots and history of global and local citizenship
16 particularly in relation to notions of critical theory, critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire's pedagogy, Marxist
17 humanist philosophy, ethics of solidarity, social justice and liberation theology.

18
19 **Keywords:** revolutionary critical pedagogy; Paulo Freire; Marxist humanist philosophy; ethics of solidarity;
20 critical global citizenship education; social justice; teacher education.

21 22 I. Introduction

23
24 Neoliberalism offers a profound challenge to social justice-oriented concepts of academic education.
25 Essential concepts of Education (e.g., justice, fairness, equity, respect and integrity) find themselves 'in
26 ruins' (Giroux & Bosio, 2021; Bosio, 2021; McLaren, 2019; 2016; 2015) and the 'intellectual heart' seems
27 often removed from much teacher education (Biesta, 2022; Veugelers & Bosio, 2021). Although such
28 criticism could seem over generalised, "we simply have to talk about these general matters because the
29 changes we are experiencing are so extensive and so fundamental that we cannot any longer feel
30 confident that we have any working assumptions that are widely agreed" (Collini, 2017, p.4). Given the
31 global dominance of neoliberal values in education then, it can be complex to put forward 'revolutionary'
32 pedagogical theories and practices, that are more oriented towards critical pedagogy (Torres & Bosio,
33 2020a/b), ethical values (Bosio & Schattle, 2021), nonkilling human capabilities (2017) where teachers
34 may seek to go beyond fostering 'global human resources' in order to foster 'critical global citizens'
35 (Bosio, 2021d; Bosio, 2020; Bosio, 2019).

36
37 Nonetheless, as the "intellectual relative" of Paulo Freire (Freire, 1995: X) and one of the leading
38 scholars of contemporary critical pedagogy, Distinguished Professor Peter McLaren has generated an
39 abundance of valuable literature focused on developing and implementing critical pedagogy strategies
40 into the classroom. His critical pedagogy is based on Marxist theories applied to curriculum development
41 and instruction, and the development of pedagogical theory and practice based on critical
42 multiculturalism, critical ethnography, critical literacy but also liberation theology and information
43 technology (McLaren & Jandrić, 2020). In simple words, critical pedagogy challenges both teacher and
44 student with queries about how power plays a role in their learning experience and examines how it
45 favors some and not others. Drawing upon this philosophy can relaunch critical pedagogy and critical
46 global citizenship education (GCE) as one unified revolutionary, critical, ethical and values-based force or
47 as Giroux and Bosio (2021, p. 4) argued elsewhere "a revitalized method to become robust by locating a
48 space in which to thrive and compete against the oppressive neoliberalism that is taking over education
49 environments".

50
51 In this perspective, our dialogue embraces contemporary educational issues and discusses what it means
52 to educate for revolutionary critical pedagogy and critical global citizenry, in this increasingly multicultural
53 world. The first section clarifies McLaren's understanding of revolutionary critical pedagogy and global
54 citizenship. It also addresses how his academic and life's 'journey' shaped this understanding. Given the
55 need for a 'revolutionary theory' to articulate the concept of critical pedagogy and global citizenship, the
56 second section explores the philosophical nexus between 'revolutionary' critical pedagogy and global

57 citizenship. The third section discusses teaching practices, specifically the relationship between teaching
 58 about revolutionary critical pedagogy and global citizenship. The article concludes with a discussion on
 59 Paulo Freire's pedagogy and how to best prepare students for critical and revolutionary citizenship (both
 60 global and local) through critical literacy in order to encourage them to participate in public discourses and
 61 debates over social, economic, and political issues that affect everyday life in their own and neighboring
 62 communities.

63

64 II. Dialogue with Pater McLaren

65

66 **Emiliano Bosio: What is your understanding of Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy and Global**
 67 **Citizenship? How has your academic and life's 'journey' shaped this understanding?**

68

69 **Peter McLaren:** I was born in a working-class neighborhood in Toronto, north of Lake Ontario, in the
 70 **Roncesvalles area which was mostly Polish.** But then my father landed a job as a manager of a major
 71 electronics firm; consequently, my formative years were spent mainly in lower-middle-class surroundings.
 72 **Prior to moving out of my home with my parents, I was living in a suburb which is now mostly**
 73 **populated by Chinese immigrants. My mother was Roman Catholic—her name was Frances**
 74 **Teresa Bernadette McLaren—and she used to repeat prayers in Latin to me when I was a child. My**
 75 **father was Lawrence McLaren, a Scots Presbyterian (he did have a Calvinist streak) and I was**
 76 **raised Anglican, but converted to Catholicism while in graduate school. I haven't really traced my**
 77 **family tree but I do recall a document in which my great grandfather described himself as a tinker**
 78 **and traveler, which makes me think I may be related to the Irish or Scottish traveler (gypsy)**
 79 **community. My father fought the Nazis overseas for 6 years with the Royal Canadian Engineers**
 80 **and my uncle went to England and joined the Royal Navy where he put the torpedo in the rudder**
 81 **of the German Battleship Bismark and received a medal, pinned on him by King George VI. My**
 82 **family was conservative, very much so, and they didn't approve when, after high school, I hitch-**
 83 **hiked to the US to participate in anti-Vietnam War protests, and where I met Timothy Leary, Allan**
 84 **Ginsberg, and some of the Black Panthers and joined the hippie counterculture.**

85

86 I was the first member of my immediate family to go to university. My early teaching experiences were
 87 colored largely by an ignorance of how my subjectivity was shaped, and how my teaching practices were
 88 implicated in wider social relations linked to the forces and relations of capitalist production, to wider
 89 epistemic presuppositions, to prevailing ideologies and worldviews. One never fully unlearns one's
 90 privilege or disadvantage; it is a lifetime of struggle. But the struggle to know oneself in relation to others
 91 is a struggle that must be waged, regardless of whether a complete victory is ever possible.

92

93 I have always been proud to be an educator, and to have been given the opportunity to work with
 94 students both as an elementary and as a middle-school teacher, as well as a university professor and
 95 political activist. My own role as a student is one that I unashamedly continue to occupy in every arena of
 96 social life. I have been blessed with the opportunity to travel to many countries and to continue my
 97 education, both here and in Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Europe, Korea, Japan, China
 98 and India. What I continue to realize is that the struggle against social injustice does not stop at the
 99 classroom door but is never-ending and continues during every waking minute, in every single day, in
 100 every situation that calls for human engagement, for trust, for solidarity, for respect, for peace, and for a
 101 willingness to make concepts, principles, and ideas our weapons—and not bombs and missiles — in the
 102 ongoing class struggle.

103

104 What is important to understand is that within revolutionary critical pedagogy and global citizenship —
 105 and you have partially discussed it with Henry Giroux (Giroux & Bosio, 2021) and Carlos Alberto Torres
 106 (Bosio & Torres, 2019; Torres & Bosio, 2020a/b) — theory and practice occupy a dialectical relationship
 107 in the interests of social justice. However, in most schools of education, they are 'violently sundered' so
 108 they may be considered two separate entities. A transformative classroom practice demands a

109 revolutionary theory. Experiences never speak for themselves and are never self-evident or transparent—
110 they are contextually specific and internally related in Marx's sense. We need a rigorous critical theory so
111 that we can better interpret, understand, and transform our everyday experiences. Critical theory can
112 create some sunlight in today's dark and foreboding world filled with disinformation and rhetorical
113 outlawry, epistemic nihilism and misology. Such theoretical sunlight, in my view, is the best disinfectant
114 for living in a post-truth world in which facts are adventitiously abandoned as soon as they become
115 inconvenient. A world where we are witnessing a dangerous restructuring of global capitalism based on
116 the increased digitalization of the economy and society since the 2008 Great Recession. This
117 restructuring due to digitalization will undoubtedly contribute to greater systems of mass social control
118 and repression and the development of greater instruments of surveillance and weapons of destruction,
119 leading to a global police state. As capitalism becomes increasingly trans/nationalized it more and more
120 relies upon racial determinations to spur capital accumulation, to allow the plutocrats to divide the working
121 class, and divert attention from the crises plaguing existing society. It is this culture of hate that nurtures
122 fascist sentiments, normalizing them through popular media outlets and through social media. In this fetid
123 milieu we need critical theory more than ever.
124
125

126 **Bosio: What is the nexus between ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and global citizenship?**
127

128 **McLaren:** I am committed to the belief that revolutionary critical pedagogy can help bring about a global
129 society where the exploitation of human labor is less likely to occur. Like many freedom-loving United
130 States citizens, I long for a world unsullied by violence, terror, scarcity, and alienation and am committed
131 to efforts that will make such a world possible. That is why I am committed to critical pedagogy. The
132 nexus between ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and global citizenship can be described as the politics of
133 understanding and action, an act of knowing that attempts to situate everyday life in a larger geopolitical
134 context, with the goal of fostering regional collective self-responsibility, large-scale ecumene, and
135 international worker solidarity. It is a commitment to building a world that is not driven by value production
136 (monetized wealth) and the alienated social relations that follow. Revolutionary critical pedagogy does not
137 remain content to make capitalist society more inhabitable by lyrical demands and appeals to the ruling
138 class for more social harmony; rather, it is designed to create the conditions for learners to examine the
139 limits and possibilities of the existential situations that emerge from learners’ experiences—experiences
140 that are sometimes traumatic for the learners as well as life-denying. Critical consciousness demands a
141 rejection of passivity and encourages the practice of dialogue wherein learners are able to identify
142 contradictions in their lived experiences and are able to reach new levels of awareness of being an
143 “object” in a world where only “subjects” have the means to determine the direction of their lives; where
144 you are able to make a choice to create history rather than being a casualty of history. If education
145 cannot lead to creating a better world then it is likely destined to recreate in different forms the barbarism,
146 violence and chaos of the present.
147

148 Connecting ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and critical global citizenship will require putting aside
149 stereotypes of leftists as “collaborators” with the enemy, as non-patriots, as bleeding-hearted naysayers
150 bent on selling out the country under the banner of political correctness. It will require the abandonment of
151 cardboard cutout images of radicals as bad guys, and feminists as extremists; equally it will require leftists
152 to jettison their blanket-thinking about those who disagree with them. It will require the courage to
153 examine social and political contradictions, even—and no doubt especially—those that govern
154 mainstream United States social policies and practices. It means that leftists will have to be more
155 attentive to opposing political positions and listen carefully to arguments put forward by conservatives and
156 libertarians alike. Students need to analyze various positions and to make judgments based on the caliber
157 of arguments put forward.
158

159 The notion that critical pedagogy is an “empowering” and “transforming” pedagogy is an often-repeated
160 expression that carries little meaning without first answering the following questions: Empowering for
161 whom and for what purpose? To what end is such transformation directed, whose interests will be served,
162 and who will benefit from such transformation? To say that critical pedagogy is empowering without
163 describing exactly what is meant by the term is to ensnare critical pedagogy in the very ductile category it
164 seeks to interrogate. These terms remain nakedly silent before such questions. Many critical teachers
165 have signally failed to engage such questions. Revolutionary critical teachers—who work from a Marxist
166 humanist perspective, which embraces a tragic humanism (of acknowledging our own incompleteness) as
167 opposed to a liberal humanism—argue for a dialectical reasoning that involves becoming conscious of
168 and transcending the limits within which we can make ourselves; it calls for externalizing, historicizing,
169 and objectifying our vision of liberation, in treating theory as a form of practice and practice as a form of
170 theory as we contest the psychopathology of everyday life incarnate in capitalism’s social division of
171 labor.
172

173 We do this with the intention of never separating the production of knowledge from praxis, of always
174 reading the word and the world dialectically. In so doing we maintain that practice serves as the ultimate
175 ground for advancing and verifying theories as well as for providing warrants for knowledge claims
176 (Stetsenko, 2002). These warrants are not connected to some fixed principles that exist outside of the
177 knowledge claims themselves, to some singular arrow of history whose arc points towards a certain
178 future, but are derived by identifying and laying bare the ideological and ethical potentialities of a given
179 theory as a form of practice.
180
181

182 **Bosio: How can teachers teach about ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and global citizenship?**
 183

184 **McLaren:** In answering your question on teaching about ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and global
 185 citizenship, I do share Rikowski’s perspective that the class relation is the capital-labor relation that forms
 186 the “violent dialectic” that generates all value. Class struggle is born out of the antagonistic relation
 187 between capital and labor. In fact, Rikowski argues that class struggle occurs intersubjectively as well as
 188 collectively as a clash of contradictory forces and drives within the social totality. Rikowski (2001, p. 20)
 189 notes that:

191 The class relation runs through our personhood. It is internal to us; we *are* labor, and we *are*
 192 capital. We are social beings incorporating antithetical social drives and forces. This fact sets off
 193 contradictions within our lives, and their solution can only come from the disintegration of
 194 ourselves as both capital and labor and our emergence as a new, non-capitalised life-form.

195
 196 Not everyone who benefits from participating in a critique of the many and often baleful contradictions of
 197 capitalism can be found in the sociology of education or critical pedagogy and global citizenship seminar
 198 room. But for those of us who have the opportunity to spend time there in a dynamic, engaging, and
 199 productive fashion, there are methodological concerns that should be addressed. What teachers learn in
 200 their academic programs should be shared with their own students, particularly if they want to foster
 201 critical global citizens. What teachers learn about society, culture, the politics of curricula, the relationship
 202 between media formations and ideological configurations, the relationship between theory and practice,
 203 and so forth can be employed in lessons in their own classrooms, with necessary adjustments for the
 204 various grade levels and other conditions.

205
 206 This stipulates that teachers need to acquire some kind of critical education themselves, something not
 207 always available—or only offered in a limited sense—in graduate programs in education, which too often
 208 are caught up in the academic hibernaculum of the ivory tower. Broadly speaking, this requires that they
 209 learn enduringly from works of critical social theorists to analyze the objective conditions that are
 210 responsible for creating everyday life in all its myriad social manifestations. For instance, teachers,
 211 particularly those who teach about ‘revolutionary’ critical pedagogy and global citizenship, could be
 212 challenged productively by the following questions: How is value produced in capitalist societies? What is
 213 the relationship between value and labor? What is the role of labor-power (human labor, living labor) in
 214 the current emphasis on educational standards, monetary rewards for successful schools, the current
 215 stress on accountability, and the push toward a national curriculum? Why do social classes exist? What
 216 forces, relations, and determinations have come together to produce them? What does this have to say
 217 about living in a meritocracy? How are racial and gender formations linked to the production of social
 218 classes? Of course, after the election of Donald Trump and attacks on critical race theory and the
 219 teaching of slavery and the genocide of indigenous peoples, such questions as these have become
 220 particularly anathema to those conservatives and reactionaries who are increasingly dominating the
 221 political landscape.

222
 223 While it is important to make available to teachers methodological approaches such as social-historical
 224 analysis that, with rigorous use, will help teachers to reconstruct the social and historical conditions
 225 surrounding the production, circulation, and reception of symbolic forms (see Thompson, 1990), it is also
 226 crucial that teachers engage in the kind of historical materialist analysis developed within the Marxist
 227 tradition so that they can see how the production of consciousness works gear-in-gear with capitalist
 228 social relations, particularly if teachers wish to foster that type of global citizenry that is critical. Symbolic
 229 formations need to be analyzed in their spatiotemporal settings, within certain fields of interaction, and in
 230 the context of social institutions and structures so that teachers have a greater sense of how meanings
 231 are inscribed, encoded, decoded, transmitted, deployed, circulated, and received in the arena of everyday
 232 social relations.

233
 234 In addition to this type of discourse analysis, it is crucial that teachers be able to articulate their site of
 235 self-discovery by uncovering the network of relations that situates themselves in the context of class
 236 confrontation, alienated labor, and exploitation as the private appropriation of surplus value. And while it
 237 remains important to acknowledge that bourgeois practices do have some progressive aspects to them,

238 we nevertheless need to recognize the far-flung and problematic nature of the United States' corporate
 239 reach across the hemispheres. As a mode of resistance, I am inspired by the principle of internationalism.
 240 Marx and Engels enunciated such a principle when they wrote about how those who oppress others
 241 cannot themselves be free. Marxism is a guide to action, not a set of metaphysical dogmas boiled down
 242 in textbook form; more specifically it is a guide for creating the conditions of possibility for revolutionary
 243 action where collective struggle becomes a way to discover new apertures through which insights can be
 244 generated, theories constructed, and strategies mobilized for popular emancipation and empowerment,
 245 even more so if we are to discuss notions of global citizenship in critical and sustainable ways.
 246

247 In relation to our discussion on revolutionary critical pedagogy and critical global citizenship, I would like
 248 to mention Glenn Rikowski. He has pointed out that many educationalists who analyze social class focus
 249 too narrowly on stratification and social inequality and in the process literally abandon the notion of
 250 working-class struggle. I am using the term *class struggle* after Rikowski (2001), as a social relation
 251 between labor and capital. It is one of the phenomena integral to the existence of capitalist society, "an
 252 element of the constitution of a world struggle" (p. 1) that exists everywhere in capitalist society.
 253 Education is a key process in "the generation of the capital relation." Education "links the chains that bind
 254 our souls to capital." It is one of the ropes making up the ring in which the combat between labor and
 255 capital takes place, a fight that utilizes fists of fury, a clash that powers contemporary his- tory: "the class
 256 struggle" (p. 2). Schools and universities therefore often act as vital supports for, and developers of, the
 257 class relation, "the violent capital-labor relation that is at the core of capitalist society and development"
 258 (p. 19). As Massimo De Angelis (2000, p. 10) remarks:

259 Education is crucial for capital if it wants to rely on a strategy of continuous displacement of the
 260 class composition. An educated worker in today's paradigm is a worker who is able to adapt—
 261 who is able to take over one job one day and another job the next day—who is engaged in life-
 262 long learning as a continuous process, which means updating their skills to suit the market. That
 263 is essential to maintain social cohesion in a context in which there is continuous displacement of
 264 the class composition of what kind of work is done.

265 **Bosio: How do we prepare students to be critical and 'revolutionary' global citizens?**

266
 267 **McLaren:** Preparing students for critical and revolutionary citizenship (both global and local) through
 268 critical literacy means to deepen the roots of democracy by encouraging students to participate in public
 269 discourses and debates over social, economic, and political issues that affect everyday life in their own
 270 and neighboring communities. In this way, students can acquire the pedagogical courage and moral
 271 responsibility to participate in democratic life as critical social agents, transforming themselves into
 272 authors of their own histories rather than being written off as the passive victims of history. In this regard,
 273 we would do well to remember the manifest possibilities offered by the creation of a socialist society,
 274 including those of education for global and local citizenry.
 275

276 A major step in preparing students to become critical global citizens is not only to provide them with
 277 meaningful learning experiences (i.e., through the use of numerical literacy, computer literacy, cultural
 278 literacy, and critical literacy skills) but also to validate and legitimate the experiences that students bring
 279 into the classroom from their everyday lives. Student experiences can be linked to a theme-based
 280 curriculum designed to facilitate economic literacy, media literacy, eco-literacy, consumer literacy, and
 281 other literacies linked to current social and educational policies motivated by unregulated global
 282 capitalism.
 283

284 Second, social justice teachers can offer students a "language of critique" and a "language of possibility,"
 285 so that they can conceptualize, analyze, theorize, and critically reflect on their experiences. Henry Giroux
 286 uses the term language of critique to refer to developing a theoretical vocabulary and a set of analytic
 287 skills drawn mainly from sociology, critical theory, and cultural studies. The term language of possibility
 288 refers to developing a vision of a better world by bringing theory into practice (praxis). In other words, it
 289 refers to using new sets of analytic skills from the social sciences to interrogate and transform the social
 290 conditions that have socially, culturally, and historically produced one's individual and collective
 291 experiences.

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The recognition of the dialectical unity between theory and practice, and action and reflection, is a third step that social justice teachers can undertake to empower students. Here we make a crucial distinction between reflection and critical reflection. While the former is related to students' awareness of their concrete social and economic circumstances, the latter deals with the investigation of their social location in the world as well as their relationship with the world. Paulo Freire refers to this as a "radical form of being," which he associates with "beings that not only know, but know that they know."

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Bosio: Peter, you are considered by many the "intellectual relative" of Paulo Freire. You conducted extensive research work on Freire and his pedagogical approach. For example, your excellent book 'Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the pedagogy of revolution' (McLaren, 2000). How the Freirean pedagogy does connect to notions of developing learners' critical consciousness at both local and global levels?

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McLaren: Freirean pedagogy is not so much about changing people's minds about their perspectives on the world from which follows a change of behavior in the learner that in some way positively impacts the environment. Because that approach still operates in the pedagogical realm of the "banking education" that Freire so famously criticized—depositing information from the teacher into the mind of the learner as one would deposit currency into a bank account. No, for Freire, learning involves a dialectical reading of the word and the world, of learning to recognize opportunities for changing the world that Freire referred to as "untested feasibilities". The act of knowing for Freire does not move in discreet methodological steps—from an epistemological shift in consciousness brought about by a teacher skilled in the Socratic method, followed by an ontological shift in behavior by the student signaling a different way of being in the world and relating to others—since for Freire this leads to a type of bifurcated Cartesian knowledge. It simply repeats the anti-humanism of Western enlightenment learning that is grounded in a Cartesian dualism separating mind and body, and ignoring the contextual specificity surrounding the act of knowing and its concrete materiality. This concrete materiality of our lives that so fascinated Freire refers to the lived experiences of the learner, experiences that are bodied forth, where learning occurs not solely in the "mind" but in the bone and sinew of everyday joy and hardship, in everyday spaces of strife and struggle in the home, the school, and the streets of the favelas, in the transformative praxis of everyday life. Here, achieving critical consciousness is not a necessary precondition for self and social transformation (i.e., you need to read the great philosophers before you are ready to undertake political action) but rather an outcome of acting in and on the world critically, with an important prerequisite to this praxis being a love for the world and humanity (in this sense ethics, for Freire, precedes epistemology). For me, this echoes Che's famous saying: "At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality."

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We act in and on the world out of a love for the world and then reflect on our actions in an attempt to affect a deeper, more critical change in our society. His approach has been compared to the "non-methodical method" of the French pedagogue Jacotot (1770–1840), creator of universal teaching or panecastic philosophy, made famous by Rancière and his important stress on aesthetics. Some critics of Freire view his concept of praxis as too reliant on an assumption of society as dehumanized and people dichotomized as oppressor and oppressed. Essentially Freirean education is never complete since it is always in the process of becoming and grounded in the notion that human beings are unfinished. Praxis in never ending, a way of reinscribing people back into the world as critical agents. This notion of 'unfinishedness' becomes clearer as we read through Freire's vast corpus of works, and not simply by focusing on his most famous work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. For instance, his experience of homelessness during his 16 years of exile from Brazil motivated Freire to "relearn" his country upon his return. Critical pedagogy as developed by Freire is essentially a dynamic and recursive process in which the context of each pedagogical encounter invites new challenges and engagements that demand translation, reinvention and re-creation and thus the process itself is continually in-the-making. You won't find the essence of Freire's teaching in a map or methodology. The map is not the territory, as Korzybski famously remarked. A map necessarily reduces the reality which it attempts to illuminate. And our destination is very much tied to how we choose to interpret the map. And this is true of critical pedagogy. Freire can serve as our inspiration. But when it comes to transforming the world through our teaching, there are no clear paths to liberation, and you will only know that you have arrived once you get there. The answer won't be found in reverse engineering Paulo Freire's pedagogy or in retracing his steps. You

348 have to set out on your own journey. And fortunately, through our engagement with his vast corpus of
349 teachings, he will be walking with us.

350
351 To echo the title of Freire's "talking" book with legendary Appalachian educator Myles Horton, we make
352 the road by walking, the title itself taken from the famous poem by Antonio Machado, "caminante, no hay
353 camino, se hace camino al andar" (traveler, there is no road, we make the road by walking). Freire, who
354 traveled through numerous countries on his fifteen-year exile from Brazil (1964-1980) has been described
355 a type of metaphysical vagabond, a wanderer, and reminds me of the famous Zapatista saying, "andar
356 **preguntando**" (walking we ask questions—a horizontal or participatory position inviting dialogue) as
357 opposed to "andar predicando", (walking we go preaching—a "follow me"-oriented position). In other
358 words, Freirean praxis is closer to resembling a "self-transformation of the masses approach" than a
359 vanguard party approach to revolutionary change. A journalist once asked Freire how he defined himself.
360 The answer was "I am a vagabond of the obvious, because I walk around the world saying obvious
361 things, such as that education is not neutral." Wandering into hinterlands unexplored not only provides
362 opportunities to err, but locates making mistakes in a realm of the pedagogical encounter that provides for
363 the possibility of growth, transcendence and emancipation. Freire was unrivaled in his obsession with
364 interrogating the world as it appears and the world as it could be, and its relationship to the power of the
365 spoken and written word. For it is precisely the sphere of literacy that enables human beings to live their
366 lives in the subjunctive mode—in an "as if" liminal state that opens up pathways to new worlds less
367 burdened by oppression that Freire was unafraid to enter but which presented an existential threat to
368 education systems premised on reproducing the vested interests of the ruling class and those whom the
369 ruling class are able to dupe with rallying cries of America First or Make America Great Again.

370
371 Freire's category of "untested feasibility" motivated disenfranchised groups to move beyond their limit
372 situations by transforming them into conditions that invite creative experimentation, that tests their
373 feasibility. Throughout his life, Freire displayed an independence of mind that did not fit easily into
374 prevailing orthodoxies surrounding pedagogy—one that institutions of education would be wise to
375 consider today. Freire understood only too well that building a new society absent of oppression required
376 not only a change in society's material conditions but also a utopian imagination, a living theory that
377 uncovered militant possibilities buried in the stubborn actualities of privation and necessity. Education
378 under capitalism constitutes a self-maintaining whole that Freire's work was destined to rupture through a
379 dialectical philosophy that stressed the 'unfinishedness' of the human being—a being with plenty of room
380 to grow and mature in their understanding of society. Freire understood the self-veiling aspects of
381 capitalism, its power of obfuscation, its power to generate a system of wage slavery under the banner of
382 freedom, and its ability to embed humanity in the systemic violence of abstract labor and the
383 commodification of subjectivity. Not least of all, Freire understood the capacity of capitalism to regenerate
384 human solidarity around the false narratives of hard work, reward, and progress. Freire keenly
385 understood that moral exertion will not save us from capitalism, since the idea of "free enterprise" lends a
386 moral certitude to the equating of capitalism to democracy which is directly proportional to the degree of
387 cultural unanimity generated by such a false equation. To see capitalism and democracy as co-
388 constitutive is a conclusion (and an illusion) that has been popularized in recent decades in the academy
389 and public-at-large and, lamentably, adopted by many liberals and neoliberals alike. Freire understood
390 the need for political and moral redemption as a step in restructuring our modes of experiencing a world
391 that has been shattered by systemic corruption, exploitation and oppression.

392
393 We should remain gravely disquieted by the fact that we have yet to be able to stem the murderous
394 assaults on Black men in this country or to prevent a generalized assault on people of color. Moral
395 redemption stipulates that educators employ powerful theoretical tools to help their students comprehend
396 their own self and social formation in relation to larger social relations of racialized capitalist production in
397 the United States. We need to consider, as well, social relations of production created within a brutal and
398 systematic extraction of surplus value from proletarianized regions of the world (usually festering in a
399 climate of bourgeois-comprador nationalism and dependent peripheral capitalism that creates the
400 "pobretariado") culminating in a condition of substantive inequality and an egregiously unequal division of
401 labor, not to mention the 'ecocidal' effects conditions have on the biosphere and planetary sustainability.
402 Insofar as being an 'American' means a slavish dedication to the world's dominant hegemon militarily and
403 economically, bringing critical analysis to bear on its history of settler colonialism, imperialist wars, slavery

404 and genocidal history with respect to its indigenous populations, has sealed the fate of critical educators
405 in the eyes of large swaths of the public. Happy to view America as a world-straddling colossus,
406 Republican senators and the high-toned elites that fund them, have made it clear that they will not
407 tolerate any criticism of the United States in public school classrooms by critical educators who they view
408 as 'woke' (too sensitive to injustice). The reason such authoritarian populism (sometimes called 'soft
409 fascism') and full-blown fascism is appealing both to rural and urban constituencies can be traced, at
410 least in part, to increasing migration; shifting global demographics marked by economic austerity, war,
411 famine and political repression; a fear of migrants as violent predators and scavengers; the threat of
412 immigrants displacing the social majority; a deliberate ratcheting up of social tensions that can be blamed
413 on the left (i.e. antifa); growing economic inequality; an increasing dissatisfaction with democratic
414 institutions and "woke" culture; right-wing attacks in the media castigating liberal democracy; attempts by
415 rightwing politicians to push for illiberal democracy (i.e., governments that operate in a legal vacuum
416 outside of judicial review, where elections are relied upon as expressions of the popular will but where
417 civil rights are curtailed, where the ruling party takes control of the courts, media and independent
418 organizations, where there exist weakening checks and balances on majority rule effectively creating a
419 one-party state, where critics of the government, including journalists, are labelled enemies of the state,
420 where assimilation is favored over multiculturalism, where open immigration and non-traditional family
421 arrangements [e.g. LGBTQ relationships] are disparaged, where an insidious reformulation of the concept
422 of community and nation state as an ethno-biological entity is taking place alongside the gerrymandering
423 of electoral districts, where far-right groups can defend themselves against racism by camouflaging local
424 variants of racial identitarian positions under the anodyne guise of 'cultural differences'; where there
425 exists a heightened fear of population exchange known as the "great replacement" of Anglo Europeans
426 by swarthy, dark-skinned immigrants).

427 **The unbridled brutality with which the legal system has treated Julian Assange of Wikileaks and**
428 **environmental lawyer Steven Donziger—Donziger's prosecution by Chevron, corporate titan of the**
429 **fossil fuel industry, is the first corporate prosecution in US history—has revealed the extent of the**
430 **cruel and ruthless judicial backlash against those who would unmask the marauding vigilantes of**
431 **the corporate world, the soldiers of fortune of the surveillance state, the flim flam artists who sell**
432 **conspiracy theories from the back of their big tire trucks at MAGA swap meets, the counterfeit**
433 **captains of industry and pinstriped Wall Street pimps who operate America's corporate fiefdoms**
434 **with high-toned sophistry and cutthroat machinations and protect the mealy-mouthed**
435 **mountebanks in the military industrial complex. Today we need an army of analytics identifiers to**
436 **map the vast scope and boundaries of corporate networks that occupy the digital brain we tap**
437 **into each time we open our laptops. When the most famous white supremacist in America, Tucker**
438 **Carlson, rants on Fox News that the Biden administration is undertaking state-sponsored**
439 **persecution of White people for the crime of being White, he amplifies political polarization and**
440 **undermines self-governance, stripping away any good faith notions of what is politically tenable**
441 **in a democracy. There is no reason to affix more conspiracy blinders to Trump's base of support**
442 **since the vision of these chapfallen creatures is already so ensanguined with hyper-partisan**
443 **psychotic hate and conspiracy-fueled frenzy that it will only spawn an endless recrudescence of**
444 **the willful ignorance, motivated amnesia, staged stupidity and woebegone vitriol of these**
445 **hangdog Republicans whose compromised sanity has been repurposed by Fox News and**
446 **Newsmax to devalue facts, to attack the very purpose of rationality and truth and to promulgate**
447 **lies as a form of worship, the source of which is America's unique cultivation of the Führerprinzip,**
448 **adorning Trump as the American Führer. Conspiracists like Tucker Carlson have been given**
449 **permission to terrorize people of color and win recruits by claiming to be 'legacy Americans'**
450 **which means they consider themselves 'real Americans', a makeshift version of Mel Gibson's axe-**
451 **wielding character in the 2000 film, The Patriot.**

452
453 All of this entails a rejection of 'citizenship' as a claim to national identity and a rejection of non-European
454 immigrants replacing so-called native-born Anglo populations. We need to face the fact that the global
455 hegemony of transnational corporate capitalism has long ago abandoned the American working-class.

456 As educators we have a singular challenge ahead of us. Evidence-based teaching is under attack and
457 civic discourse in the public square is no longer rooted in reality but rather digitally moored in social media
458 platforms where facts are exchangeable with opinions and conspiracy theories. How do we move forward
459 with a revolutionary critical pedagogy in a climate where hate and fear and inhumanity and violence and
460 racism are likely to win elections? This is the present challenge.

461
462 **Bosio:** In concluding our first dialogue, I would to ask you what does it mean to be 'critical/Freirean
463 educators' in the age of dominant neoliberal globalization where inequalities seem growing – rather than
464 declining.

465
466 **McLaren:** Critical educators who challenge racist epistemic assumptions about who is imagined to be the
467 true inheritors of the American Dream and who criticize the relational inequalities of global capitalism
468 continue to be excoriated by Republican propaganda operatives as “partisan.” This criticism relies on the
469 notion that education should be politically neutral. But as Freire famously opined, “Washing one's hands
470 of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”
471 Black Lives Matter activists who recognize that African-Americans have been written out of the social
472 contract and who reject the delusory hope that racism can be overcome by lyrical pleas for formal
473 equality, social harmony or sociable argument, have become the objects of scornful repudiation by Trump
474 supporters, and admonished for being unable to adhere to the country's official social hierarchy where
475 white citizens reign supreme. In fact, the Black Lives Matter movement has been described by Trump and
476 many of his Republican minions as a terrorist organization, ignoring the growth of stochastic terrorism
477 (lone wolf) in the United States, usually perpetrated by white males. Post-digital outlawry such as
478 spreading disinformation through social media platforms is rampant among Republicans and far right
479 extremists. Much of the disinformation on the internet is scripted by hate mongers who use algorithmic
480 surveillance tools to allow relentlessly overseen white supremacist, neo-Nazi and QAnon sites to be
481 accessed by teenagers. It is no surprise that the source of these scripts mirror the madcap and
482 wonderstruck sentiments of Trumpian politicians.

483
484 Freirean educators face this reality with a gasp of incredulity while at the same time recognizing that
485 social structures and relations of oppression need to be replaced with socialist alternatives before
486 attitudes of the Republican electorate can be changed. Freire stressed that we need to break out of our
487 self-contented finitude, to be conscious of our incompleteness and our utopic desire for plenitude and that
488 we need to fight on a day-to-day basis to preserve the historical possibilities for true freedom. Freire
489 offers hope that we have the ability to escape being ensepulchered in this cold, damp suppurating
490 undercroft, in this darkness of inevitability that forms our earthly prison-house of creaturely being, through
491 a praxis of liberation since, for Freire, we cannot hope for salvation but we have to achieve it, “we have to
492 earn heaven here and now.” We are educated to sustain truth-obliterating practices of subjugation when
493 we tolerate injustice, when, for instance, we sit silently in the shadow of injustice and do nothing. As
494 Howard Zinn famously proclaimed, “you can't remain neutral on a moving train.” We cannot absolve that
495 which puts us in chains, that which makes us unequal; we cannot extend tolerance to those who preach
496 hate because we must hold accountable the constituted authorities who represent the rules of society,
497 rules that form the whole of society and that speak for all the differentiated parts of society that
498 institutionalize injustice, that serve as a precondition for turning truth into its opposite. We must, in Freire's
499 view, examine the “untested feasibility” of our practices, that is, struggle to build a future which we have
500 yet to create, that which catalyzes our search for deepening our humanity. Critical scholars in both Brazil
501 and the United States have vociferously denounced the legacies of settler colonial societies that from
502 their inception to the present day have been stained by acts of genocide, democide, ecocide and
503 epistemicide, the memories of which too often remain buried in the crevices of history. Freire's work has
504 been at the forefront in bringing many of these acts to light. There are similarities between contemporary
505 attacks on Freire in Brazil and the virulent backlash against Nikole Hannah-Jones' New York Times 1619
506 Project, a major critique of the centrality of racism and slavery in U.S. history. As a result, state legislators
507 are working hard to pass laws which would gravely circumscribe the ways in which slavery and racism are
508 taught in the United States, effectively prohibiting insights gleaned from critical race theory. Both Trump
509 and Bolsonaro have waged war on truth, using a cruel, calculated, artificial logic that ushered in an era of
510 post-truth politics under the slogan of “fake news.” Freire reveals to us that what is true is not so much

511 syntactical as it is pedagogical because education is about forming minds and for that you need premises
512 that are warranted.

513
514 What Freire offers us is both an educated reason, and a general theory of education, a reason tempered
515 by the realities and struggles of his own life: his imprisonment, his work in Guinea Bissau, his work in
516 support of Latin American guerrilla movements, his work with teachers throughout Latin America and the
517 United States with whom he developed a deep solidarity. What the murder of George Floyd, the rise of
518 the Black Lives Matter movement and the global pandemic has brought to the fore in public arena are the
519 obscene disparities between the rich and poor, between White folks and people of color, between
520 immigrants and the so-called 'real' Americans. Such issues are, at most, tepidly acknowledged during
521 times of national crisis yet merge back into that dark ether of willful forgetfulness, of historical amnesia,
522 once the crisis has past. What critical pedagogy and critical race theory has taught us is that such a
523 legacy must be examined and reexamined by each generation if democracy is to survive, in order to
524 avoid those "circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a
525 hero's part" (if I may borrow some words of Marx used to describe the class struggle in France). While
526 we would be hard pressed to expect a full-throated denunciation of the violence that the United States
527 has unleashed into history through the unholy exercise of its sacred claim to be the defender of liberty
528 and the protector of freedom by those ardent proponents of American exceptionalism, we should in no
529 way stand by while the Trumpists are destroying what remains of American democracy in their campaign
530 against evidence-based truth and in their attempts to sacralize the Big Lie that the 2020 election was
531 stolen from Trump. The American academy has been successful in working out ways to quarantine
532 Freire's work away from social revolution grounded in a philosophy of praxis.

533
534 Just when we need Freire the most—particularly in relation to our discussion around educating for critical-
535 revolutionary local and global citizenship— attempts are being made now to rebury him, to shut down any
536 and all attempts to produce a critical citizenry, to make it a crime to teach the history of slavery or to
537 provide a language of analysis designed to uncover historical events unflattering to the so-called
538 defenders of freedom. These are veiled attempts at denigrating pluralism, at promoting white supremacy
539 and fear of immigrants, and advocating for the creation of a white Christian ethno-state. Florida Governor
540 Ron DeSantis has introduced several bills to the Florida legislature. The purpose of these bills is to
541 embed in the school curriculum a knee-jerk discrediting of socialism. DeSantis wants teachers to
542 condemn communism in their classrooms. He wants the United States to remain untarnished by its
543 imperialist-driven atrocities and unblemished by its settler colonial history. The bills mandate that K-12
544 schools must develop "portraits in patriotism" within civic courses, praising the United States as a beacon
545 of freedom. State universities must teach courses on anti-communism, and promote rightwing
546 conservative ideology, grounded in conservative Christian values, requiring college students to pass a
547 "civic literacy" assessment exam and take a course on civic literacy to graduate. All college students and
548 professors will be required to register their political views with the state. This sounds suspiciously like
549 ideological tyranny to me. DeSantis wants to penalize universities that do not celebrate his own Trump-
550 inspired rightwing ideology. He vows that he is attacking the 'evil' ideologies spawned from totalitarianism.
551 He describes Che Guevara as a "total communist thug." Che Guevara was a complex figure--I wrote a
552 book about Che and Paulo Freire--and I would certainly prefer to honor Che than to praise Batista's
553 torturers who fled to Miami, or Somoza's National Guard who became the Contras who targeted teachers
554 for assassination during the Sandinista revolution, and who also fled to Miami. These so-called 'bills' are
555 an attack on reason itself. Doesn't DeSantis recognize that he is mirroring the very totalitarian ideology
556 that he purports to be denouncing? He sounds as if he is announcing a fascist declaration, jut-jawed,
557 from the famous balcony at the Palazzo Venezia in the Sala del Mappamondo, overlooking the Piazza
558 Venezia. DeSantis is a blood curdling echo from the 1950s. McCarthyism is back with a vengeance in
559 the United States and he is among the vanguard Party of Trump ushering it back into the streets of our
560 cities, cities already rife with police terror. We have yet to find an antidote to the historically generated
561 social relations that percolate through our school system that have, on the sly, legitimized racism,
562 homophobia, misogyny, misanthropy, misology and misoneism and have spawned white supremacist and
563 authoritarian populist ideology at a scale hitherto unprecedented in the United States. But we need to try.

564
565 In closing, let me say that for years, I have called for a *critical patriotism*. The notion of critical patriotism is
566 pivotal for our discussion on critical/revolutionary pedagogy and global citizenship. I support this

567 statement by suggesting that we can acknowledge some of the great accomplishments of our country
 568 (the United States of America) while still denouncing the terror of slavery and the genocide of the
 569 indigenous population during the founding of our country and the imperialist wars we have launched
 570 many times after its founding. We need a different way of conceptualizing belonging and inclusion. We
 571 need a different way of intellectualizing the notion of 'patriotism' and its relationship with citizenship and
 572 nationality. In our discussion on critical/revolutionary pedagogy and global citizenship we must envision a
 573 critical patriotism that tackles our social inequities and allows us to expose our historical responsibilities
 574 as a nation (e.g., colonialism, racism, sexism).
 575

576 III. Conclusion

577
 578 In all sites of everyday life under capitalist social relations we have institutional power relations which are
 579 not free spaces that foster equality. Thus, we need a pedagogy of critique locally and globally oriented.
 580 For instance, we do need a type of 'global citizenship education' grounded in revolutionary love in the
 581 struggle for transforming these social relations. In this article, we call this approach 'revolutionary critical
 582 global citizenship pedagogy'. In this perspective, our dialogue has embraced contemporary educational
 583 issues and discussed what it means to educate for revolutionary critical pedagogy and critical global
 584 citizenry, in this increasingly multicultural world. The first section clarified McLaren's understanding of
 585 revolutionary critical pedagogy and global citizenship. It also addressed how his academic and life's
 586 'journey' shaped this understanding. Given the need for a 'revolutionary theory' to articulate the concept
 587 of critical pedagogy and global citizenship, the second section explored the philosophical nexus between
 588 'revolutionary' critical pedagogy and global citizenship. The third section discussed teaching practices,
 589 specifically the relationship between teaching about revolutionary critical pedagogy and global citizenship
 590 with reference to the work of Paulo Freire and Peter McLaren. We concluded this article with a discussion
 591 on how to best prepare students for critical and revolutionary citizenship (both global and local) through
 592 critical literacy in order to encourage them to participate in public discourses and debates over social,
 593 economic, and political issues that affect everyday life in their own and neighboring communities.
 594

595 Note

596 **This article-interview contains some extracts from Peter McLaren's past publications. See:**
 597

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