CULTURAL PLURALISM DEMOCRACY, SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & EDUCATION

Democracy and Its Discontents

Critical Literacy across Global Contexts

Robert E. White and Karyn Cooper

SensePublishers

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CULTURAL PLURALISM DEMOCRACY, SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & EDUCATION

Volume 1

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Democracy and Its Discontents

Critical Literacy across Global Contexts

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Tiger got to hunt,
Bird got to fly;
Man got to sit and wonder, "Why, why, why?"
Tiger got to sleep,
Bird got to land;
Man got to tell himself he understand.

From *The Books of Bokonon*

– *Cat's Cradle,* Kurt Vonnegut, 1963, p. 182

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PREFACE

The inspiration for this volume came from a variety of sources. In order to honour the somewhat linear nature of historical interpretation, we first must turn to work that was begun almost a decade ago. We had been working on a series of articles that had, as its main focus, the idea that critical literacy was a necessary component in the teaching of literacy. As this project germinated and eventually came to fruition, we began looking at other projects, and settled upon the innovative notion of video-interviewing some of the great names in qualitative research.

With the assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, this project bore fruit in the form of a volume entitled *Qualitative Research in the Postmodern Era: Contexts of Qualitative Research* (Cooper & White, 2012). The relevance that this tome eventually had for our current project was enormous. Using the same idea of the video-interview and also employing the "Five Contexts," a conceptual framework that had been developed in that book, we applied those to this volume. But, we get ahead of ourselves. These five contexts will be described below in greater detail.

No one would argue that literacy is not an important aspect of today's society. In fact, many school improvement projects identify improved literacy as a key aspect of any educational improvement program. However, we had to ask the question – "What is literacy for?" After some time, we concluded that it was better to be literate than not, but there was still the nagging question – "Is that all there is?" Clearly, there was something more. Literacy may make life easier in terms of finding one's way around, being able to read scripts and many other useful things, but there was also the problem of believing in what one was reading. Who gets to make the decisions about what is presented to the public eye? What is left out of the transmission? Are we to agree with the "word," or is it allowable to disagree? And this is not limited to written scripts, but extends to other scripts, both oral and visual, that have been marginalized over the course of colonialism.

Critical literacy demands a skeptical, if not cynical, approach to all things, including the written word. Critical literacy, in at least some permutations, asks who is the author, what right does the author have to the opinions presented in the script, or text, if you will, and where and what are the biases hidden within the text? Thus, the implicit nature of being critically literate is an essential feature of being able to navigate the new modernities of this postmodern era. It is necessary to question all texts, whether they be linear, two-dimensional or three-dimensional, whether they are readable, observable or subliminal.

What is a text, then, you may wonder? Texts can be any vehicle that is used as a system for the making of meaning. A text can be as simple as a book, a work of art, a computer application or it can move beyond this to incorporate a variety of

different texts within any observable phenomenon. For example, as Helene Cixous contends, the world itself can be viewed as a text. As such, then, we can "perform" critical literacy by becoming invested in understanding the text, not as it is spoken or "written," but as it is interpreted.

Roland Barthes (2004) in his book, *Elements of Semiology,* made the distinction between readerly and writerly texts. The readerly text asks very little of the reader as it requires little work in terms of interpretation. Many novels operate as readerly texts and, once finished, are promptly forgotten. Writerly texts demand more of the reader and require interaction. These texts may not be so easily forgotten, as they demand a certain input in terms of thinking through ideas and possibilities. The notion of critical literacy falls well within the parameters of the writerly text.

It is not the intent of this book to create the impression that there is a single pathway towards critical attention to literacy and its relationship to democratic processes. Rather, it is hoped that this current volume, along with interviews of noted scholars in the fields of critical literacy and democratic processes, will challenge the reader to examine long-held notions. In asking that the reader become engaged with the text at hand, we do not represent this volume as "the truth," so much as a perspective that can be challenged, engaged with and expanded upon.

In order to accomplish the task of bringing a text that is about critical literacy to the fore, we chose to employ a construct that we refer to as the "Five Contexts" (Cooper & White, 2012). Thus, the text is viewed through a conceptual framework that utilizes the five lenses of autobiography, history, politics, postmodernity and philosophy. Through this conceptual framework, it is our goal to gain a perspective on critical literacy and its connections to democracy. It is hoped that the conceptual framework will allow for discussion, a conversation that will engage the reader with the many versions of "truth." It is expected that readers may be troubled by the text; for example, there may be versions of the "truth" that are absent. This, in part, may be due to individual autobiographical contexts the readers bring to text. In addition and by way of example, we, Robert and Karyn, have been socialized into Western views of democratic thought. We recognize, given our own cultural pre-understandings, the limitations that we are living. Therefore, we call for many perspectives and multiple interpretations in this conversation on critical literacy and its relationship to democracy. We hope that further conversations about this relationship will serve to inform issues of causality rather than inscribe notions of a linear reciprocity between critical literacy and democratic values. This view, we hope, will add depth and understanding to a very complex discussion surrounding democracy and critical literacy. That is our hope for this text.

To return to the "Five Contexts," this framework has proven to be invaluable in disentangling complex notions such as the relationship between critical literacy and democratic ideals and practices. The autobiographical context is important, as indicated by our own preconceptions within this text. As such, this context helps to situate a particular speaker or reader within a frame of reference that can assist that reader in making inferences relating to particular individual perspectives. In other

words, this context can enable the recognition of multiple, marginal and dominant perspectives. Through such sharing of perspectives, hopefully one may come away with a broader, more critical viewpoint.

The historical context allows the narrative that is represented by the text to be identified and located within a certain time and place. History is hinged upon powers that hold and write the "truth." For example, many cultures with oral histories have become marginalized or excluded by historical documents represented by a hegemonic discourse, such as "legally binding" written contracts. It is contextual and, given this, one can see that there is not just one conceptual truth. This is why global contexts, and hence, multiple cultural realities, become increasingly important, as our current times become increasingly complex.

As well, the political context helps in determining consequences of the actions that are referenced within the text. Interestingly enough, these contexts run concurrently and are often overlapping or interwoven with other contextual considerations. For example, if one is preparing a birthday celebration, this may be an element of one's autobiography, nothing more. However, this birthday may also represent an historical event as well, such as a one hundredth birthday, a sixty-fifth birthday or even a sixteenth birthday. As such, we attach historical footnotes to events that we wish to remember as special in some way.

Let's take another look at that birthday that is at once autobiographical and historic. It may also have political significance as well. Perhaps that birthday was celebrated on the event of a matter of world significance. Or perhaps that birthday is held in tandem with the birthday of, perhaps, the Canadian patriot, Louis Riel, a founder of the province of Manitoba, and political and spiritual leader of the Métis people of Canada's prairies, or some other great patriot. As you may see, a single event in one individual's life may also be historically significant to that person and beyond, or it may also have greater political overtones. All this to say that the autobiographic, the historical and the political contexts may or may not have overlaps and significances far beyond themselves, as the sum of the whole is often much greater than the sum of its parts.

Add to this the postmodern context. Here is an overlay of what it means to be alive in one of the most exciting epochs in human history. The postmodern era, now frequently referred to as "liquid modernity," has, as its hallmark, questions about the nature of almost everything. Poststructuralists have provided us with the means of deconstructing, the opening up, the re-examining of terms, such as "democracy," in order to recognize the multiple interpretations available in any given text. Thus, it is not so much about questioning the nature of "truth," as to question the contexts within which any discourse is embedded.

This postmodern era is a time when choice abounds, although the choices themselves may not be particularly important. It is a time of change, rapid change, where the one constant has become the accelerating nature of change. Hyperbole exists in terms of the gigantism reminiscent of the prehistoric era when dinosaurs roamed the earth. This gigantism was attributed to the fact that there was a great deal

more oxygen in the atmosphere than exists in this current day and age. However, we have our own forms of gigantism in terms of the proliferation of transnational corporations, in the economic globalization of huge tracts of geographic areas and in the rapid changes occurring within our environment. As such, postmodernity is an important context to assist in making sense of, describing and exploring what critical literacy is and how it has been adapted to our ever-changing circumstances – globally, nationally and locally.

Perhaps the most important context is the final one, the philosophical context, as it allows one to step back and to view the whole ball of autobiographical, historical, political and postmodern contexts with some level of objectivity and to begin to gain some further perspective on the particular phenomenon – in this case, critical literacy and its impact on democracy – under study. Through the pages of this volume, with some of the most influential scholars of our time, across global contexts, we hope to explore the nature of critical literacy and how it has been shaped by individuals, how it is played out in various geographic locations and some of the considerations pertinent to this particular interpretation or permutation of literacy.

In this volume we travel to several parts of the world. Because we are concerned with what critical literacy means and looks like in predominantly English-speaking countries, we chose to explore three Commonwealth countries – Australia, South Africa and Canada. Each of these countries has developed its own views relating to critical literacy. Australia was perhaps the first country to develop a coherent and cohesive approach to critical literacy. As with any country, South Africa continues to struggle with its own democratic issues and with emergent critical considerations. Canada has imported much of its culture from the United States, its neighbour to the south and, as such, critical literacy seems to have assumed a more "continental" perspective.

Video-interviews have provided a means of capturing a number of the "experts in the field." Within the pages of this book, we offer a survey of a number of people who have developed, refined and put into practice – in short, *performed* – critical literacy. These people have offered their time, their insights and their knowledge that adds to our understanding of what critical literacy may be, may become, and how it may operate in these trying times of the postmodern era.

But what of democracy? What does that have to do with critical literacy? There is not one story to tell about democracy, and this volume attempts to bring together a variety of perspectives from renowned scholars to enhance our understanding of what we might mean by this term. If critical literacy can be used to help people understand biases in their various scripts, texts and worlds, then perhaps it may be a useful tool to help people to begin to advocate for themselves. What is the end result of this? Carried to logical extremes, critical literacy can pave the way to a future where powerful "others" can be held accountable for their actions, where decisions that are made "for the people" can be questioned and even, if necessary, reversed. It can help to establish differences between notions of equity and equality, where ideas of meritocracy can be called into question and where people from all walks

of life, race and creed can come together in the spirit of community and humanity. Can critical literacy really help to achieve greater democratic free will? Perhaps this is a tall order. However, to do nothing is to condone current practices that influence power differentials, foster greater consumerism and help to deplete an already suffering planet.

We hope that, as you read through this book, you will come to see the myriad connections between individuals, their influence on others and the impact that this can have for good or for ill. We trust that issues of democracy and the global patterns that we have come to take for granted can be adjusted. This may not be easy and it may not occur in our lifetimes, even if it is to occur at all. However, to not strive for positive social change is to accept the *status quo* as it stands. This is problematic in the face of such issues as world hunger and impoverishment, neoliberal forces of consumerism and political manipulation, and the decimation of a planet that is the only home we know. Clearly, if critical literacy can begin to question such elements and, if it can be seen as a possible way forward, perhaps humanity, in the broadest sense of the word, will stand a fighting chance to leave behind a world that our children would want to inherit. The alternatives are distinctly unattractive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped to make this book a reality. It would be impossible to recognize all those who have offered their time, their wisdom and their hard work to assist us in bringing this volume to publication. To all of you, thank you for your patience, your heroic efforts and your loyalty to the cause. We remain forever grateful.

There are also a number of individuals who we can identify who have been instrumental in developing this book. Bopha Ong has given of her time when she was rushing to complete other enterprises. To Bopha, thank you so much for assisting in editing the video-clips and helping to mount them in a useful frame. We are proud of your dedication to this work.

Another important individual to this project is Neil Tinker. Neil, thank you. On more than one occasion you managed to work your considerable magic to ensure that videotapes were backed up, accessible and "readable." This project would have stalled and ground to a shuddering halt without your steady hand. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

In addition to all the marvelous support that we have received, Frances Tolnai has transcribed all of our interviews. For this, Frances, we are truly grateful. We thank you for your promptness, accuracy and attention to detail. There are numerous others who will remain nameless but who have contributed significantly to this work. To all those people who have helped this project come to fruition, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Last, but not least, we wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its unflagging support of our projects. This grant has allowed us to refine our approaches to video work and has assisted us in our exploration of the intersections between linear texts and video work. Your continuing assistance is greatly appreciated.

CHAPTER 1

DEMOCRACY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

> Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.
>
> —Reinhold Niebuhr (1944)

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

While this volume is about democracy and its relationship to critical literacy, it is first and foremost, a book about critical literacy. However, it is important to begin a discussion that attempts to unpack the notion of democracy, albeit from a secular Westernized tradition. The influential scholars who grace the pages of this volume have informed the conversation by contributing their views, perspectives and opinions. In doing so, it is our intent to question a single, monolithic presentation of an untroubled version of the "truth." It is these scholars who present a forceful critique that helps to deconstruct normative, hegemonic notions of democracy, and helps to underscore Niebuhr's (1944) comment that "Man's [sic] capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's [sic] inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Truer words were never spoken.

Critical literacy and democracy are intertwined, in this text, so much so that it may nigh be impossible to talk about one without allusions to the other. While critical literacy may be "intertwined" with democracy, they are not one and the same thing. In fact, critical literacy may be a consequence of a deeper conception of democracy, although there are innumerable highly contested debates regarding the nature of democracy and democratic thought. However, one must start somewhere and, so, a brief discussion of democracy follows. For a much more complex and thoughtful discussion on deconstructing the many permutations of democracy, readers could turn to such helpful texts as George Novack's *Democracy and Revolution* (1971) or Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995).

Prior to an all-too-brief discussion of democracy, this volume proceeds to ground critical literacy in three different locations – Australia, South Africa and North America, with specific reference to Canada. The reason for this is that all three of these countries are Commonwealth countries, meaning that, at one time, they were all part of the British Empire, replete with issues of colonialism and the attendant privileges that such power confers on the dominators. However, aside from this commonality, all three countries have enacted critical literacy in a decidedly different vein.

For example, Australia has attempted to operationalize critical literacy within its school system, and some would argue that this represents the dawning of critical literacy in educational fields. South Africa has a different issue with critical literacy and there are an almost infinite amount of factors, arguments, and dissenting voices in that context that would render the issues quite different to those in other parts of the world. Viewing the issue of critical literacy in South Africa as a deficit condition of 'access to education' is very reductionist in a very complex historical and political context such as South Africa. While it may be true that large numbers of the population have been unable to access suitable educational resources, it could be said that aligning critical literacy with access to education tends to repeat the dominant deficit neoliberal discourses on schooling in South Africa that have gained traction post-apartheid, rather than attempting to deconstruct this discourse. While Canada, on the other hand, pays tribute to the idea of critical literacy through the likes of noteworthy literacy pioneers such as Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye, it has not really focused on the topic of critical literacy in the curricula of school districts within its various provinces.

Perhaps because of its relatively small population, much Canadian culture, of course, is imported from its neighbour to the south, the United States of America. Typically, this has a great effect on policies and practices that are established within Canada itself. As a result, this volume will deal with North America as a whole, while striving to separate purely Canadian events from the larger international events that have helped to shape this nation.

In addition to a discussion of how critical literacy is enacted in these countries and how this relates to democratic practices, we have been fortunate in being able to provide video-clips from interviews that we have conducted with a number of notable scholars. These video-clips are provided online and the reader will be prompted to view particular video-clips at different points throughout this book.

In order to facilitate the complexity of a volume that discusses critical literacy and its connection to greater democracy, we employ a framework that we have found to be quite successful in being able to isolate various parts of the discussion for closer examination. This framework we call the "Five Contexts" (Cooper & White, 2012), and each context, while distinctly observable from one to the other, is also capable of overlapping and existing concurrently with the other contexts that we use. These contexts are identified as the autobiographical, the historical, the political, the postmodern and the philosophical context, respectively.

In summation then, we present to you, the reader, a discussion of critical literacy and its connection to democracy, in three different countries, through five separate lenses and include video-clips from interviews with scholars in each of these locales. We begin our journey in Boston, Massachusetts to interview one of the great luminaries, not only of our time, but also of all time, Dr. Noam Chomsky. Then utilizing the five contexts, we travel variously between Australia, South Africa and North America. Eventually, we end our journey in Greece, the cradle of Western democracy, a fitting place to disembark for a number of reasons that will be clear

to the reader who is aware of current (at the time of writing) developments in the European Union. A fitting place indeed, for this is where Western democracy was born, and where this form of democracy has been assailed by the new world order of neoliberal thought.

It must be mentioned that the assertion that Greece is the cradle of democracy is, indeed, Westernized and Eurocentric in origin. To be fair, in his book, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995), Nelson Mandela cites a number of different forms of democracy that were current in Africa, possibly for thousands of years. As well, and in concert, it can easily be argued that many indigenous cultures practised various forms of democracy for many generations, separate from the West. It is not the authors' intent to imply that these traditions derived from the Greek "cradle of civilization."

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF DEMOCRACY

There exists a strong relationship between democracy and any number of social constructs within a democratic society. For example, social justice, equity and equality, and critical literacy are all present in varying degrees in any democracy, nominal or operational. Hopefully, each and every individual who has an opportunity to pick up this book and to open its pages has been in a position where his or her voice has been heard, listened to and acted upon. Of course, this does not mean that the powers receiving this communication from such individuals must hear the voice, listen to the words being spoken and then act upon the message without consideration for the consequences. Due process, debate, testing of alternatives and so on will likely be the result for any voice that calls for change. However, the message here is that it is not always the case that every voice can be heard at any given point in time. In fact, a great deal of effort has been invested in silencing voices, even in democracies. Unfortunately, many people currently living in democracies have had opportunity to reflect upon the fact that their voices have not always been heard or have not been heard at all.

This fact alone brings into focus issues that are related to democracy. These are issues of social justice. The need for every voice to be heard, listened to and acted upon is an essential element of democracy, yet how can this be accomplished in an effective, efficient and logical manner? Habermas (1973) speaks of the ideal speech situation in which the power of the best argument wins the day. However, not every individual is eloquent and, due to greater immigration and the increasing diversity of populations, not everyone speaks the same language within the borders of one's own country. In addition, there remain variances in education, social economic status and a whole host of other reasons why one voice may be heard above others, often silencing or marginalizing other voices along the way. Social justice focuses on the need for all voices to be heard. This implies a greater commitment to the principals of equity, a fundamental goal of critical literacy.

For example, in South Africa, critical literacy has arguably been far more evident than it has in many other international contexts as a result of street politics, and the

mobilisation of solidarity movements in the struggle against apartheid. As well, it could be argued that, given these high levels of critical literacy, access to schooling as it is currently conceived and mandated in the South African context may do little to foster transformation agendas. These complex issues may look very different from colonial, Western notions of critical literacy. It is necessary to understand such conceptions of critical literacy in differing global contexts in order to provide a deep sense of many of the existing contradictions, ambiguities, discrepancies, varied interpretations and issues, range of philosophical and epistemological orientations, all under the name of democracy and critical literacy.

Equity and equality are terms that are often used interchangeably. However, they really represent the extremes of a continuum. For example, equality implies that everyone is treated the same way. We all have to climb the stairs from the first floor in order to get to the second floor. But what about the old, the tired, the frail? Perhaps, in the name of equality, they, too, can be expected to climb the same set of stairs as anyone else. The differential here is represented by issues of time and effort. It will clearly take these people longer to accomplish the same task with greater difficulty than others who may be able to accomplish it without a second thought. But, what about those among us who can no longer walk? Or who never were able to walk? Can we also expect these people to climb this same flight of stairs? It seems that, for some people in such circumstances, climbing this flight of steps is akin to climbing the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. What is to become of them? Are they to be left to their separate fates at the bottom of the stairs? While they may have been treated equally and the expectations placed upon them may be the same as for others who have successfully managed to negotiate the stairs, there remains the matter of equity.

Simply put, equity refers to providing people with what they need in order to obtain the same advantages as others enjoy. For example, if one were to introduce an elevator or a moving stairway, such as an escalator, the people who were left behind are now able to join their peers at the top of the stairs. They have become equal once again.

This is the nature of equity. If people were to be provided with what they need in order to be successful in their endeavours, we would have a more authentic form of equality. In short, the way to true equality is through the practice of ensuring equitable treatment for all. However, even in democratic societies, there is still an imbalance between the more powerful and the less powerful, measured in any terms one may wish. Often, the meritocratic card is played with comments like, "Work for it, like I had to," or "Those people are just lazy," or other phrases that serve to justify the fact that some people enjoy privileges that others do not.

This is to say simply that, in any society, there will always be those among us who either have not had the opportunity, the access or the good fortune to have what the majority of people enjoy. Power differentials operate within any society to further marginalize those who are least able to fend for themselves. Even in a democratic

society, this may occur as well. As Henry Giroux (In Cooper & White, 2012) notes, a society can never be democratic enough. Democracy must be “performed” again and again, over and over, daily, each time including those who have been left out, re-including those who have somehow become lost within the larger group, and seeking out those voices that have not yet been heard, listened to or acted upon. Let us view society as a metaphoric pyramid, with the general populace forming the base of the pyramid and the elite of the society at its pinnacle. As we move from the base to the peak of this metaphoric pyramid, we may begin to see how democracy, writ large, helps to govern us all and how the same concept can serve to assist or to marginalize each and every one of us, depending on who has more power and privilege along the way. This is so because the notion of democracy is a function of the actions, motives and values of the people within a particular geographic space. Each and every one of us can influence the democratic process for good or for ill, and each of us may have very different abilities in terms of our means to control this process to make it work for us or to prevent (or promote) difficulties for others.

Power tends to be distributed unevenly within any society and people who are marginalized by the society tend to be marginalized in one of two ways. They can be marginalized by physical characteristics such as physical abilities or disabilities, skin colour or gender, or by less obvious issues such as height, weight or age. People can also be marginalized through social characteristics such as financial ability, psychological or emotional issues, culture (or the lack thereof), race, religion, sexual orientation, or even the part of town from which they come.

These considerations are by no means exhaustive and the list continues to grow at an alarming rate, aided and abetted by social media such as television, the newspaper and the Internet, which tend to portray desirable attributes as a function of the consumer culture within which many of us currently live. Clearly this discourse values some cultural characteristics such as youth and beauty over others, created in part by less than conscious consumer desires or circumstances. Simply put, learning to become more critically literate may help citizens to become more democratic, at least in part.

As noted previously, no society can ever be democratic enough. This means that we must always remain vigilant not only to ensure that we do not become marginalized within the very society to which we belong, but that others less fortunate than we are can continue to contribute and to be productive in the best ways that they can. The move is always towards greater democracy. Anything less is a restriction that threatens the rights of individuals and groups of individuals to a happy, healthy and prosperous life in which they can all become contributing members of a strong, productive and vibrant society.

But, given the inequities and inequalities that exist within any society, including democratic societies, how did we come to embody, within our societies, such uncomfortable harmonies? Perhaps the answer lies within the very nature of the democratic process itself.

Dr. Noam Chomsky

To this end, we have had the marvelous opportunity to interview one of the world's greatest activists and scholars, Dr. Noam Chomsky, at his office at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). This video-clip (1.1) may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/0O-FBznW6uQ

In order to view this video-clip, please copy and paste this URL into the address box of your web browser. Alternately, if you have an electronic version of this volume, you may simply click on the URL to gain access to the video-clip.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NOAM CHOMSKY

The word "democracy" arrived most recently from the Middle French around 1570."Democracy" had its origins in the Medieval Latin "démocratie" which, in turn, came from the Greek "demokratia," meaning "popular government." This word referred to the "common people" (demos), although, originally, it was used to refer to a district (demotic). The term "kratos" referred to "rule" or "strength."

As words move through time and across great distances, it is no little wonder that the denotations, or definitions, of words often change or become adjusted to new sets of circumstances, new problems and new perspectives. Not only do denotations change, so do the ways that the words are used. The "connotation" of words, or the way in which words become used in circumstances other than those for which they were originally intended, are everywhere evident, particularly in slang words among the youth of today and in computer technology where new vocabulary has been cobbled from common words currently existing in the English language.

Thus, it is no surprise when Noam Chomsky notes that the term "democracy" has dual meanings, therefore the term can be used in a variety of ways. Dr. Chomsky notes that one of the dimensions to democracy is that public opinion is, to some extent, reflected in public policy. He claims that, to the extent that this is true, any country that reflects public opinion within public policy can be said to be democratic. What is important to note here are the "degrees" of democracy that are enacted at

any given time in any country's history. Democracy, viewed in this way, can be seen to ebb and flow like the tides or wax and wane like the cycles of the moon. It is not an ever-fixed constant, and, as such, can never be taken for granted. In fact, to the opposite, it is an asset that must be jealously guarded, particularly as it comes to be seen in finite supply.

Dr. Chomsky goes on to note that this definition and its attendant connotations are not representative of the operative sense of the term. He states that there is a significant gap between public opinion and policy, which means that, in today's society, public policy is often made regardless of public opinion. While this may be true of the United States of America, it is also true of many of the nations that currently choose to identify themselves as democratic nations. Democracy is enacted and performed differently in different places.

Dr. Chomsky further claims that the difference between the way that democracy is envisioned and the way in which it is enacted occurs due to various built in mechanisms that determine the very nature of the government and also by the constraints through which this governing body must operate. So why is the image of democracy so very different from how it plays out in the public realm? As Dr. Chomsky points out, the way that democracy operates within a society bears witness to the distribution of power within the society in question. Power and its attendant privileges, supported by minimally regulated capitalist economies, inhibit formation of political social structures, and the unmitigated progress of technology limit the realization of full democratic practice (Habermas, cited in Brookfield & Preskill, 2005). Because of this, we can begin to see that, in many Westernized countries, there is a high degree of economic power brought to bear on public policy making through large transnational corporations. This marriage of political power and economic might are frequently referred to as the neoliberal front, and the attempt is to fashion public policy to favour the interests of the large corporations that, in some cases, have the financial backing to be able to topple entire governments. Consequently, in this postmodern age, unlike any age previous, corporate power tends to drive public policy towards the interests of the ultra-wealthy rather than towards the interests of the general populace.

However, the subjugation of public policy to the interests of the "scions of industry" is not the only problem to which democracy has fallen prey. This issue is one that every democratic society must ultimately come to grips with. The question is basically this one; "How much democracy is democratic?" In the following video-clip, Noam Chomsky suggests that democracies and the extent to which they are democratic is an issue that must be decided upon. Clearly, such issues are decided upon by those in power. So, the question that must be asked, then, is, "How democratic do those in power wish their societies to be?" Dr. Chomsky uses the United States of America as his example, and traces the development of the current level of democracy in this country all the way back to the Constitutional Convention.

The Constitutional Convention was also known as the Philadelphia Convention, the Federal Convention, and the Grand Convention at Philadelphia. It took place

from May to September, 1787, in Philadelphia, PA. The Constitutional Convention was formed to address issues of governance within the newly-formed United States, following the War of Independence (1775–1783). Up to this point, the fledgling United States had been operating under the articles of Confederation following their independence from the British. The major thrust of this convention, following the lead of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, was to create a new government rather than redesigning a government after the British system that they had so recently overthrown. The result of this convention was the creation of the Constitution of the United States. One of the more contentious issues emerging from this convention was how "proportional representation" was to be defined. Thus it was that the very parameters around what we take for granted as "democratic" were decided upon. This is a scenario that is enacted and re-enacted during every meeting of democratic governments where public policy is decided upon. To view Video-Clip 1.2, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/mOjC7g4vIEY

Ultimately, the issue surrounds the notion of who gets to decide upon what is good for the people which, of course, is predicated upon what is good for the country itself.

According to Dr. Chomsky, it was James Madison who was the main framer of the nascent constitution for the newly formed United States. However, it was Madison who pointed out a fatal "flaw" with the notion of democracy. Madison likened the society to a large pyramid with the very wealthy at its pinnacle. The less wealthy occupied a tenuous position in the middle of the pyramid, with some being able to migrate upwards into the ranks of the elite, while others may fall back into the masses of the poor, nearly poor and permanently impoverished. Society was held in a kind of "dynamic equilibrium" where the three main social classes sought either to maintain their position on the pyramid, strive to be more upwardly mobile or attempt to reduce or mitigate the effects of a "fall from grace," typically caused by a reversal of economic fortune.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

James Madison noted that, in a democracy such as England, the poor could use their voting power to overcome the more powerful minority. This could be easily accomplished since the lower echelons of society were in the majority. According to Dr. Chomsky, the problem with this was that the poor could then encroach on the property of the rich and would carry out all manner of land reforms. In Madison's analysis, this would have been considered undemocratic because, in his opinion, one of the main functions of government was to protect the interests of the minority against those of the majority. The fact that the minority controlled most of what was worth controlling was immaterial to Madison. His solution to this determined "flaw" in democracy was to limit democracy so that the more opulent could serve as sober

decision makers for those who were less educated and therefore more prone to make ineffective or damaging decisions with their votes. In essence, Madison's choice was to limit democracy to the upper and middle classes. It took almost another hundred years before slaves were given the right to vote. Voting rights for women occurred after this and the suffragette movements extended into the early 20th Century. Dr. Chomsky comments on the American vision of representative democracy:

> … If you read the Fifth Amendment, for example, it says that no person shall be deprived of rights without due process of the law. But the Founding Fathers didn't mean person when they said person. So that obviously, it didn't include Native Americans, you could do anything you liked to them. It didn't include slaves, it didn't include women and up until the mid-twentieth century, women were mostly property under the law. In fact, until the 1970's, women didn't even have the legal right to serve on juries. A woman was the property of her father or her husband, so they weren't persons. And this goes right up to the present. So if you come up to the present day, if you look at the Supreme Court rulings, the concept of person has been both expanded and narrowed. It's been expanded to include legal fictions, corporations, collectivist legal fictions established by the government – they're a person. But it excludes undocumented immigrants; they're not persons, so they don't have rights under the law. …When we talk about our yearning for democracy, our leading the world in democracy, none of these questions ever come up. (Chomsky, Personal Communication, March, 2012)

In Noam Chomsky's view, the founders of the American nation were very clear on the notion that only some individuals were to be recognized as "persons." Perhaps, even more startling, is the fact that corporations have gained the right to be labeled as "person." Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott explore this concept in their documentary entitled "The Corporation" (2003). In this film, it is accepted that the corporation is to be treated as an individual. However, this "individual" is given a psychiatric evaluation and is identified as having strong sociopathic tendencies. However, given that corporations wield huge amounts of power, they are also given privileges they ordinarily would not enjoy; perhaps simply because of the threat they could pose to governing forces if such large corporations were to experience even the threat of being marginalized. Other members of the society, and by this we mean living, breathing, flesh and blood people who populate the far reaches of any nation, and often populate the far reaches of the society itself, find they have less power by far than a construct that has been legislated into "being," literally as well as figuratively.

And so, power, according to James Madison, was to be concentrated in the hands of the wealthy of the nation. The bulk of this power rested with the Senate, which, as the dominant group at the time, was furthest removed from the general population. Interestingly enough, the Senate was not an elected body. Intrinsically, what this meant was that the architects of the new American Constitution, while they

were committed to democratic governance, effectively distributed the power of the democratic among themselves, arguable the most elite individuals of the fledgling nation. Thus, the power would be in the hands of the wealthy, the more "responsible" of men, those who sympathized with property owners and their rights, rather than those who were already marginalized by the existing society. And the general public would be marginalized in a myriad of ways.

"Representative" democracy, where those with more power are expected by the general populace to exercise their votes in the interest of the people they represent, works well providing that the interests of the people are in line with the interests of their representatives. However, as we find out more times than is comfortable, the representative also serves a master. The representative must either vote in the way that his or her party wishes him or her to vote or else risk the ire of that party. Secondly, if the representative is presented with a dilemma, such that the people being represented want the vote to go differently than that envisioned by their representative, the representative generally votes the way that he or she would have voted regardless of the wishes of the represented populace. The rationale for this is that those who are ejected from office are no longer able to represent their supporters. In short, when push comes to shove, the representatives of the people vote to preserve their own power, often at the expense of those they represent.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

We have ascertained that the term for democracy came from as far back as Ancient Greece. According to records of the time, it was Aristotle who studied various forms of political governance. Ultimately, after a period of research, Aristotle came to the conclusion that democracy was probably the best of a bad deal. Democracy was probably a system that was slightly superior to the other forms of governance, but it was flawed. Interestingly enough, James Madison's argument about the flaws inherent with democracy was not entirely original, as Aristotle pointed out the same issues. Aristotle, too, was concerned that the poor, the majority of the populace, would use their votes to wrest property from the wealthy. Like Madison, Aristotle believed this to be unjust and, like Madison, proposed a solution to the problem. However, Aristotle's solution was the opposite of Madison's. Dr. Chomsky provides his view in Video-Clip 1.3:

https://youtu.be/VMCcftHT8NI

Where Madison believed that the answer to the problem was to reduce democracy to protect the wealthy, Aristotle's view was to reduce the inequality between the various classes of people, rather than to reduce their voting power. Aristotle had envisioned the first "welfare" state.

This solution that Aristotle envisioned for the city-state of Athens, compared to the solution of reduced democracy by Madison, exemplifies two different types of democracy. The type of democracy espoused by Madison would be similar to a

"representative" democracy, where those with more power exercise their votes in the interest of the people they represent.

Aristotle, on the other hand, considered a "participatory" democracy in that all people had a vote and they were free to vote into power whomsoever they wished. After all, if the issue of inequality were effectively addressed, the people would enjoy more equitable life circumstances and the twin issues of power and control would be minimized. At least, that is the way it sounds in theory.

At the time of writing, there appears to be no truly participatory democracy that can be observed in the so-called "developed" world. Even Marxist doctrine was intended to be more democratic and egalitarian than as practiced but it, like so many philosophies, was re-interpreted by those who took hold of the reins of power subsequent to the fall of the Romanoff dynasty. Thus, democracy, even "true" democracy, is enacted and performed differently in different places and different times. Perhaps, "true" democracy is an ideal that can, for the moment at least, only be envisioned as an elusive dream, sought by many, enjoyed by a privileged few.

The premise here, of course, is that democracy may not be the prettiest thing ever, but it is what we have at the moment and it is still worth fighting for. As we travel through this new millennium, already we see our freedoms being diminished as we are becoming ever more prone to technological surveillance, which serves to reduce our democratic rights even further, to stifle advances in the name of democratic thought and to continue to privilege some citizens and corporations at the expense of more vulnerable citizens, namely the impoverished, the young, the old, the non-conformists and groups of people who are identified as belonging to unworthy or suspect groups, based on their racial heritage (Bauman & Lyons, 2013).

WHAT'S EDUCATION GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Can we envision a society where there is little difference between groups and classes of people, where everyone is valued, respected and accepted? It is a tall order. Marx thought he had it figured out and, while it may appear cogent in theory, interpreters such as Joseph Stalin managed to hold on to power that was intended to be distributed amongst the entire population. The "power of the people" has been rendered ineffectual in democratic countries around the world. Perhaps, then, it is not the problem of the inability of democracy to be practiced fairly, but the inability of those in power to practice it fairly.

One way to further the pursuit of greater democracy is to educate the populace. This could provide a response to problems posed by both Madison and Aristotle. In both cases, education can increase equitable treatment within society through allowing greater life opportunities and thus reducing inequality between the various classes of people. It is this very inequity that results in inequality that is eating away at the heart of democracy. Many people throughout the history of education in North America have been vociferous in calling for universal education. John Dewey, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Ralph Waldo Emerson are just a few names in a long

list of people who believed that education was a way forward, not necessarily just in terms of politics, but in terms of life. In Video-Clip 1.4, Dr. Chomsky refers to several of these champions of education:

https://youtu.be/8Frs4kx5RLE

Dr. Chomsky comments that leading intellectuals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, expressed surprise to see that leading political figures were so much in favour of education. Perhaps this is due to the power that education can unlock. In Emerson's words:

> Whilst thus the world exists for the mind; whilst thus the man is ever invited inward into shining realms of knowledge and power by the shows of the world, which interpret to him the infinitude of his own consciousness – it becomes the office of a just education to awaken him to the knowledge of this fact. (Emerson, 1964, p. 201)

As has been noted elsewhere by a cynic whose name has been lost to the vicissitudes of time, we must help the poor so that they don't turn on us. This very sentiment may be the reason for leading political figures of Emerson's day to call for more education for the general population. Unfortunately, this raises an ethical dilemma. Those in power want to keep the poor from their throats but they do not wish to allow too much power to be devolved to the public because, in this case, the results may be the same. At any rate, maintaining and protecting the power of the democracy was not seen as something that would easily be shared. Education remained one of the few means by which individuals could exchange whatever capitals they possessed for education which they could then convert into cultural, financial and social capital in order to become one of those empowered to assist in maintaining the democracy, such as it was.

So it remains. The early hypocrisy of the representative democracy and, indeed, of all attempts at democracy, has been transmitted through a number of permutations; and the system of education is no different. The powers that controlled democracy also controlled the system of education. Consequently, while it was felt that it was very important to educate the "masses," too much education would have the reverse effect and would make the populace dangerous to those in power. Educating people enough so that they will conform and obey continues to be a hallmark of educational systems in many developed countries. As Dr. Chomsky affirms, that dilemma has run throughout the entire history of education up to the present time. Depending on the time and place in the history of Western society, the young have always been manipulated to be dutiful to the "democratic state."

The solution is clear. The current position held by the policy makers and corporate entities is clearly problematic. As global warming and depletion of raw materials devastates the planet, as we are offered too much choice over things that do not matter much and little choice over things that do, as the middle class becomes hollowed out due to the ravages of taxation and consumerist policies and philosophies, people

remember the words of some of the past philosophers in the field of education, who claimed that, as Wilhelm von Humboldt, a Prussian philosopher, suggested, education should allow students to experience the joy of discovery. This seems like a precursor to critical literacy, as one of its features tends to encourage less manipulation and more self discovery and thoughtfulness, redolent of the quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, above. Noam Chomsky refers to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as an example:

> In fact, at a university like this, MIT, that's exactly the way the sciences are taught. It's not taught to test and it doesn't really matter much what you cover… it matters what you discover. So students have to – are expected to – challenge, to inquire, to create. I mean, there's a framework; that's the string that Humboldt was talking about. (Chomsky, Personal Communication, March, 2012)

Unlocking the power of education includes liberating the powers of observation, the power of bringing logic to bear on any given problem, and the power to recognize the need for justice in all of its forms. And this power is not limited to those in higher education. Even primary school-aged children can benefit from an education that invigorates and enlivens, rather than an education that serves to pacify and de-motivate. Dr. Chomsky comments on this aspect of the educational process as well:

> … Bruce Albert, who's a biochemist, talks about K to 12, younger education, same kind of criticism. And he also points out success stories. One of them, for example, is in Kindergarten; it's a good example of this. It's a project where the children in Kindergarten were…, each child was given a small dish and on the dish there was a collection of seeds, pebbles, and shells. And the task was to figure out which ones were the seeds. And so the project started with the kids getting together and having what they called a scientific conference in which they thought about different ways in which they might be able to do this. And then they tried out some of the ways, you know, the teacher gave some guidance and so on, but basically the kids explored their own ideas about how to do it. By the end, they finally figured out which were the seeds and knew how to find them. At that point, every child got a magnifying glass and the seeds, which they now knew, were cut apart, and they could find within it the embryo that makes it grow, that makes it a seed. Well those kids, first of all, they learned about science, but they also learned what it means to discover, to create. They experienced the joy of discovery. That's serious teaching. And that can go on at any level. (Chomsky, Personal Communication, March, 2012)

A number of New England authors, notably Edith Wharton in her novel, *Ethan Frome* (1911), and Nathaniel Hawthorne in, among others, his short stories, *Young Goodman Brown* (1846) and *Ethan Brand* (1852), respectively, do not always see education as an epiphany of graciousness, happiness and the acquisition of artful and scientific discovery. The message is short. Knowledge does not always bring

happiness. It can bring other things to the fore, such as the understanding of how people can be marginalized, how wars can begin and how, like the seven-year cycle of rabbits, we may carry within us the seeds of our own destruction. Noam Chomsky describes just such a lesson by a sixth grade teacher:

> A friend of mine, who is a sixth grade teacher, to give one more example to you, was teaching a history course, and got to the American Revolution. So what she decided to do for a couple of weeks was to impose arbitrary, onerous restrictions on the children, senselessly. And they didn't like it much but they sort of followed them. And finally, they got so upset that they were practically revolting. At that point, she introduced the American Revolution and said "Yeah, that's what happened." That's a creative way to teach History. And you can do it at any level whether it's graduate school or Kindergarten…. (Chomsky, Personal Communication, March, 2012)

Thus there is a need for critical literacy along the path of one's education. Essentially, Professor Chomsky reveals how this can be accomplished at all levels of education. The key is to allow children to think for themselves and to foster this early if equity, social justice and democracy are considered to be important goals of education. However, the question remains: Are they?

WHAT IS EDUCATION LIKE TODAY?

Since the advent of postmodern times, described by Zygmunt Bauman (2000) as "liquid modernity," the world has seen revolutionary changes in culture and society. Apparently, the postmodern age was introduced in 1978 with the invention of the microchip (Bauman & Lyons, 2013). This allowed for miniaturization of almost everything, resulting in tremendous societal change. Now, huge sums of money can be shunted around the world at the touch of a button (read "computer key"). Borders have become so porous (Castells, 2000) as to require thorough surveillance at all border crossings, airline flights and any form of transportation that will put you within arm's reach of any "foreign" country. In fact, Bauman & Lyons (2013) state that we have become a surveillance society that serves to include some who have the wherewithal to be able to consume and the "Others" who, using the same technology, are excluded until further notice; "further notice" means until such time as their conditions improve to allow them to join the closely guarded ranks of the few who have the privileges that are coveted by all of the society.

What is at play here is the immense power of the corporate world. As corporations have taken advantage of the available technology, they have grown into transnational firms, many of them powerful enough to topple governments. Consequently, governments have been careful to hearken to the needs of their very powerful corporate "citizens" whether they are physically present in the governing body's country or not. After all, thanks to miniaturization, tremendous financial damage can

be wrought from outside the borders of any country, thus calling into question the idea of countries as a modern day anachronism (Castells, 2000).

And the competition is fierce. Takeovers, hostile or otherwise, are the order of the day. Insecurity mounts as corporations change hands, threaten to leave a host country or demand concessions in terms of tax breaks, government bailouts or outright gifts. It is not possible for the corporations to devolve into a state of grace that they may have enjoyed previously because, in this new world order of gigantic competitions, the investors in any company want to see a profit – a return on their investments. If the CEO of any given company cannot or will not supply the necessary dividends, he or she is simply replaced by one who can or will. Power and privilege, particularly bolstered by the influence of minimally-regulated capitalist economies, inhibiting political social structures and the unmitigated progress of technology limit the realization of full democratic practice (Habermas, 1970 as cited in Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

So, what does this have to do with education?

In the growing "war," and this term is used advisedly, one of the ways that corporate partners have seen fit to improve their financial bottom line and one of the ways that governments have seen fit to maintain a vibrant economy is by conscripting education. This is a complex undertaking, as the neoliberal right wing seeks to privatize education for several reasons. Among the main reasons is the idea that, if the market were in charge of education, the businesses and corporations would be able to more easily influence what it is that students would learn in school (Tooley, 2000). These structures are not interested in the whole person; they are only interested in developing an obedient, compliant and dedicated employee. Oh yes, there are a few elite private schools capable of turning out elites who will form the management teams required to govern the army of near-drones. Even though some of the rhetoric suggests that industry is looking for competent, resourceful problem-solvers, this does not apply to the rank and file of the students within the walls of our public educational institutions; or problem-solving is taught within an unethical vacuum, with a textbook relating to the teaching of creativity as an exercise in technique rather than imagination. The "successful" individuals will already belong to or will take their places among the elite management class.

Governments around the world exist in synchronicity with corporations attempting to replace public with private education. After all, public education has not been the panacea that it was hoped. The results of public education have not been standardized. Some students perform better than others and it is extremely costly for such varied results. Around the world, systems of public education are succumbing to the thrall of the Siren (Σειρήν Seirēn) call for private schooling.

Enter Margaret Thatcher and her solution to under-resourced schools in the UK. Her move to provide funds to schools was not without strings attached. The site-based management approach may have been useful in some ways, but it also added the burden of deliberation and choice to already struggling schools. Furthermore,

all schools had to comply with the new order and justify their success (or the lack thereof). Standardization had become the new standard by which schools were measured. This did not take long to spread across the ocean to the United States and other parts of the world.

This is not to say, however, that there has been no repudiation of earlier versions of neoliberal practices across time, even though it is common knowledge that continuous attempts to oppressively influence educational decisions have a long history in various parts of the world, particularly in North America. Standardized testing in the form of the Stanford-Binet test, for example, first developed in France in 1905 and adapted for use by the US military prior to World War I, bears witness to how White, male, middle class, English speaking individuals were perceived to be superior to others, chiefly as a result of the cultural bias of the test itself. Thus, many of the critiques advanced in this book are anything but new and many of the concerns that exist have been strongly contested over time. It is unfortunate that those critiques continue to remain with us.

Neither is it to say that standards, in a variety of instances, have no positive aspects. For example, standards in curriculum subjects are important in providing a variety of experiences for students, as they move through the various grade levels, without repeating information from previous years. Additionally, standards in research ethics are intended to prevent harm to participants. In the same way, standards in food preparation are intended to prevent the public from getting ill. The issue remains that standards, in general, are not singular, linear, and static. Nor are they established in order to be met in rigidly similar ways. Also noteworthy are long-standing educational conventions that situate standards, outcomes and assessments as similarly long-standing tools for the marginalization and oppression of minorities, often under the guise of equity and access, a trend that is as similar in North American – Canadian and American – contexts as it is in the rest of the commonwealth. Perhaps these issues are exactly the problem with the setting of standards in educational circles around the globe.

However, it was this development of standardized testing that allowed for the comparison, however faulty, of educational achievement between competing countries. Of course, context was not a consideration and, as countries happily compared their educational apples to other countries' educational oranges, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) became a huge player. The OECD now exports educational policy to over 40 countries. The writers of this volume refrain from asking the somewhat obvious questions about the legitimacy of an organization that promotes economic development becoming so deeply and irrevocably involved in matters of education.

Along with the processes related to practices of standardization came the holy grail of the new order of education – to improve student "achievement," something that is notoriously difficult to define. However, improved scores on standardized tests are how society, government and corporations have chosen to define achievement. Here, it is completely divorced from knowledge acquisition, and improving marks are not

seen as a proxy for learning, they are seen as knowledge itself (MacNeil, 2000). In fact, in MacNeil's study of students in Texas, she found that, although their marks went up, the students themselves did not really know any more than they did before the advent of standardized testing. The reasons for this may be threefold.

First of all, if a teacher's career is connected to how well students perform on standardized tests, that teacher will often do the only thing that remains available to him or her – they will teach to the test. Secondly, and in response to this, the curriculum often shrinks to only what is going to be tested. Finally, not everyone takes the test. Those who have learning disabilities, those for whom English is not their language of origin and those who are considered to provide a level of exposure that may weaken the test scores are often exempted from writing the standardized tests. In their infinite wisdom, corporations and governments alike are racing directly towards a future that they are desperately attempting to avoid – mediocrity.

It is not standardization that is the answer. It is the opposite. Instead of a malleable, sheep-like society that is stunted in terms of its cultural development because culture is seen as an unnecessary distraction that takes us away from the culture of "everyman" – that is, the culture of the television set which is an outlet for the consumer culture; instead of an "all you need to know is your particular job" attitude that renders people docile and disengaged; instead of a system of education that valorizes test scores over authentic knowledge, what is needed is a system of education where student are free to explore, to investigate, to think and learn; in short, to become "critical thinkers." Noam Chomsky comments:

> It's the opposite of what is done; it's the opposite of "No Child Left Behind," you know, "Race to the Top," teaching to test, evaluating students and teachers. In fact, I'm sure you have too, but I've seen the results of this in my own grandchildren. And we've all experienced it. I should say this Humboltian conception was counterposed to a different one in the Enlightenment. The alternative conception to be rejected was thinking of education as pouring water into a vessel. And as we all know from experience, it's a pretty weak vessel. To be poured in to pass a test, a week later, you've forgotten what the subject was. We all know that's a lot of what's done unfortunately. It's training for conformity and obedience but not for independence of mind, meaningful participation in a free community, inquiry investigation, and so on. And that goes right back to the origins of the mass education system. One of the great achievements of the United States was to pioneer mass public education when there wasn't any in Europe, just elite education or just, you know, kind of what amounted to training to be a worker. You know? And the American system went beyond that in interesting ways, but with constraints. A large part of the motive of the educational system, the early educational system, was to convert independent farmers to docile workers in an industrial system. And they resented it bitterly. *The Labour Press*, which was quite lively in the late

> nineteenth century, discusses this at length. And even some of the leading intellectuals discuss it. (Chomsky, Personal Communication, March, 2012)

Given the current state of affairs, along with an educational system that threatens to become ever more restrictive, a trend that is being echoed throughout the society as the powers of technology are being harnessed to provide ever greater levels of surveillance, something needs to be done. If this society is not flexible enough to bend, it will break. And, unfortunately, the flexibility that marks so many powerful societies that have appeared in the past is being systematically removed from our current society at an ever-increasing rate.

SUMMARY

This first chapter has attempted to outline some of the main points that this volume will undertake to explore. First of all, an all-too-brief discussion of the roots of the democratic process has hopefully served to acquaint or re-acquaint the reader with the development of Western democratic thought. Democracy tends to play out differently in different contexts. Ancient Greek thoughts on democracy, as per Aristotle, were juxtaposed with the American Constitution, of whom one of the major architects was James Madison. What was pointed out was that democracy is never an easy concept; it is performed differently in different locales and it is interpreted differently by different groups of people. As has been implied, the pathway from Greek constructions of democracy, transformed through continental, as well as colonial constructions, to contemporary interpretations of Western democracy, cannot help but ignore some voices. Typically these are the voices of traditionally marginalized peoples. Ultimately, perhaps all we really have is the illusion of democracy.

Over the past half-century, democracy has become ever more elusive as corporate entities have become defined as individuals with many of the attendant rights that individuals possess. Not only are these organizations financially more powerful than the citizens of any given country, the corporations are, in Bauman's opinion, amoral (Bauman & Donskis, 2013). What has also made this all the more complex is the need for governments to become very close to the corporate world in order to maintain that ever-so-elusive "vibrant" economy. This has had a huge impact on education over the past quarter century as corporations and governments confer as to what a system of education, beneficial to the needs of both the corporations and the governments, should look like.

Systems of education have attempted to withstand these pressures in accepting multinational organizations dictating educational policy inside their own countries and from outside their countries. The result has been an unprecedented standardization movement that seeks to re-order educational systems around the world. This has created increased stress on stakeholders in the system to the point at which mental health issues in schools among all levels of stakeholders is on the

rise. Student achievement has been re-interpreted in terms of standardized test scores and this has come to serve as a proxy for knowledge. In the wake of all of this, technological "improvements" have both complicated the issues already extant, while simultaneously ameliorating others.

The question is, "Will all this result in a newer, improved society?" We think not. In the wake of corporations becoming ever more global and governments being restricted to operating within their own porously-bordered countries, the slow death of democratic process on a world-wide scale and the on-going siege of systems of public schooling, societies around the world are having to contend with issues that are beginning to approach the critical. Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman & Lyons, 2013) believes that the centre cannot hold for much longer. What Bauman points to is the resilience of the society itself. The answer must come from within. We, the authors, feel that the answer does exist within the very form of democratic thought that sought to establish systems of public schooling in the first place.

However, in order to better mobilize the awesome potential of the public school, we must first recognize the structures of oppression and then seek to neutralize them. How can this be accomplished? The authors of this volume believe that re-investigation of critical literacy may hold the key. To this end, we have traveled to three Commonwealth countries – Australia, South Africa and Canada – and to Greece, the first developer of the democratic process. Through the pages of this book we explore what critical literacy looks like for each of these countries. Through the words and stories of critical literacy leaders in these educational institutions, we hope to find some answers as to how critically literate societies can be fashioned and how this, in turn, can help to prevent the further erosion of democratic ideals.

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CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS CRITICAL LITERACY?

The world must be made safe for democracy.
—President Woodrow Wilson (Address to Congress, 1917)

DEMOCRACY AND CRITICAL LITERACY

"The world must be made safe for democracy," represents an interesting view that seems to suggest that President Wilson felt that the world may not yet have been ready for democracy, or that democracy was too fragile a philosophy for immediate currency, or both. At any rate, this comment represents what we call "the voice from the margins." Even though Woodrow Wilson was anything but a marginalized individual, his comment offered a new positioning of democracy, a position that showed it to be vulnerable. Perhaps this is not a common idea associated with democracy – its inherent vulnerability – and, as such, it represents a counterpoint to commonly held beliefs about the invincibilities of democracy and the democratic process.

The recognition that democracy is frail and must be bolstered allows for an interesting balance because such comments, expressed from this perspective, give us pause for consideration. And, as such, it is these considerations that allow us to gain a greater awareness of the fragility of many of humankind's greatest ideas. Abstract notions such as democracy can be supplanted by other notions, other systems of governance that are supported by the public, unaware of the fact that they are supporting complicity in their own captivity within a system that may fail to protect them. Democracy shares these fallibilities with other great systems of governance and it is only through continued vigilance and the daily re-enactment of democracy and democratic values that we, the public, can be sure that we are being governed in a democratic fashion.

This point cannot be stressed thoroughly enough. If we believe in democratic freedom, then we must maintain it through protecting our rights and freedoms. We must engage, enact and perform democracy on a daily basis. It is not useful to assume that those in power will protect us and that they will also protect democracy for us. Ultimately, it is the individual who must ensure that democracy continues to support and protect us. Much like M.C. Escher's (2000) drawing of two hands, each one drawing the other, democracy supports and must be supported by those who consider it their preferred system of governance.

Moving from the individual to the society, it can be noted that society is made up of individuals who join together, almost as tribes, to embrace a common goal. Once their goal is achieved, the tribe dissolves as individuals join other tribes with other causes (Bauman, 2000). Each group of individuals comes together and drifts apart many times during the course of a multiplicity of causes or purposes – and these causes and purposes overlap and may, or may not, be congruent with one another. While the pursuit of democratic principles may be hotly debated by one group or another at many times during election cycles, from local municipal elections to federal elections, it is true that the particular form of democracy practiced by any group in power tends to affect all citizens of that particular territory, whether they are considered to be full citizens or those who languish at the margins of democratic thought.

Thus, it is important that all citizens need to develop a greater understanding of democratic processes, policies and practices in order to ensure fair representation of themselves and others. It is these relationships between the self and the "Other" that allows for greater understanding among people to unite in the spirit of democratic thought. This may sound a trifle idyllic and, to be sure, it is. The rose of democracy is sick. The following poem, by William Blake, definitely a voice from the margins, could have been a poem about democracy.

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

—William Blake (1927)

Yes, democracy is sick. Perhaps the metaphor of democracy being represented by a rose may be somewhat "overblown," but democracy is being besieged by malignant forces. While there may not be an exact symbolic correlation between the poem and the ills of democracy, the metaphor can perhaps explain some of the leading issues relative to the need for a strong democracy. The neoliberal front, that marriage of politics and corporatism, may well be thought of as the "invisible worm" that "flies in the night." Perhaps the worm is not malignant. Perhaps the worm is doing just what worms do – eat roses. The fact that the worm is "invisible" and "flies in the night" reveals a certain secretiveness in the worm's actions, however. While the worm, like the neoliberal alliance, does not want to be caught in the act of consuming democracy, it cannot help its actions.

After all, around the world, governments require "vibrant" economies in order for their lands and territories to be considered developed countries. Their appetites are insatiable. Bauman and Lyons (2013) suggest that globalization, in general, is responsible for the consumerism that threatens economies and environments. And, as we have seen, it is the profit margin that dictates the rules of the game. For a CEO to have a twinge of conscience and not honour the investments of those buying into the stock market is to find himself replaced by one who will. The worm cannot stop being a worm. However, the worm can wrap itself in a cloak of secrecy, much as the corporations, in league with government, attempt to wrap themselves in the same cloak of secrecy, perhaps in order to (mis)guide their citizens in the best (perhaps only) way they know how.

Because of this, democracy is under siege. This has serious implications for the societies in which we live, but it also has dire consequences for the systems that we support and hold dear to our hearts – particularly systems of education. The Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) makes educational policy for over 40 member countries. These policies contain themes that speak of education as being important for a number of reasons, but such vocalizations in the form of policy statements frequently add tags promoting the "need" for a vibrant economy. Thus, education becomes conscripted to the purposes of the neoliberal agenda. Leif Moos (2012) avers that equality and participatory democracy are core values in the welfare state. While this may be true, he also notes that competition in and preparedness for the labour market are also core values for the competitive state.

Pederson (2010) notes how this came about through three distinct phases of development. The first phase is represented as a nation-building period that, in Europe, lasted until the end of World War II. As many nations of the world moved from primary industry to secondary and tertiary industries, societies realized that they needed to educate future generations to become individuals who would build new, national communities. From the Second World War to the 1990s, the welfare state became a common feature in various societies the world over. This second phase is represented by a democracy-building period. Because politicians endeavoured to prevent other wars by raising democratic thought in schools, democratic participation became a pivotal value in schooling. However, in the current era, as a result of ever-increasing globalization, the state is competing for survival, largely in economic terms.

Because of this, politicians and their counterparts in the corporate world attempt to ensure that children grow up to be able and willing workers. We have moved from the dream of developing creative and enthusiastic problem-solvers to creating an army of compliant and obedient workers. Schools, thus, have begun to (re)focus on basic skills and knowledge and on accountability through standardized tests.

Michael Apple (2006) states that public education has become contested terrain. Apple distinguishes between neoliberals, who promote consumer cultures and individualism, and neoconservatives, who believe in moral authority and a return to

past schooling traditions. Apple notes that large segments of the dominant culture, such as evangelical church members and the middle class involved in corporate endeavours also complement the ideologies of the politically right wing neoliberals and neoconservatives. Consequently, many of our curriculum initiatives, such as the infamous *No Child Left Behind* edict, are replete with right wing political assumptions. Besides possessing material resources to drive their ideological perspectives, Apple (2006) claims that neoliberals and neoconservatives alike make effective use of language to conjure support from the general public. He claims that this also highlights the impact on society of neoliberal interests that promote market-oriented practices at the expense of young people's needs. These political right wing movements seek to create a world where democracy becomes modeled on economic principles expressed in terms of a consumerist philosophy. In this world, dwindling material resources are made more accessible to certain social classes, thus reinforcing James Madison's notion of a limited representative democracy.

So, while society has been conscripted by neoliberal ideals and a consumerist philosophy that is being actively promoted in schools around the globe, what can be done to disrupt these damaging academic discourses of the current educational climate? What can be done to contain what counts as legitimate social practice within and outside of our public school systems?

Goodlad (1979) argues that the essential goal of schooling is to provide a systematic general education that addresses the purposes of democracy as well as the needs of the individual. He states, "The making of free individuals will result in the making of a free, democratic state. In this we must have faith or education will be corrupted" (p. 42). Perhaps it is not only democratic purpose that is sick; perhaps the educational systems of so many countries, like the sick rose, have already been corrupted. Noting this concern, Apple (2006) worries about how capable and resilient the education system is in its ability to disrupt the dominance of neoliberal and neoconservative discourses in academic institutions.

Jackson (2012) may begin to provide a way forward as he notes that "Education is a socially facilitated process of cultural transmission whose explicit goal is to effect an enduring change for the better in the character and psychological well-being (the personhood) of its recipients and, by indirection, in their broader social environment, which ultimately extends to the world at large" (p. 95). Clearly, the struggle for control of the educational systems that are so important to the continued vibrancy of the economy has begun in earnest. Likening this to World War III is not so far from fiction. Like all wars, the battle at its deepest level is ideological. The war on one side is being fought to preserve democracy. On the other side, the war is being fought to win future markets and to further a consumerist agenda. In preparing to do battle, we must fight fire with fire by providing ourselves with weapons equal to the task of preserving our democratic future.

But what weapons are available to teachers? Perhaps a return to our democratic roots will provide an answer. The background for education and assessment is in practice based on, what Aristotle calls "phronesis," a Greek word for a type of

wisdom or intelligence. While this word eludes description in terms of universal standards, it is open to negotiation, and innovative and creative perspectives. This could be likened to a form of critical literacy, a term that will be defined in this chapter by international experts in the field of literacy education through a series of video-clips.

The struggle for control of the public educational system in the United States of America is described by Henry Giroux in Cooper and White (2012):

> It was impossible in the 1960s not to be aware of what was going on in the outside world…. People were really beginning to re-theorize what it meant to connect schooling to politics. Bowles & Gintis had just written *Schooling in Capitalist America*, an enormously important book for many of us. Paulo Freire, of course, his work we had already known. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was an enormously important book because it linked education to social change, whereas Gintis linked education to questions of capitalism and exactly what that relationship did and what it meant and the metaphor of schools as factories and schools as modes of social and cultural reproduction began to emerge and became dominant in the language. (p. 144)

As can be seen from the above comment, Professor Giroux understands that schools as modes of social and cultural reproduction had begun to emerge as early as the 1960s. The rapid emergence of capitalist ideologies was an anathema to critical education in that the proliferation of authoritarianism, along with the growth of capitalism, threatened the very foundations of social justice and democracy. He says, in moving to Canada:

> … I could no longer live in a country that in many ways was…inventing a mode of authoritarianism that in many ways was increasingly as dangerous, particularly to the issue of democracy…. [A]uthority should be held accountable; that, you know, we should push the envelope around questions of social justice; that societies should be seen as never just enough; and that intellectuals have responsibilities, to say the very least, not just simply to produce knowledge but, in some ways, do what they can to expand and deepen the possibilities of democracy itself…. (Giroux, in Cooper & White, 2012, p. 145)

Let us take a moment or two to explore the concept of critical literacy. First of all, the term "critical" may not have been the best choice for this idea, simply because the word "critical" may mean different things depending on to whom you are speaking. In this volume, we use the term "critical literacy" as a means to differentiate it from reading and writing, as it is both of these and so much more. It is a means by which scripts and texts can be analyzed in order to detect bias. In so doing, hierarchies of power can be identified, interrogated and, hopefully, dismantled in the name of greater democracy.

This chapter began with a quotation by an American president calling for the world to be made safe for democracy. The irony extant in this comment is much like

the position that Sophocles' Oedipus found himself in, as he rushed blindly towards the very fate he was attempting to avoid. Democracy must be accepted rather than mandated. By its very nature, it must be something that can be negotiated. As we delve more deeply into issues within the democratic process, a democracy that is "forced" upon its citizen is at best a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1995) and, at worst, a parody of itself. As a way of intervening in the democratic process in a positive frame, perhaps the concept of critical literacy will allow for democratic nations to ensure that they do not become trapped within their own critique of other nations' infirmities.

DEFINITIONS

One of the most important things to do, by anyone who is contemplating writing as opposed to a face-to-face encounter, is to define the terms one is using. Have you ever had a conversation with someone with whom you believe that you share a common vocabulary, only to find out part way through the conversation that each of you is really talking about something entirely different? If you have never had this experience, try to engage someone in discussing student achievement without defining in advance what you mean by this term. Some might assume you are talking about test scores; others may interpret the term to mean general conduct or deportment in the schools. Thus, as can be seen, student achievement can cover a very wide spectrum. Still others, cagier than most, will ask you what you mean by this term before ploughing forward to engage with terms, whose etymology, denotations or connotations may be indistinct or misleading.

To illustrate this more graphically, there is a very old joke about two psychiatrists who happen to be in an elevator together. One psychiatrist says to the other, "Good morning" and is met with nothing more than a puzzled look. The second psychiatrist ascends to his own floor and, as he leaves the elevator, he turns to the closing doors and thinks to himself, "I wonder what he meant by that." The second psychiatrist was vigilant in not falling prey to assuming that what the first psychiatrist was saying was, in fact, exactly what he meant to say. Perhaps this says more about the psychiatric profession than it does about understanding not only what we say, but also what it is that we mean when we say something. However, this may also help to illustrate the need to make our definitions clear. To name something and to understand what it is that we mean by our naming and defining allows us to speak about the entity, artifact or event that has been identified. It is also very helpful if others to whom we are speaking also share a common understanding of what it is that the object of discussion represents.

For example, "dictionary.com" defines a democracy as:

1. government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

2. a state having such a form of government: The United States and Canada are democracies.
3. a state of society characterized by formal equality of rights and privileges.
4. political or social equality; democratic spirit.
5. the common people of a community as distinguished from any privileged class; the common people with respect to their political power.

Just in case we do not find what we are looking for in these definitions, "dictionary.com" invites us to ponder the following "relevant questions:"

- What is democracy?
- What is democracy in America?
- What is a republic?
- What is a representative republic?
- What is a republican democracy?
- What is a representative democracy?

For purposes of this discussion, the term "democracy" will be used as the first definition indicates, "government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system," whether this be entirely true or not.

Another similarly vague term is "Social Justice," which happens to be defined very succinctly by the same dictionary as "the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society" and, as such, may actually be defining its opposite, social injustice. After all, how can any distribution of disadvantages within a society be construed as socially just unless, of course every member of the society labours under the same disadvantage? Having said that, when disadvantage becomes normalized, does it then cease to be a disadvantage and merely become an accepted way of life or of doing things? Unfortunately, such terms, and such conditions do exist within societies around the globe and, consequently, "social justice" can devolve to nothing more than a politically correct term that really only identifies those who are excluded, as if those who are marginalized require further marginalization in order for false prophets to introduce personal agendas that quickly become "social justice for me" (White & Cooper, 2013, p. 1065). Wikipedia defines social justice more closely as the ability people have to realize their potential in the society in which they live. This potential can easily be achieved by investing, in appropriate proportions, in equity and equality.

Equity and equality, oddly enough, have often been used interchangeably. However, thanks to *dictionary.com*, equity refers to the quality of being fair or impartial, fairness, or impartiality; whereas "equality" refers to sameness. In essence, equitable treatment means that those among us who are disadvantaged, marginalized or excluded in some way are given what they need in order to enjoy the same privileges as are commonly enjoyed by other members of the society. Equality simply means that everyone gets the same thing whether they already have more of

whatever is being distributed or not. For example, equity is evident in many of the food kitchens dotted around larger urban centres that attempt to feed the homeless people who would not be able to fend for themselves. Equality, on the other hand, would extend this offer to all and sundry, regardless of their finances, socio-economic status or position in the community. There is a place for both equity and equality in every society; however, it can be considered unjust when one poses as the other and the result is the exclusion or further marginalization of one group or another. It has been contended that, if we were to act equitably by giving to those what they need in order to thrive, eventually all people would become equal (White & Cooper, 2013).

CRITICAL LITERACY

So far, in the past chapter and a half, we have covered some territory. Perhaps this would be a good point at which to recapitulate and to point to the direction in which we are headed. First of all, the issue is about how democracy is engaged with, enacted and performed in different ways in different places and at different times. We note that democracy, while flawed, is the system that many countries have chosen to represent their population. However, democracy is tired. It is under siege. Pressures from global and national forces combine to threaten democratic societies everywhere.

So, what is the recommended solution to return democracy to a system of values that populations can continue to believe in? Well, first of all, democracy must never be taken for granted. It must be engaged with, enacted and performed on a daily basis. It is the individual who will make a difference, providing that enough individuals work for change in systems of democratic governance that threaten to limit their rights and freedoms. Our politicians, our corporations and, indeed, our citizens themselves must be held accountable for their decisions and their subsequent actions. But how can we accomplish this?

Critical literacy has often been connected to a desire for a more equitable and accessible society and as such, may offer a potential solution. This will take time, as it relates primarily to our school-age youth, simply because schools are one place where large numbers of young people gather together. In the absence of general membership in community-based institutions such as churches, recreation centres and social groups, schools become the default mechanism for the mounting of social change. Of course, maintenance of a strong and healthy democracy is not the only issue that schools are being called upon to engineer; other issues such as career considerations, university preparation, family studies and many other social issues, situations and demands also fall to the lot of the public school's educational checklist.

This is not to say that critical literacy is not as important than these others, it is to signal that the life of the school is not only amazingly complex, it is to recognize that there are many competing demands for the very precious time that we have allotted during the school day for the education of future generations. However, the good news is that critical literacy does not need to have its own space, as it is not taught

like a separate subject. It can (and should) be taught within the context of any subject or topic that is currently under the aegis of the public school system. But precisely what is critical literacy? Simply put, critical literacy is an instructional attitude originating with the neo-Marxist approach to critical pedagogy. This approach adopts a "critical" stance towards text.

Text can be defined as anything that bears a message. For example, any manuscript can be a text, as can any movie, video or performance or technological media. Norman Denzin, in paying homage to Jacques Derrida, notes that "everything is inside the text, there is nothing outside the text. The social is always within the text" (Cooper & White, 2012, p. 142). In fact, Helene Cixous, the internationally renowned feminist writer and philosopher, claims that the entire world can be seen as a text (Personal communication, 2008).

Given any text of any description, then, practitioners of critical literacy adopt a "critical" perspective toward the text. The basic premise of critical literacy requires consumers of text to adopt a critical and questioning approach to what they read. Critical literacy encourages readers to actively analyze texts and offers strategies for exploring biases and uncovering underlying messages, positions and themes. While there are a number of differing orientations to critical literacy, it was Paulo Freire (2000), in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* who outlined his work with migrant farm workers. In this book, Freire chronicles how teaching these farm workers to read and write was not successful until he introduced meaningful situations that were relevant to their health and welfare. At this point, the workers began to recognize not only the value in achieving literacy but also the empowering effect that critical literacy provided them with respect to changing their lives by fighting against those forces that oppressed them. Although, Freire was working with adult learners, his approach has been valued in educational venues around the globe. At the heart of critical literacy is the ability to cultivate the numerous meanings a text may contain and to develop flexibility in our thinking about these various meanings. As a caveat, no text is truly neutral.

Further to this, critical literacy, like democracy itself, is engaged with, and enacted and performed differently in different places around the world. It is for this reason that we have interviewed world-renowned international scholars in this field of endeavor in order to illustrate how critical literacy is valuated in three Commonwealth countries – Australia, South Africa and Canada. Hopefully, the investigation that follows will help readers to engage with critical literacy in their own daily lives, their employment and professional practices, and their theoretical and philosophical orientations to the lives they lead within democratic societies. It is also hoped that critical literacy may be a method that anyone can use to interrogate systems of repression wherever they may be found.

Let us turn now towards the defining of critical literacy by the very people who have helped to understand, shape, and promote this Freirian ideal. While the approaches identified in each of these geographic areas overlap in many ways, and while they may approach the subject and subject matter in somewhat

different ways due to their own societal contexts, they do not necessarily represent competing views.

AUSTRALIA

Barbara Comber is a professor in the Faculty of Education at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. In this capacity, Dr. Comber has undertaken numerous research projects concerned with literacy development, educational policy, teachers' work and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Dr. Barbara Comber

In the following video-clip, Dr. Comber describes her view of critical literacy and notes that it is often considered to be a "family" of practices. In her view, Dr. Comber identifies privilege and injustice as targets worthy of interrogation through the lens of critical literacy. To view Video-Clip 2.1, please proceed to:

http://youtu.be/EXNOdZfOb6s

In order to effectively interrogate systems of privilege and injustice, Dr. Comber suggests that it is important to look at the various ways that texts mediate people's lives through the relationship between language, power and identity, how things came to be as they are currently and how people become positioned through the ways they are represented by the text(s) in question.

In a second video-clip, Dr. Peter Freebody of the University of Sydney describes how he and Allan Luke of the University of Queensland developed a model that, in Australia and beyond, became a hallmark of literacy education in general and critical literacy education in particular.

Dr. Peter Freebody

This model eventually became known as the "Four Roles Model" or, alternately, as the "Four Resources Model" of critical literacy. Video-Clip 2.2 may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/t1U9gwbKA4k

As we work our way through subsequent chapters of this book, we will revisit these scholars and introduce others who have points of view to offer regarding critical literacy and its potential impact of systems of inequity and injustice.

Having witnessed the view of critical literacy in Australia, let us now travel to South Africa in order to discover the views held by South African scholars with respect to critical literacy.

SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Carolyn McKinney was interviewed at her university, the University of Cape Town. Professor McKinney acknowledges the fact that, in analyzing others' discourses, we cannot help but produce our own discourses. At the heart of her work is the commitment to democracy which, in the South African context, has been hard won and is still in a very vulnerable state. Dr. McKinney offers a cautionary note in suggesting that the enterprise of investigation using the critical literacy approach is, at its heart, a moral investigation.

Dr. Carolyn McKinney

With respect to understanding the moral nature of such investigations, Zygmunt Bauman (1993) notes that morality does not mean that one must adopt a "politically correct" stance towards a given subject, but that one must be prepared to make a choice between what they know to be good and what they may suspect to be corrupt. Either choice, claims Bauman, is moral in that the chooser has the freedom to choose either path. What makes this a moral undertaking is the fact that the individual will choose one path or another, knowing or at least considering what the consequences of any action will be:

> Zygmunt Bauman recognizes the ultimately *existential* nature of moral choice. With the rapidity of accelerating change, choice, moral or otherwise, becomes a necessity. To not choose or to not have choice is to no longer count, to no longer have a purpose and, hence, to no longer have meaning. In these postmodern times, one is either on the bandwagon or is left behind. There

> is no other alternative. Consequently, this has serious ramifications for one's concepts around the meaning and purpose of life. Professor Bauman is not referring to the hoary old debate about whether humankind is essentially good or evil, but articulates the idea that being moral means to exercise freedom of choice in choosing between the two binaries. Thus, one must take the responsibility for one's choice…. Bauman suggests, as does Camus (2000) that, in the absence of a higher authority, it is the individual who must take responsibility not only for his or her own actions, but for the consequences of the actions of others as they impact upon that individual and influence his or her circumstances. In this way, to choose right or wrong, good or evil, both of these possible choices are moral choices; and what it is that causes a person to choose one way or the other is a moral choice. It is not the act but the motivation and intent that recasts the issue of choice as moral commitment, which ultimately means that one's life situation is a set of moral problems and one's life choices can be viewed as moral dilemmas – the choice between good and evil. (Cooper & White, 2012, p. 96)

Professor McKinney is vitally aware of this consideration as she notes that some of the perspectives that are interrogated are privileged viewpoints. The issue for this scholar is how one comes to grips with a particular point of view without silencing those who hold that viewpoint. To her credit, Dr. McKinney promotes the view that all perspectives, even those from the point of privilege, are valid views and that, in order to gain greater equity and social justice, greater democracy notwithstanding, it is only by tussling with incongruent perspectives that we can influence attitudes and hope to fashion some kind of equity and fairness for all. To view Video-Clip 2.3, please go to:

https://youtu.be/seUUqEIDuLU

It is through the use of critical literacy that Dr. McKinney attempts to deconstruct the binaries of Black and White, the oppressed and the oppressor. The power in this approach is that, by de-materializing these binaries, we can begin to view each other as real people rather than a sum of attributes and traits that cause them to be regarded as objects, rather than as people. Thus, these people can come together and learn together and, given a modicum of trust, can actually work towards authentic, valuing relationships.

CANADA

Of the three areas that were identified for exploration, Canada remains the only country that, among other goods and services, imports a great deal of its culture from the United States. This chapter features two video-clips, one from Dr. John Willinsky, who is currently a faculty member at Stanford University. Dr. Willinsky was born in Canada and was on faculty at the University of British Columbia until

2007. As a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Dr. Willinsky has had enormous influence on how critical literacy is conceived in this country.

Dr. John Willinsky

Dr. Willinsky defines critical literacy as asking questions that go beyond the author's purpose and identifying how that text interacts with other areas of endeavour. He asks how the text influences the individual, how it interacts with other texts and what impact this text has on the larger society. These impacts often can be seen to resonate or discord with political ideas, social interests, knowledge, and what is valued as knowledge. Professor Willinsky offers a caveat that the critical interrogation of texts should not serve to destroy the pleasure of the text, and to acknowledge the efforts and intents of the author. Of interest is the question he asks around what a counter-text to that being examined would look like and what may be omitted from the text under discussion. Please view Video-Clip 2.4 at:

https://youtu.be/0GYGAOsrsr4

At some point, notes Professor Willinsky, the critical reader must step back from the text under discussion and ask about how the text serves as a political object and how it serves or chooses to not serve social interests. He goes on to note that any program of critical literacy would necessitate providing students with some scaffolding in order for them to gain experience with simpler texts rather than moving forward too quickly into some of the more pendulous tomes. In this way, students can gain experience in the ways in which texts operate, socially and politically. Among examples of texts, Dr. Willinsky cites examples of political cartoons, satire and parody, music that is rife with social commentary such as hip-hop and rap, blogs and social media websites, as well as the new multi-modal literacies that can allow students to identify the text, discover the intent, and use it to practice critical literacy skills by raising questions about the nature of the text, how it operates, who is excluded, what is missing from the text and the standpoint of that text.

It is at this point that Dr. Willinsky takes us into the social studies or English language arts program in order to show us what this would look like in practice. He suggests that teachers should also select alternate texts that complement or are incongruent with the text at hand in order to more clearly understand what perspectives are being presented or what is being left out in the companion texts, or to provide a new perspective altogether. As such, it must be noted that critical

literacy is more of an attitude towards texts than a method that can be practiced in the same way each time a new text is chosen. By proceeding in this way, students gain an opportunity to understand what it is that is being promoted, and can begin to become critical thinkers in view of not only the canon of authorized texts, but of the responses to that canon as well.

Dr. Willinsky credits Allan Luke and others with recognizing the occupational or vocational aspect of how literacies work within the political economy of media control and the dominant messages. It is also recognized that critical literacy, having emerged, is also changing and evolving in response to new technological, political and social developments around the world.

Another scholar in the field of critical literacy is Valerie Kinloch of Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. For Dr. Kinloch, critical literacy raises issues of power and the dynamics associated with such power.

Dr. Valerie Kinloch

Dr. Kinloch holds that communication is an important facet of critical literacy. As noted previously, knowledge generation and acquisition is, for the most part, a social activity, particularly as it is engaged with in the public schools. Professor Kinloch says, in agreement with Paulo Freire, that we must converse about the ways in which people read, write and engage in thinking about the word and the world, as well as how people interact with one another and the types of questions we ask of each other. To view Video-Clip 2.5, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/owGQx57uA3A

In essence, for Professor Kinloch, critical literacy is really concerned with the spaces that people occupy in relation to who they are and with regard to the spaces that others occupy. In short, the way that people think about the world in which they live, how they read this world and how they think about texts is a key to understanding the power of critical literacy. Texts, of course, can refer to any system of meaning making (White, 2008), including print texts, oral texts and what Dr. Kinloch refers to as the "text of our entire lives" that we are so enmeshed in that we cease to regard as a text.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have attempted to demystify what it is that we mean by the term "critical literacy" and why this may be a positive reinforcement to issues of social injustice and inequity that have begun to plague modern democracies. Perhaps critical literacy may be a useful instrument to hone in the interests of developing not only a more democratic form of governance but also one that will allow a certain understanding of ourselves, one another and of the world around us.

It is to these ends that we now turn. In the chapters that ensue, we use a construct that we have developed that we hope will help us delve into the complexities of critical literacy in a variety of global geographies. The "Five Contexts" refer to the following (auto)biographical, historical, political, postmodern and philosophical dimensions of understanding what critical literacy is, how it operates in different countries and what the sociological implications are for a democracy of the future that will truly represent the needs of the people who participate in democratic pursuits and are represented by the democracy within which they live and interact.

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CHAPTER 3

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

I swear to the Lord
I still can't see
Why Democracy means
Everybody but me.

—Langston Hughes (1943).

INTRODUCTION

Thus far, we have discussed some of the problems associated with democracy. At issue tends to be the recognition that societies can never be democratic enough (Cooper & White, 2012; Henry Giroux, Personal communication). We have suggested that schools can prepare students for the rigours of promoting, extending and expanding democracy and democratic principles through an exploration of critical literacy. This is a complex and multi-dimensional concept and, in order to render it comprehensible, we have decided to employ a construct or framework (Cooper & White, 2012), which we call the "Five Contexts." These five contexts are represented by the autobiographical context, presented here, and by the historical, political, postmodern and philosophical contexts. As we proceed, we will identify the particular context within which we are operating and provide an explanation of each context as we engage with it.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

As Clifford Geertz has noted in numerous places, the researcher is of prime importance to the research (Cooper & White, 2012; Clifford Geertz, 1977). This particular context is typically the first context to be considered because knowing *who* the researcher is becomes enormously important. It is also of more than passing importance to know who it is who is being researched. During the course of this chapter, you, the reader, will have an opportunity to meet the authors of this book as well as the many people who have contributed their time and knowledge through videotaped interviews to the development of this work.

The autobiographical context is a valuable tool for researchers of any stripe, as this context can be utilized to question one's assumptions about research, its process and products. This context makes use of Dr. William F. Pinar's (1994) method of *Currere,* which develops guidelines for research using his Regressive, Progressive,

Analytical, and Synthetical approach to autobiography. Hopefully, this context will assist the individual in situating him- or herself relative to the critical literacy inquiry being conducted. After all, to understand one's own motivations and to question one's own assumptions can allow the individual to become more objective when engaging in research endeavours.

"Currere" is derived from the Latin cognate, "Curriculum," and, as such, implies that the reader, educator or learner, or even the researcher him- or herself, can undertake an autobiographical assessment of themselves. This assessment can assist the individual in shaping the understanding of one's own position with respect to society, democratic or otherwise. Professor Pinar notes that this is a "complicated conversation with oneself (as a "private" intellectual), an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engaged pedagogical action – as a private-and-public intellectual – with others in the social reconstruction of the public sphere" (Pinar, 2004).

In order to reflect upon one's life experiences to date, Dr. Pinar proposes a four-step framework, which includes retelling the story of one's educational experiences (the regressive phase); imagining future possibilities for self-understanding and educational practice (the progressive phase); analysis of the relationships between past, present and future life history and practice (the analytical phase); and new ways of thinking about education (the synthetical phase). While Dr. Pinar proposes this framework specifically for reflecting on curriculum theory and public education, we have found it very useful for developing a more nuanced view of ourselves and those who have agreed to join us in this research endeavour.

The regressive step encourages practitioners to remember past educational experiences that have assisted them in developing their personal beliefs, values and attitudes. By following this process, the explorer can then begin to not only understand how past events have affected them personally but also how these same events have influenced those around them. The progressive step provides opportunities to think about the future and to envision it in terms of future goals. The analytical step returns the explorer to the present and creates a subjective space that, while it is free from the present moment, it is still of the present. Finally, the synthetical step analyzes the present in light of the knowledge and understanding gained from the previous three steps. We identify the specific steps here in the event that readers may wish to explore the "Method of Currere" at their leisure.

Prior to proceeding with the current discussion on autobiography, let us look at two more terms: literacy and critical literacy. "Literacy" is generally defined as the ability to read and write in one's dominant language. It may also refer to one's ability to conduct oneself adroitly in a particular discipline, subject or topic. For example, computer literacy has been much discussed and is a topic of some concern within our educational system and within the society in general. "Critical literacy" takes the concept of literacy several steps further. Critical literacy encourages readers and

consumers of texts to actively analyze those texts, wherever they may be found, and to adopt a critical and questioning approach towards the text(s) with which they engage.

Needless to say, different contexts apply to different texts and each text may originate from different countries at different times. The critically literate reader is able to acknowledge these peculiarities and particularities of each text and can interact with each text for his or her own personal enlightenment, in order to compare one text with others and so glean a more thoroughly developed perspective on any particular topic, or view that text as a specific artifact that reveals something about the world as it is inhabited, the power differentials at play and the recognition of equity and equality, or the lack thereof.

Each of the terms defined above will be addressed as we move through this volume. Thus, it is of paramount import that we all agree on the meaning of these words or, at least, accept the definition provided in order to advance the discussion of democracy and its connections to critical literacy.

SITUATING OURSELVES

What brought us to this creation? As many readers may already know, creating a book, or any work of art, requires that one begin from virtually nothing. Now, having said that, it is not entirely true. Of course, there are points of references that extend from any volume to its underpinnings in the larger social context. All works, whether they be fiction or otherwise, have, as their starting point, some connection to the author and, by the axiom of extension, to that individual's lived experiences and the sense that is made of those experiences, as well as their relative importance in the individual's life. Needless to say, readers also interpret and take unto themselves experiences, vicarious or otherwise, that they encounter through the pages of the books they read.

What follows are two narratives by the authors of this volume. Hopefully, they will help to answer two questions. The first question is, "Who are we?" and the second question is, "What gives us the imperative to write this book?" Robert's story is followed by Karyn's narrative.

Robert White and Karyn Cooper

CHAPTER 3

ROBERT'S STORY

I was born in the years following World War II. Although I was not present during the war, it nevertheless had a huge impact on me. For one thing, both of my parents were involved in the war effort. My mother was with the Women's Auxiliary Corps (W.A.C.) stationed in Britain throughout the war years. Born and raised in Lincolnshire, she was no stranger to world wars. Her father was wounded in the First World War and was "shell-shocked" as a result of this tour of duty. Today, we know "shell-shock" as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although I know very little about my mother's circumstances, I do know that she was severely affected by her father's involvement during the war years, and very likely by her own. I believe that my mother also struggled with PSTD.

My father's involvement in World War II was much more dramatic. Having been born and raised on a farm in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada, my father, for reasons unclear at the time, decided to join the "Great Adventure" by enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). It was 1939.

Generations of subsistence farming makes people either very strong and/or allows for natural selection of the fittest. At 19 years of age, my father was of slight build but very hardy, thanks in large part to years of heavy farm work, done without the aid of many of the modern implements that we now take for granted. Like other youngsters who enlisted voluntarily in the war effort, my father was whisked through basic training and sent overseas as an observer, and later as an RCAF navigator, in the Royal Air Force's (RAF) Bomber Command (Hibbert, 1985). He was a Flight Lieutenant and his plane was a Whitley bomber, which flew at a disconcerting angle – nose slightly down. Because of their ungainly appearance, and perhaps due to other reasons, these planes were affectionately referred to as "flying coffins."

At a time when life expectancy was estimated at approximately six weeks, young Earle White managed to last three years, up to 1942. It was at that point that he was shot down over Germany carrying a full payload of bombs. What followed next is largely speculation. Young Earle was wearing his parachute and, because the explosion was so catastrophic, he believed that, as he was blown out through the Perspex nose of the aircraft, his ripcord caught on something and his parachute opened, saving his life. Badly injured, he noted that basic training was so thorough that he buried his parachute and began walking away from the burning wreck. He had walked about 10 kilometers (with a fractured jaw, broken ribs and having had his eardrums blown out from the explosion) going the wrong way – ever deeper into enemy territory – when he was brought down by a bullet in the knee. He became a resident of "Hotel Hitler."

For the next three years, he was sent to a number of different camps and ended up in Stalag Luft III, an officers' prison camp in Poland that later became famous for "The Great Escape" (Brickhill, 1951) in 1944. Ironically, this prison camp has recently been opened to the public as a tourist attraction. My father was not party to the Great Escape due to the injuries sustained in surviving the explosion of his plane.

However, he was included in the grisly aftermath of this brave bid for freedom by his fellow prisoners.

Apparently, Adolf Hitler was so angered by this attempted escape that he ordered all the officers – the entire camp – shot. His adjutant, Heinrich Himmler, knew that the war was ending and that this edict would not go over very well with the allies and so ordered the entire camp out on a march of attrition. These men, in various stages of malnutrition and starvation, left the relative comfort of their prisoner of war shelters and were marched out into the teeth of the coldest January in over twenty years. This "Death March" was intended to kill by attrition, as the near-starving men would not be strong enough to travel the full 750-kilometre distance to a new encampment. Added to this, German deserters, hiding in the woods, would happily kill you and take whatever rags you were wearing for their own. Clearly, no one was feeling victorious.

Even though this young farm boy was, by now, weighing in at just over a hundred pounds, he managed to survive this challenge. When the war ended, as an RCAF officer, my father was asked to witness the concentration camps and the gas chambers where so many people had met their deaths. At the end of the war, having experienced things that no one should bear witness to, he was 25 years old. He returned to England, married my mother and brought her out to his family's farm in Quebec.

While war is sometimes necessary, it is always damaging, and it seems always to be the children who tend to suffer the most. Growing up in my parents' home was not easy, since both of my parents had PTSD. What made a lasting impression on me was the inexcusable damage done by our leaders not understanding, hearing and listening to one another. However, another chapter of my life was about to open. My father had wanted to become a surgeon, but no longer having any hearing precluded this option. He became a dentist instead. After graduating in 1950, having spent his back pay on education, he took the family and struck out for Saskatchewan, one of Canada's prairie provinces, and the promise of a job in the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) under the premiership of Tommy Douglas, the great Canadian Socialist-Democrat.

Growing up in Tommy Douglas's Saskatchewan was an interesting lesson in life. Health care was easily available and was relatively inexpensive. Better than that, everyone had access to health care under the Tommy Douglas regime. Eventually Douglas left the CCF to become the head of the newly formed New Democratic Party, but his legacy continues to be remembered in movies such as *Prairie Giant* (2006) and the CBC television program that named him "The Greatest Canadian."

As I grew up and matured, I was surprised to find that one of my most formative life lessons was largely an illusion. I had grown up believing that Tommy Douglas's influence had been felt everywhere and, to be sure, he was a very influential speaker and politician. However, what I did not understand was that Canada was not a Socialist country, as I had thought. The great battle for equality for all, particularly in all things medical, never really reached past the borders of the province of

Saskatchewan. Years later, when I discovered this, I was surprised, embarrassed to be found so naïve and a little angry that this marvelous humanitarian's work was slowly being eroded. This erosion continues unabated to this very day.

It is these two major influences, my father's war career and the influence of Tommy Douglas, the Prairie Giant, which have encouraged me to continue to seek justice and democracy for all. There have been many other influences along the way, as well, but these two experiences in particular have allowed me to change in ways that make me want to see marginalized people and groups of people enfolded in the embrace of greater social justice and, necessarily, greater democratic power and its attendant responsibilities and freedoms.

KARYN'S STORY

Autobiographical Fragment

It is so very difficult to decide which fragments of my autobiography to include in this book, not because my life is at all interesting but because I could write it in so many ways depending on the angle taken. In the end, I choose to echo some of the themes in Robert's autobiography. While Robert and I are different in so many ways, perhaps our story fragments may, together, offer some insights into the larger cultural script.

It is my hope that the historical, political, postmodern and philosophical story fragments that I choose to share within the next pages will be in some way instructive in not only coming to see my position as a contributor to this text but also helpful in shedding light on larger cultural shadows and the need for critical literacy.

Mine is a small story. I grew up in small town in northern Alberta, Canada. There were many cliques in the small town where I grew up. English, French, Métis and Cree formed the lines of identity. Perhaps because I did not fit within these strict bounds of identity, I began to realize at a relatively early age that the world is a place with many contradictions, but most individuals just want to fit in. Moreover, because my early life was not without challenge, I also came to understand at a very young age that "if knowledge be power, it is also pain" (Emerson, 1983, p. 39).

Historical Fragment

My father, but a boy, like so many so many individuals in Canadian history around the time of the First World War, was an immigrant to this country. Although there are family stories of orchards and riches left behind, I expect my Father's family were peasant farmers and, like most families coming to this new land, they simply wanted a better life, one without war. My father used to tell me that the town where he was born did not now exist; in fact, the lines of his country were redrawn so many times through so many wars that I had the blood of both victor and Slav(e) running through my veins.

I learned, at my father's funeral, that he had been a sniper in the Second World War. This new information shed light on so much of my father's behaviour (he probably suffered from PTSD) and why he was so McLuhan-like in his analysis of the media, or what he termed "propaganda." In any case, no doubt his ability to speak languages other than English proved useful in the war effort. He had three brothers, two of whom were useful to the war effort, as well. Curiously enough, after the war, two of the three brothers continued their postwar lives with different English surnames. My Father was one of them. It seemed Canada was a place to try to "fit in" at that point in Canadian history.

My mother was British and so this may have made life easier for my father. But history speaks and their differences also made it harder – his religion was Greek Orthodox and she was Church of England on her father's side and Irish Catholic on her mother's side. Because of this, my mother had access to the dominant culture and this situated us well enough. Most likely, it was seeing life through my father's wide-open eyes and living in the world of opposites within that historic moment that laid the groundwork for my later interest in critical inquiry.

Political Fragment

The autobiographical and historical contexts seem to bleed so very easily into the political, but perhaps it was not until I studied for my Master's degree in education that I began to understand why I often felt so uncomfortable with my identity as a teacher. In fact, this identity was often at direct odds with values and views articulated in my home.

Grumet (1988) and Titley and Miller (1982) helped me, at that time, to discover that teacher identity is also embedded within the larger historical and cultural story of education. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Canadian schools were viewed as "an important instrument of social cohesion—so necessary in an era of rapid change. It would bind the diverse social elements together with one set of values and political beliefs" (Titley & Miller, 1982, p. 58).

When Canada became a nation in its own right in 1867, the schools became a crucial means for cementing a cohesive Canadian identity. My father and his family of origin, like so many other immigrants during this crucial time, were dutiful to this plan; some changed their names, many did not pass the languages of their homeland on to their children and, of course, many taught their children to blend in for fear of discrimination. Titley and Miller (1982) tell us:

> The new nation of Canada, a shaky amalgam of disparate entities unsure of its identity and future, looked to public education to forge a sense of unity and political loyalty. This was of particular concern in Ontario where the tactic employed was a 'Canadianization' of the curriculum. Yet the new English-Canadian nationalism did not undermine one of the original purposes of the school—the inculcation of the Victorian puritan ethic. Canadian texts were

> equally as redolent of a vigilant moralizing as those they replaced. Social stability remained a central aim of education and the concept of Canadian nationality was wedded to this. (p. 58)

Teachers were selected and trained to conform to this vision. This history and this political act has had a profound effect on the identities of all teachers: "So complete is the system, so carefully is every contingency provided for, that the observer… is apt to feel that its completeness is perhaps its greatest defect" (Wilson, 1982, p. 88). It was indeed a humbling experience, in my Master's degree, to reflect on the historical and political forces that shaped my identity. Through coming to know these forces, I began to recognize that my beliefs, values and attitudes were not my own by choice but were given, or enculturated, by the historical and cultural context into which I was born. Yet, in reflecting on these contexts, I had the opportunity to view myself differently in relation to society. And, being reflected upon, the society changes in response to the individual.

Postmodern Fragment

We live in different times or, as Zygmunt Bauman says, "Things are not like they used to be" (Cooper & White, 2012). If I return to that small town where I grew up, for example, I witness this: I am at a Christmas celebration and "Silent Night" is being sung in English and then French and then Cree. In this newfound script there is an attempt to atone, to heed the call for a multicultural society, and to be inclusive. Currently, Canada's multiculturalism policies espouse pluralism and diversity, which are now the essence of Canada's national identity. Yet, when this pluralism is focused at the level of the individual within the society, then one might ask what scripts are currently being passed along to children through the policies operating in schools today. In order to attempt to answer this question, Robert and I have created a multi-vocal videotext that goes beyond the boundaries of our own country. Some would call this a postmodern text with its nod to technology and a focus on not one single story or truth but multiple stories open to interpretation.

Philosophical Fragment

In this text, we have chosen to use the five contexts as a conceptual framework for opening up *and* deepening the conversation. As previously stated, this framework rests within the tradition of critical pedagogy, with its long and colourful history. While we both feel this framework is fitting for this text, as well as for many others that we have written together thus far, my personal philosophy began with my father who called for continuous self-scrutiny and the need to let go of tight arguments in order to attempt to see other perspectives.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

Now that we have met the authors of this volume, let us continue on and meet the people who have contributed so much to the development of this book. It would likely be inhumane to you, the reader, to trundle out every individual and squeeze, from him or her, their life stories and how they came to be so involved in critical literacy pursuits. As a result, we have taken a sampling of individuals and have attempted to show that, in every country we visited, there are individuals and groups of individuals who are tirelessly striving for change. As these pages unfold, you, the reader, will have an opportunity to engage with the narratives of each of the people who we interviewed in attempting to complete this project. We begin in Australia and move to South Africa and North America before ending up in Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

ALLAN LUKE

We begin with Allan Luke, who was born, raised and educated in the United States before moving to Canada to teach and to take a post graduate degree prior to emigrating to Australia. Currently, Professor Luke teaches at the Queensland University of Technology, located in Brisbane, Australia. In the following video-clip Allan Luke describes growing up as a "little Chinese kid" in a culture that was predominantly Eurocentric. This led to a multitude of experiences that Dr. Luke claims to be racist, even though many of these experiences were intended as educative.

Dr. Allan Luke

Lack of awareness on the part of teachers and other members of society left young Allan with a deep sense of being misunderstood. Stereotyping of his family members and, indeed, of young Allan himself, left him feeling angry about the fact that the deeper differences between him and other students went unacknowledged. This is a fine example of educators feigning "colour-blindness," in that they pretend that they do not see the diversity of races within their classroom. This "willful blindness" is often the result of teachers being uncertain as to how to proceed and, therefore, they take the path of least resistance – colour, race, creed, sexual orientation,

marginalization all cease to exist, simply because it is easier to ignore this than to challenge or adapt to it. Recognizing colour-blindness is the first step towards developing a more culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy. It has been said that some of the most important questions are the hardest ones to ask – or is it the other way around? At any rate, burying our heads in the sand by pretending that all children are equal is a mistake. We know they are not.

Thomas Jefferson first used the phrase, "All men are created equal" in the *Declaration of Independence.* Since then, it has been used *ad nauseum* by many individuals intent on denying the difference between people's circumstances. As such, this represents a dangerous descent into the notion of meritocracy – the view that some people have more than others, not by virtue of access, but by the fact that they work harder than those who have less or that by dint of educational or social capital, or other forms of capital, they deserve better than others. To view Video-Clip 3.1 of Allan Luke, please see:

https://youtu.be/ccaMk9cg_nc

Allan Luke points to the Vietnam War as a water shed in his young life. He notes that, as a member of the school journalism club, he was expelled from high school for writing protests about the war. Another important life experience for Dr. Luke was the so-called Hippie Revolution of the 1960s, one that Robert Pirsig (1991) refers to as a failed intellectual revolution. It is these experiences to which Allan Luke points when he discusses how he became critically literate. Both the Vietnam War and the counterculture of the '60s was where, according to Allan Luke, his critical literacy grew its roots, as well as the fact that he was a member of a cultural and ethnic minority.

Because of these experiences, he claims that critical literacy is a disposition; that it is a byproduct of a particular historical, generational and biographical journey, which, as such, is consequently a cultural-ideological journey. And herein lies his warning. Critical literacy, as a byproduct of individual cultural-ideological journeys "will need to be sufficiently malleable for the next generation and the next cultural cohort to take it and shape it in its interests."

BARBARA COMBER

Dr. Barbara Comber describes her early years as a youngster growing up in her native Australia. For her, becoming critically literate was, in many ways, almost unavoidable. Her parents were both very articulate and, by her own admission, were very critical of systems responsible for enforcing hierarchies and points of privilege.

However, it was not until she had become an educator in post-secondary education that she encountered a vocabulary for this. Thanks to the work of Paulo Freire, Dr. Comber discovered strong and immediate connections with Freire's (1970, 2000) work and began her own exploration about how language and power are

interconnected and about who people could be. To view Video-Clip 3.2 of Barbara Comber, please go to:

http://youtu.be/lMtZZcYDvIQ

Currently, Dr. Comber teaches in the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology, located, in Brisbane, Australia. Her research interests lie in the field of maths and science education, particularly in light of critical multiliteracies and communicative practices. She also explores assessment and evaluation, as well as issues relating to Indigenous education.

PETER FREEBODY

Dr. Peter Freebody is a faculty member at the University of Sydney, in Sydney, Australia. As a youth, Peter Freebody admits to a happy childhood and notes that he found his way into studies in critical literacy through early feminist writings. He notes that he was captivated by the way in which people could utilize texts and writing aimed at a particular audience in order to make significant points about "key elements of our social organization and experience" that assisted his understanding of how the technology of writing, the conditions of production and dissemination of key texts could evince profound changes on how people experienced and interpreted their lives. To view Video-Clip 3.3 of Peter Freebody, please go to:

http://youtu.be/VdGc7igzw-E

Through his reading, Dr. Freebody came to question and examine how society maintains patriarchies. Further to this, he also became aware of these connections within Neo-Marxist thought.

HILARY JANKS

Dr. Hilary Janks teaches and researches at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. During the time that Hilary Janks was in post-secondary school, South Africa was in the grip of a devastating civil war. It was the 1960s, a seminal time for many of the people who have contributed to this volume. However, Dr. Janks' experience was unlike other experiences so far documented on these pages.

Dr. Hilary Janks

At their university, both Hilary Janks and her husband were involved in student government. As idealistic young citizens, Hilary and her husband took part in the student protests that were endemic at this time. Often, as the police became involved, these protests turned ugly and then violent. While such determination is laudable, in her interview Dr. Janks said that she took this violence in stride and, while she and her husband were fairly radical students, such protests were so commonplace that consequences went unconsidered, as it was all part of student life at the time. Such bravery, she maintains, was all part of the ethos of the times, even with the added threat of student spies. To view Video-Clip 3.4 of Hilary Janks, please see:

https://youtu.be/kvr30HtzPWw

As years rolled by, new uprisings came and went. By 1985, Professor Janks decided that she really needed to find out what was going on, particularly since news sources were heavily censored. In fact, she notes that she felt much less secure in not knowing what was going on. Black colleagues would recount how they had to lock their children in their homes to prevent them from being injured out on the street by stray bullets.

To add to the already palpable risk, Dr. Janks had access to books that were banned, such as Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and *Cultural Freedom for Action* (1970). In fact, this risk to personal safety was so apparent that the Janks family decided that her husband, as the main breadwinner, would not become involved so that their children would not suffer risk or the loss of both parents should the unspeakable occur. Dr. Janks continued to run workshops for teachers' organizations, which were also highly politicized in those days.

CAROLYN MCKINNEY

In case there is ever any doubt about the impact that Paulo Freire has had on the world, Dr. Carolyn McKinney notes that she first came to critical literacy through the works of Paulo Freire, notably *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000). Dr. McKinney teaches at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Even though Dr. McKinney began her undergraduate work somewhat later than most of the people interviewed for this project, even as late as the 1990s there were organizations operating to bring about the end of apartheid.

At this point, please note that South African politics during this troubled and troubling time were anything but transparent. We will endeavour to shed some light on some of the main points relating to this time, but chose not to trouble the reader with line and verse relating to these matters, as they will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. To view Video-Clip 3.5 of Carolyn McKinney, please go to:

https://youtu.be/TsMt0zyhS8E

At that time, Dr. McKinney was aligned with the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), a group of academics, intellectuals and political activists

intent on addressing the crisis of education for the majority of South Africans. It probably goes without saying that apartheid has never really come to an end, and that the chosen democratic form of government is still nascent, to be overly kind, and education is still problematic for many South Africans, particularly for the Black citizenry.

So, during that time in the late 1990s, Professor McKinney notes that apartheid was still very much in evidence and the NECC was at work on developing "policy proposals for what education would look like in the new democratic South Africa." As she worked, Dr. McKinney became more and more interested in students' difficulties in dealing with the apartheid past as represented in South African literature.

As she notes, it is not just the students who must come to grips with who they are, critical literacy makes huge demands on the teacher as well, because, as stated by Dr. McKinney, critical literacy work from the teacher's perspective makes the assumption that the teacher already has acquired the critical consciousness required for this task, and also assumes that one has already deconstructed the text in all the many ways possible. Eventually, Professor McKinney came to engage with the problem of resistance. This has led her into her current identity work that critical literacy asks of us all. In South Africa, much identity work is about change and the inevitable resistance born of that change.

JOHN WILLINSKY

In this video-clip, John Willinsky notes that the 1960s and early 1970s had a huge impact on his learning and understanding of the world around him. As has been previously noted, this was the era of the Hippie Revolution and the war in Vietnam.

As a young man, living in Toronto, Canada, Professor Willinsky was involved in protests against the war. However, upon becoming a public school teacher, much of his activism was put aside in performing his responsibilities as a teacher. Dr. Willinsky credits Edgar Freidenberg, author of *Coming of Age in America* (1965), who had also been a political activist, with connecting the war in Vietnam to the oppressive nature of schooling in the daily lives of the children within the public school system in North America. It was this seminal event that launched, in John Willinsky, the desire to become more fully acquainted with the tenets of critical literacy. To view Video-Clip 3.6 of John Willinsky, please see:

https://youtu.be/dMkkd29P5Gk

VALERIE KINLOCH

Dr. Valerie Kinloch teaches in the College of Education and Human Ecology at Ohio State University, located in Columbus, Ohio. A female Black educator, Dr. Kinloch traces her beginnings to the segregated south of the Unites States. Because of this geographic fact of her life, Dr. Kinloch notes that she and her family have always had

to contend with issues of prejudice and discrimination. She has first hand experience with feelings of both inclusion and exclusion, not only in terms of skin colour, but also in terms of humble beginnings – issues of class, coupled with working class realities, as compared with more affluent neighbours and neighbourhoods, as well as from the very real perspective of poverty. From this, Professor Kinloch understands that definitions are "imposed" on people's realities. She also notes that such definitions may not match the people's experience of these things. In short, the objective reality as defined by the general populace, particularly around issues such as poverty, may not match the experience of many of the so-called impoverished individuals.

This comes back to the notion of what it is that constitutes success, what success is estimated to be, in terms of quantity, and who gets to decide whether a person is successful or not. If success is measured in terms of affluence, this may not be the same measure that is used by everyone within the society. There are many alternative measures of success that often can be calculated in less concrete ways.

Dr. Kinloch relates this point to her own family and notes that, when she thinks of her family of origin and their various struggles, she comments on the richness of her family life. Both of her parents provided her with stories about life, work, ethics and responsibilities. It was from this that Dr. Kinloch came to think about issues of how people are represented, not only in these stories but in real life as well. From here it is a small wonderment as to how people understand who they are in relation to other people. This is what Hilary Janks and Carolyn McKinney refer to as "identity work" and has been explored by such philosophers as Jean Paul Sartre, particularly in his seminal work, *Being and Nothingness* (1993).

Whose voices are heard and whose voices are silent or silenced is an important consideration in the understanding of identity, as well as the spheres of influence that each individual is able to command and which spheres of influence remain closed to him or her. Dr. Kinloch notes that the concept of literacy, in particular critical literacy, has everything to do with this manufacturing of identity. She relates literacy to a sense of personal space and a sense of belonging. As such, the act of becoming literate, in a critical way, relates to issues of access, spheres of influence and a sense of safety. Each of these components is necessary to the development of a critically literate individual, but each on its own is not enough. All three components are required in sufficient quantity to be able to guarantee a transformation from an individual who reads and believes to an individual who reads and questions. To view Video-Clip 3.7 of Valerie Kinloch, please see:

https://youtu.be/Znf8cbA54uM

Significantly, Dr. Kinloch also notes that there are spheres of influence beyond the family. There are systems within systems that, beyond the family, are represented by the neighbourhood, the community and the larger society. Regarding her own spheres of influence, Professor Kinloch identifies with what she refers to as a primarily African-American neighbourhood. And beyond that, she speaks of attending an all-Black elementary school, an all-Black middle school, and a predominantly

all-Black high school, before eventually going to an historic Black college and prior to attending graduate school in Detroit.

As much as the rest of us may think about White privilege, Professor Kinloch states that, for her, it was really a non-issue until she was in graduate school. Here, she found a multitude of stories that appeared to contradict the stories that she had heard in her youth, sitting on the porch with her father or listening to her mother at the living room table. In thinking about how these stories conflict, she now listens to the stories of the people with whom she interacts and recognizes that she has a responsibility in preserving and understanding these stories in order that they do not become lost in the sands of time or the winds of change. As such, Dr. Kinloch attempts to view these stories through a critical lens, in order to better understand issues such as access, identity and privilege in order to take action that will improve opportunities for those who are marginalized or at risk of marginalization. She says that it is these stories that ground her and offer guidance in all that she is able to accomplish.

And, in order for her to accomplish her goals, Dr. Kinloch reminds us that one must be open to thinking about difference, diversity and about the ways we hear, acknowledge and recognize others. At this point, she offers the caveat that we must recognize rather than affirm one another's stories. To affirm a story is, ultimately, a patronizing act and, as such, does not represent a stance of equitable treatment. Although subtle, this distinction is extremely important. To merely affirm is to acknowledge veracity as in the idea that the other is telling the truth, even though we may still not agree with it or accept it. In a way, it is like the difference between tolerance and acceptance. To merely tolerate someone is to put up with the person, whereas to accept him or her is to care for and about the individual. In much the same way, to affirm an individual's story is to say, "Uh-huh," or, even worse, "I know exactly how you feel." Recognizing and accepting are, in fact, much more positive ways to progress, and to build trust, particularly among diverse peoples. It is by recognizing each other that Valerie Kinloch suggests that we can get closer to recognizing the value of the stories that each of us has. She adds that the stories that she hears represent a brilliance undefined by the jargon we use in educational circles to describe people's capacities or abilities. It was her father who taught her to bring stories forth into educational places and spaces that value him but also push her to further her own efforts to promote social justice through her work.

EFSTRATIA KARAGRIGORIOU

Dr. Karagrigoriou was born and raised in Athens, Greece. She notes that democracy was a virtue that was evident not only through her family but also within the Hellenic culture as well. Thus, to Dr. Karagrigoriou, democracy is like the water that the fish swim in. It is so engrained in the culture that it is all but invisible even though its presence is felt everywhere.

Dr. Efstratia Karagrigoriou

Efstratia Karagrigoriou knew from a very early age that her destiny was to become an educator. To this end, she studied education at the University of Crete, received her Master's degree and was hired to teach in the public school system in Athens. However, as her native Hellas (Greece) was becoming increasingly multicultural, she wanted to know more about multiculturalism, its ties to social justice and, ultimately, to democratic thought.

Dr. Karagrigoriou sought out a country where she felt that multiculturalism and practices of equity and social justice were being practiced. Happily, she chose Toronto, Canada, as a model where she felt that multiculturalism was the basis of not only the public school system but of the culture itself. Her recent doctoral work allowed a comparison of the Hellenic and Canadian perspectives as they pertained to education, specifically multiculturalism and the pursuit of democratic values in citizenship education. It was these experiences that became her "treasure" and helped to influence her teaching practice. To view Video-Clip 3.8 of Efstratia Karagrigoriou, please go to:

https://youtu.be/4BJSK3wkO_w

In closing, Dr. Karagrigoriou notes that the theory of what she has learned during her Canadian sojourn has helped her to become better in her work as a Kindergarten teacher in her native Greece.

SUMMARY

This chapter was devoted to the autobiographical context, the first of five contexts developed by Cooper and White (2012). In this chapter, we have introduced ourselves – the authors of this book – and have heard autobiographical perspectives from a number of the interview participants whose contributions to this volume on critical literacy are invaluable.

If democracy is a social act, performed with, for and by people who have an interest in equity and social justice, who we are definitely matters. What we bring to the table of democratic thought depends on our own lived experiences and the effects that these experiences have had in shaping us and in shaping our beliefs, values and attitudes. Thus the autobiographical context of this topic of democracy

is of vital importance, as our democratic cultures not only help to shape us but are also shaped by us.

It is interesting to note that, throughout this chapter, many of the critical points noted by our interviewees that helped to change their direction and to influence their lives toward the critical were brought about by conflict. The Second World War, the Vietnam War and apartheid were, and continue to be, important historical moments that contribute to the development of agendas for change. At one time, many of these voices were calling from the margins, but as these conflicts subsided, the people who we have interviewed for this book have ensured that their voices were not only heard, but also listened to and acted upon.

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CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORICAL

> Two cheers for democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. Two cheers are quite enough.
>
> —E. M. Forster (1951)

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests that one must delve deeply into history in order to reach the unique core of existential meaning that emerges, ultimately, within any type of research. It is important to recognize that one has a place in history, and that one can change that place from being merely an observer and/or a reactionary to being in a position of power where one can insert oneself into the historical moment in order to influence the course of that history. He says:

> Should the starting point for the understanding of history be ideology or politics or religion or economics? Should we try to understand a doctrine from its overt content or from the psychological make-up and the biography of its author? We must seek an understanding from all these angles simultaneously, everything has meaning, and we shall find the same structure of being underlying all relationships. All these views are true provided that they are not isolated, that we delve deeply into history and reach the unique core of existential meaning which emerges in each perspective. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. xviii–xix)

It is in this way that, for the reader, the historical context offers an important perspective on the past, which, in turn, can inform future decisions, considerations and methodologies. As has too often been noted, those who refuse to learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. Although a hoary old adage, by now, its truth can still be acknowledged by all manner of examples, some of which may become evident as these pages unfold.

However, conversely, accurate recording of historical events cannot always be entrusted to the historians. We recognize that the invention of the printing press allowed a breakthrough with writing systems so that the word could be recorded "as set down" for posterity. However, as stated in an old African proverb, *"Until the lion has his own historian, the hunter will always be the hero."* A version of this can be found in George Orwell's *1984*, where history can be and is frequently adjusted to align with current policy. Although Orwell's cynical viewpoint can be

discarded as the unreliable creation of a science fiction writer, our own history is replete with innumerable examples. But, suffice it to say that both the state and religious authorities have tried to craft and control their own versions of history. As Allan Luke notes in one of his interviews for this volume:

> Virgil's *Aeneid* was crafted, was a commissioned piece of history. As readily as Hitler commissioned Speer to create grandiose architecture. Caesar Augustus commissioned Virgil to write a history of the Roman Empire, of the founding of Rome, that would justify his reign. (Allan Luke, Interview)

Consequently, all versions of a particular event are and should be open to scrutiny. The words of the people we have interviewed represent records of their experiences and, while this makes their experiences part of their autobiographical journey, their words in conjunction with others' words, can and should be weighed for veracity and recognized as individual perspective. This is not to say that their words are false or of little value as objective fact; it is to value each perspective for its own views, knowing full well that those views are necessarily subjective in recounting what may be seen as an all too objective "truth." In short, the interpretation of historic events is important as it provides contextual clues as to the emotional underpinnings of such "truths."

As we progress through this chapter, we will depart from the focus on individual participants in this research in order to concentrate more fully on the geographics and the general history of each of our three locations.

AUSTRALIA

Australia, from the Latin "Australis," meaning "southern," comprises the mainland of Australia, which represents the sixth largest country, world-wide, and includes Tasmania and a number of smaller islands. Australia's neighbours include New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Indonesia.

Although known as "Terra Australis Incognita" (The unknown land of the south) by the ancient Romans, it was not until the 1600s that European influence was in evidence. Dutch explorers discovered Australia in 1606 and, by 1770, thanks to Captain James Cook, Britain had claimed the eastern-most part of the continent. As the continent was explored, crown colonies were established. The Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901 and became a Dominion of the British Empire in 1907. It remains a constitutional monarchy, but functions as a federal parliamentary democracy.

Originally populated some 45,000 years ago, possibly by ancestors of the modern Aboriginals, these hunters and gatherers had a complex oral tradition and spiritual beliefs congruent with reverence for the land and its bounty. The first British settlers arrived in New South Wales as part of the newly founded penal colony in the 1800s and displaced the Aboriginals, called "Aborigines." The Aboriginal population,

estimated at about one million souls, steadily declined largely due to infectious disease brought to the shores by the new colonists. This, and the government policy of assimilation, enshrined in the ironically entitled "*Aboriginal Protection Act"* of 1869, added to the decline of the indigenous population. It was not until 1967 that the Federal government gained the right to make laws with respect to the Aboriginals, and it was not until 1992 that traditional ownership of land under "Aboriginal Title" was recognized.

Currently, Australia is home to over 23 million people living in six states and two territories. The population is not only highly urbanized; it is also concentrated along the country's eastern shore. As a developed country, Australia boasts the world's 12th largest economy. Australia ranks highly in terms of per capita income, military expenditure, health and education, not to mention general quality of life, civil rights and economic freedom. It is a member nation of, among others, the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In 1914, Australia joined Britain in World War I, where approximately 15% of the soldiers were killed and more that 35% injured at such arenas as Gallipoli and in the Kokoda Track Campaign of World War II. Since 1951 Australia has been an ally of the United States. Although images of Queen Elizabeth II can still be found on Australian currency, formal ties with Britain were ended with the Australia Act (1986).

As a constitutional monarchy, Australia maintains a federal division of powers, using a parliamentary government with Queen Elizabeth II as the Queen of Australia, distinct from her position as Monarch of the Commonwealth. Perhaps this is the rationale for maintaining the Queen's image on, among other things, Australia's currency. The Queen is represented by the Governor-General (federal) and a variety of state governors. Voting is compulsory for all citizens over the age of 18. Even though Australia's population is on the increase, thanks to immigration from many Pacific Rim countries after the abolition of the "White Australia Policy" in 1973, population density is still less than 3 inhabitants per square kilometer, possibly due to the large portions of desert that stretch across the continent beyond the luxuriant semi-tropical verdure of coastal regions. Almost 30% of Australians were born outside the borders of this country, making it a land of immigrants. The bulk of Australia's population is of European or Asian ancestry, while the indigenous population represents a small minority of only 2.5% of the total population. Interestingly enough, Aboriginal Australians endure much higher than average rates of imprisonment and unemployment, lower levels of education and shorter life expectancies, as compared with other Australians.

Although Australia has no state religion, education is compulsory and is the responsibility of individual states and territories. Australia, to its credit, boasts a literacy rate of 99%, although in Tasmania, this drops to only 50%. The Programme

for International Student Assessment (PISA), a benchmark for many of the OECD member countries, identifies Australia as routinely scoring among the top five developed countries worldwide.

Critical Literacy in Australia

Allan Luke comments on the Australian educational system in terms of the neo-liberal agenda. He notes that, in spite of the neo-liberal movement towards reductionism in terms of both education and governance, Professor Luke is optimistic as he points out that some systems are still functioning. To view Video-Clip 4.1 please go to:

https://youtu.be/VavTC4TRwhE

Thanks to unstinting hard work by Australian educators, Professor Luke cites an entire generation of teachers who are going to remember that critical literacy is about one's attitude rather than there being a particular set of skills, tools and resources at one's disposal. Critical literacy, claims Dr. Luke, is about one's stance. He states that one must always remember that it is important to encourage students to treat the word of the text with skepticism. And, teachers also need to be skeptics when it comes to matters educational.

Australian educators at the public and private school level, as well as at the post-secondary level, have managed to move critical literacy from a critique of ideology and state to the much broader level of a *disposition* of critique towards the state, culture, political economy, and everything around the individual, not excluding environmental issues. As such, this disposition of critique needs to remain open, as it cannot be codified into a specific set of tools. It is by remaining a disposition that critical literacy maintains its freshness and flexibility. As technologies change, so must critical literacy adapt to new texts, to changing literacies, and to new ideologies, as well as to new forms of subjectivity. Critical literacy must also maintain the capacity to remain flexible enough to adapt to new, as of yet unimagined, forms of oppression.

However, in spite of the need for adaptability and flexibility, Allan Luke asks about the tools that we need in order to survive. He notes that these are canonical and should remain so, as these represent the very tools that we're going to need in order to deal with a new set of problems. Present societies and societies of the future will need to be able to understand and to navigate a complexity of texts and images that interacts with those societies in an attempt to position and define them by identifying, commodifying and marketing the wants and desires of such societies, at all times. As political economies and other competing complex interests drive those texts, people within these societies must understand that, whether they are purchasing particular things or engaging with particular texts, they are feeding an economy replete with specific and particular structures of power.

The consolidation of print and digital resources in the hands of six to seven media barons, which economists and others have pointed out, claims Dr. Luke, is

similar to the reconsolidation of the print archive by the Catholic Church into the "scriptoriums" of medieval times. He notes that such consolidation means that the archive of human history can be altered to the extent that there will no longer be recoverable, contestable versions of, for example, significant events in history.

Added to this, Dr. Luke frames questions around control, access, ownership and modes of production of information within an emerging "pay-per-view" universe. He asks if advocacy for open access to such information will be censored or restricted in order to protect particular interests or individuals. Consequently, he considers, between the State and corporations, individuals in societies would be granted only limited and controlled access, resulting in a kind of dystopian information régime that many of the great science-fiction writers such as Aldous Huxley (1932), George Orwell (1949), Phillip K. Dick (1974) and Margaret Atwood (1985) have written about.

In a second video-clip, Allan Luke describes the process by which critical literacy came to be valued in Australian schools. Professor Luke notes that models of critical literacy began being used in the 1960s and '70s to demonstrate that texts can be challenged. To view Video-Clip 4.2, please see:

https://youtu.be/Cmf2cfgRev0

Professor Luke recalls that, when he began to realize that texts were to be argued with, it was something that had been a constant in his own education as a Chinese youngster growing up in a North American culture:

> So we began to show them how texts were positioning them, how texts were trying to sell them things, how texts were trying to convince them of things, right at the sentence level. (Allan Luke, Interview)

By providing students with the tools for lexical and grammatical analysis of texts, Allan Luke (Luke & Elkins, 1998) and other educators, such as Peter Freebody and Barbara Comber, began to show the students how functional grammar created the world in different ways. This was, according to Allan Luke, taking the work of Paulo Freire (1970) to another, higher level. This agenda with respect to critical literacy helped to resolve two issues that had surfaced with the traditional critical literacy model popularized by Paulo Freire; the focus on self was expanded to identifying how the text works on others as well as on the self, and it extended the focus on narrative to how different genres require the mastery of differing lexicons or registers.

The Vietnam Era

Peter Freebody speaks of the impact that the Vietnam War years had on the Australian psyche. In the following video-clip, he speaks about how the disjunction between the current generation and the previous generation, particularly as it had to do with the war in Vietnam, served to help understanding and rethinking of a wider range of

social issues, particularly as they related to equity, conflict, and power, gender and race relations. To view Video-Clip 4.3, please go to:

http://youtu.be/DK9S4mmUg7s

A fundamental rethinking of these issues helped to recruit critical theories and pedagogical practices that had been around, in many cases, for some time. The wheel did not need to be re-invented, merely re-discovered.

According to Peter Freebody, the Vietnam war threw into relief the potentially problematic relationships between Australia and other economically, culturally, and militarily more powerful countries; countries that were aligned with Australia or, as is the case of Asia, that Australia was considered to be right in the middle of. Professor Freebody notes that, for most of its history, Australia refused to recognize itself as being located in Asia. As such, Australia has tended to align its educational policies with those of the Western nations.

In considering the responsibilities of schooling, Professor Freebody suggests that the responsibility for education consists of more than just producing an intellectual elite. Video-Clip 4.4 may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/15rfm-b4WBI

The issue has become, in addition to the development of an intellectual elite capable of producing great scientists or economists, what the average citizen is entitled to by way of their education. For scholars such as Peter Freebody, this issue is focused on the dispositions, skills and resources required to be able to compare, contrast, evaluate, discover and write about such concerns, as well as to be active and agentive in modern societies. Should we fail to inculcate such capacities, Dr. Freebody fears that citizens will believe the most charismatic speaker or whoever is in control of the media.

Speaking directly to literacy education, Dr. Freebody describes past debates surrounding literacy education. Through the 1970s and 1980s, debates raised questions about whether the prime function of literacy education was fluency, or decoding skills, or accuracy, and whether it necessitated the gaining of meaning, or the making of inferences. Also, a third question was whether literacy education comprised suitable knowledge about appropriate types of texts and how these texts formed dynamic, yet recognizable genres of textual practice. As well, the role of literacy education was questioned regarding philosophical, moral, political and ideological features that made a particular text seem sensible in a particular place and time.

While people argued for one or another of these four approaches, Peter Freebody and Allan Luke demonstrated that each approach was a necessary aspect of participating in a fully literate society in a more or less complete way. Each approach, therefore, while sufficient unto itself in that it could be the point of entry into literacy education, was deemed insufficient on its own. All the components taken together

began to look like a comprehensive program, which included the component that we know as critical literacy.

> We came across people from different tribes and from different territories and, in many cases, attempted to form some general alliances that would penetrate what was then a kind of confluence of basic skills training, literacy as basic skills training, and literacy as having to do with the study of literature in a fairly romanticized, leave-aside way, which also, sort of, for the most part in Australian education in the sixties and seventies, sort of bleached it clean of any kind of historical, ideological, political analyses or anything like that. So trying to penetrate that unspoken alliance of what the scope and span of literacy studies and literacy education looked like was a kind of a loose and, at times, troubled set of relationships across these different borders of applied linguistics and cognitive science and anthropology and sociology. (Peter Freebody, Interview)

During the 1980s and '90s, this developed in to a recognizable field in Australia and has since extended to other parts of the English-speaking world. This model became known alternatively as the "Four Resources" or "Four Roles" Model of literacy, of which critical literacy remains a part.

As a parting note, Dr. Freebody states that literacy and literacy education will never leave a society the way it was before:

> The one thing we can tell historically, I think, from before ancient Greece but most dramatically beginning at that time, is that literacy and literacy education will never leave a society the way it was before. They will completely re-shape it and they will continue to re-shape it as new technologies for dissemination and new formations of media and education arise. (Peter Freebody, Interview)

In a subsequent video-clip, Peter Freebody goes into greater detail as to how the "Four Resources" Model was conceived, developed and put into practice.

Dr. Freebody speaks of the various camps among the academies that were each claiming to be the sole necessary ingredient for literacy education. Among these groups was a strong element of traditional educational psychologists who were interested in basic issues of acquisition of sound-letter combinations and basic comprehension issues. There were Whole Language people who approached language and literacy acquisition holistically. As well, there was a group operating with applied linguistics in terms of teaching genres and grammar. A fourth group was represented by critical sociologists looking at aspects of texts and of literacy as a sociological phenomenon. Among this group was Allan Luke, a graduate of the North American educational system. To view Video-Clip 4.5, please proceed to:

http://youtu.be/_aCzQJZ-ZNM

What Peter Freebody points out is the fact that Australia had, and continues to have, a small population. Thus, there was little insulation in terms of numbers of neutral bodies, and academic conferences tended to find these people in the same room as one another. Of course the result was, as Peter Freebody states, "very robust debates." As people came up against these "boundaries issues," and began to look at what may be necessary in terms of graduating a student who is "fully" literate in terms of understanding his or her role with respect to their agency in social and cultural settings, capable of setting trajectories for themselves, those very robust debates began to recognize the need for all of the components that the "Four Resources" Model represented. Critical literacy can be thought of as one necessary aspect of this model.

The Four Resources Model remains elegant in its simplicity and effectiveness, as it features necessity and sufficiency without trammeling these up into a strict hierarchical, development of literacy education. Particularly because it was so understandable, simple and yet effective, it began to gain support very quickly throughout Australia and, within half a dozen years, most state and territory jurisdictions and departments featured it within their curriculum documents. From here, it began to become a part of a larger orthodoxy by the late 1980s and '90s.

Critical Literacy in Australia Today

As she began to read about literacy and its components, it did not take Barbara Comber long to discover the work of Allan Luke and Peter Freebody. From Allan Luke, she began to realize that some of the more progressive models of language and literacy pedagogy had serious blind spots about assumptions and strategies, particularly as it concerned critical issues such as whose story has the opportunity to be told and whose interests are being served by this. It was very disturbing for Barbara Comber to discover that these so-called progressive models in which she had placed her trust, tended to position children in specific and restrictive ways. As a consequence, class and race, normative views of families and of schooling, and "appropriate" views of educational trajectories were all held up to the light in order to be duly examined. To view Video-Clip 4.6, please go to:

http://youtu.be/xLc6Q2gb6zc

At this time, Peter Freebody was also raising questions about the ways in which particular versions of reality and cultural dominance were being inculcated in children, right from their first days at school. Peter Freebody and Allan Luke were at the forefront of this movement in English education to interrogate these supposedly progressive and democratic approaches to literacy.

Barbara Comber continues the history of critical literacy in Australia noting that the federal government, although involved in education, was not responsible for evaluation and assessment. Neither was it responsible for curriculum design. Consequently, she affirms, there was plenty of opportunity for each state to fashion

curriculum in the way they wanted. This professional autonomy was largely due to the fact that the various states in Australia had different histories, different universities and different professional associations.

Meanwhile, in South Africa, Hilary Janks was contending with the problem of English as the medium of instruction in schools where the students and teachers alike spoke English as a second, third, or even fourth language. It was Norman Fairclough's (1989) work on critical discourse analysis that assisted Hilary Janks in developing a pedagogy powerful enough to assist her work in challenging contexts. At issue was the need to develop a pedagogy that would address how to teach in a language that was a second or third tongue to the teacher, let alone the students in his/her care. To view Video-Clip 4.7, please go to:

http://youtu.be/5xmpwptHP_k

In this video-clip, Barbara Comber asks how one can interrogate texts in what essentially amounts to a foreign language even though it is the *lingua franca* of the country, in this case, South Africa. For Professor Comber, it was this realization that brought whole new levels of complexity to an already complex undertaking. As she states, it was the idea of critical literacy that proved to be very useful – that, and having the opportunity to work with Hilary Janks, Allan Luke and Peter Freebody over an extended period of time.

As a result of this "cross-pollination," Professor Comber began to consider what it was that teachers required in order to understand the principles behind the teaching of language, along with all of the hierarchies of power that this implies. Dr. Comber's current and ongoing work continues this development of a pedagogical repertoire in teachers' classrooms.

Professor Comber summarizes her interview by noting that much work done in critical literacy has occupied itself with children's literature or popular culture. By studying textual practices, she claims, individuals can begin to think about critical questions, such as who is represented and whose viewpoint is missing, as well as who is silent and who is being silenced. While these may be questions that we are already fairly familiar with, Dr. Comber has extended this work to include considerations relating to the politics of place, how those places are already constructed and how they influence our thinking and actions in promoting particular interests and excluding other interests.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is officially known as the Republic of South Africa and can be found at the southernmost tip of the continent of Africa. It has a mostly temperate climate as the Indian and Atlantic Oceans surround it on three sides. Northward lies the neighbouring countries of Mozambique, Swaziland, Nambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Within South Africa is the enclave Kingdom of Lesotho. As the 25th largest country worldwide, South Africa is home to almost 53 million people. Cape

Town, the country's capital, is situated on the Cape Peninsula and is home to almost four million people.

South Africa is multi-ethnic, encompasses a variety of cultures and religions, and recognizes 11 official languages, two of which are Afrikaans and English, as well as numerous unofficial languages. Afrikaans originated from the Dutch and is the chosen tongue for most South Africans, white and coloured. Approximately 80% of Africans trace their heritage to Black African ancestry. The 2011 census reveals that the White minority accounts for less than 9% of the country's total population. All ethnic and linguistic groups are represented within the country's constitutional democracy of nine provinces and one parliamentary republic.

According to the World Bank, South Africa is considered to be a "newly industrialized" country and is ranked as an upper middle-income economy, the largest and most well developed in Africa, and boasts the seventh highest per capita income in all of Africa. As enlightening as this seems, South Africa is still gripped within the throes of poverty, as approximately 25% of the populace remains unemployed or under employed, living on less that two dollars (CDN) a day. Given these unnerving statistics, it is clear that inequality runs rampant.

Within the borders of this country, many fossil sites, including humanoid fossils, most notably *Australopithecus africanus,* have been discovered, identifying this area as the "Cradle of Humankind." South Africa has been inhabited by modern humans, *Homo sapiens*, for over 170,000 years. Iron Age agriculturalists and herdsmen, the Bantus, displaced, conquered and absorbed the original civilization as early as the fourth century as they moved southward.

As a result of the first European conquest in 1487, Bartolomeu Dias of Portugal named the southernmost tip of the country Cape of Storms for its inclement weather. It was later renamed Cape of Good Hope due to its proximity to the riches of the East Indies. Cape Town was established on behalf of the Dutch East India Company as a "rest stop" in 1652 by Jan van Riebeeck. Needless to say, wars were fought between the Dutch settlers and the indigenous population over land and livestock.

Later on, in the 1800s, gold and diamonds were discovered, triggering the Anglo-Boer war which saw the British and Boers, who were Dutch, German, Flemish and French settlers, at loggerheads. The British prevailed, making Cape Town a British Colony, but returned it to Dutch control shortly thereafter, but annexing it once again a few years later. As European settlement during the 1820s increased, conflicts arose among the newcomers and the indigenous population, largely over territorial control, with Boers, British and Blacks all vying for supremacy.

In the meantime, the Zulus grew in power and expanded their own territory at the expense of other African tribes. After 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act, spearheaded by British abolitionist societies, eradicated the practice of slavery, at least in name. The warring factions of the Boers and the British continued into the 1880s and the early part of the 20th Century, with the prize going first to the Boers and then, ultimately, to the British. During this time, racial segregation had not yet been formalized, except for legislation intended to control the movement of the aboriginal people. In 1910,

the Union of South Africa was created by an act of British Parliament, making it a British dominion. However, in 1913, the Natives' Land Act restricted ownership of land to only 7%. By 1931, South Africa was granted independence from Britain and, in 1934, the "United Party" sought reconciliation between Afrikaners and English-speaking Whites, but split again over the support of the United Kingdom upon its entry into World War II.

The 1948 election saw the government institutionalize segregation, later known as *apartheid,* in support of the small White minority, which controlled the huge Black majority. The Black majority enjoyed few of the privileges their lighter skinned countrymen took for granted and struggled to find sufficient income, education and housing. The Freedom Charter of 1955 supported an end to discrimination with its call for a non-racial society. By 1961 the country had become a republic and Queen Elizabeth relinquished her title of Queen of South Africa in favour of the advancement of the last governor-general to State President, which, oddly enough, remained appointed by parliament. Needless to say, the president of the new republic, under such circumstances, was virtually powerless until the Constitution Act of 1983 instituted a presidency responsible to parliament. This government decided to legislate a continuation of apartheid, harshly opposing resistance as violent demonstrations increased. The African National Congress (ANC) was one major resistance movement, at the same time as many Western countries and their institutions began boycotting South African products and divesting themselves of their South African holdings.

In 1990, the National Party government lifted the ban on the African National Congress (ANC) and other political organizations. After releasing Nelson Mandela from prison after twenty-seven years, serving a sentence for sabotage, Mandela negotiated in 1993 for the repeal of apartheid legislation and South Africa held its first democratic election in 1994. The ANC, of which Nelson Mandela was leader, won an overwhelming majority. It has remained in power and South Africa has since rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations.

However, in post-apartheid South Africa, unemployment has remained staggeringly high with the Blacks suffering the most. Since the mid-1990s, the United Nations Human Development Index of South Africa has declined, attributed by some to the prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Adult HIV/AIDS related deaths have resulted in well over a million young orphans becoming dependent on the state for care and financial support. As a side bar to this already grim reality, in 2009, life expectancy for a White South African was approximately one and a half times greater than that of their Black counterparts. It is interesting to note that only one sixth of the population has anything resembling a health care plan. The public health care plan is riddled with limited resources, including human resource shortages.

With an adult literacy rate of just under 90%, South Africa has a traditional three-tiered education system of primary school, secondary school and 23 universities (academic and technical). However, under apartheid, providing inadequate funding

and vocational educations discriminated against schools for Blacks. Attempts to redress these imbalances continue. As of 2005, public expenditure on education was less than 6% of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Language, Power and Context

When Hilary Janks first began her work in critical literacy, her major focus was on the relationship between language, power, and context. Over time, she has moved towards a model that positions different elements as being important in critical literacy. For example, questions of identity and diversity, or difference, are important aspects of issues relating to power and the ways in which power is utilized. Another important aspect of critical literacy is the question of who is allowed access and under what terms and conditions, as well as to what can the individuals gain access to?

An additional element is the notion of design as the productive end of the critical literacy process. Professor Janks suggests that there is little point in undertaking any sensitive rehabilitation of educational and democratic processes if one has no point of intervention and no way of redesigning that which has been deconstructed in pursuit of a different possibility. While she claims that these ideas are not new, what is new is the fact that we now see all of these elements as being entirely interdependent on one another. To view Video-Clip 4.8, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/QLBefvw3eOU

In a subsequent video-clip, Hilary Janks describes her role in the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) following years of political unrest punctuated by bloody riots. The struggle had been led primarily by the youth, and this eventually resulted in school boycotts. Although parents and other adults were not at the forefront of the struggle, they remained deeply concerned about the youth losing out on an education. As a result, parents in Soweto formed the National Education Crisis Committee, out of which grew the People's Education Movement. To view Video-Clip 4.9, please see:

https://youtu.be/Hs7YWI_Sa6g

In 1986, following the school boycotts, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed by concerned parents, teachers and students. The NECC encouraged students to return to their studies, and to take on forms of protest less disruptive to their education. As a result, consumer boycotts sprang up, and teachers, parents and students worked to develop an alternative education system.

Hilary Janks was invited to take part in the People's English Group, a part of the NECC, in order to help to conceptualize a new and very different curriculum for South Africa. However, not only were leaders of the NECC imprisoned, the NECC

itself and leaders of sister sub-groups, such as the People's Maths, were banned. It was too dangerous, according to Professor Janks, to continue meeting.

Although Professor Janks recalls that this was a particularly difficult time, she also notes the situational irony that followed, as she was appointed to the State Syllabus Committee. This provided her an opportunity to insert gaps into the curriculum that teachers could exploit. South African literature and protest poetry became included in the curriculum. It was at this point that Professor Janks began producing and honing her critical language awareness materials. As an additional irony, at the same time, she recalls, the government in England was unhappy with their curriculum and began work on curriculum materials for the government.

And so, at a time when people in England were working on a new curriculum, Hilary Janks was writing much more radical materials that were originally intended to be distributed underground. However, in 1993, by the time these materials were ready for publication, South Africa was changing. These materials got published and the British curriculum materials were banned. How ironic, indeed.

Paulo Freire and South Africa

In the next video-clip, Mastin Prinsloo, Professor of Education at Cape Town University in South Africa, describes his entrance into education. He was persuaded to work in Swaziland in distance education projects. It was here that he became interested in working in education outside of the school system. Upon returning to South Africa, he eventually worked for a non-government organization project called "Learn and Teach," an anti-apartheid adult literacy project which emulated Freirean ideas to teach adults to read and write.

Dr. Mastin Prinsloo

As Dr. Prinsloo claims, Freirean work was almost illegal during the social unrest in this period, and Freire's most acclaimed work*, Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was banned in South Africa. This book was smuggled into the country in the suitcase of a left-wing Anglican priest, who proceeded to make five hundred photocopies of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Copies of this book were distributed to Black consciousness students who were linked to the South African Students Organization

(SASO) Black People's Convention. It was at this point that Professor Prinsloo took over a church-funded literacy project and worked with young Black activists in further developing this project. However, it was not smooth sailing, as Professor Prinsloo found he had major concerns with Freirean methodology. To view Video-Clip 4.10, please go to:

https://youtu.be/u3RXJqSJNaM

What Dr. Prinsloo found troubling was Freire's notion that naïve consciousness moved to critical consciousness as people learn to read and write and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Context and Large Scale Reform

At the heart of Dr. Prinsloo's concern appears to be an issue with context. As has been so clearly demonstrated by numerous academics, such as Shimizu (2001), large-scale reform, when moved from one setting to another, tends to not replicate itself in the same way that it is experienced in the original setting.

Although he is quick to allow Friere's idea some validity in the Brazilian context, Mastin Prinsloo suggests that unschooled and un(der)educated South Africans, and those from other parts of Africa who have adopted South Africa as home, have a different reality. Unlike Freire's Brazilian migrant workers, Mastin Prinsloo claims that those living in South Africa exist in a highly politicized environment, seething with political turmoil. He parts company with Paulo Freire at the point where people living in South Africa don't need to be shown that their lives are shaped by political inequality because they live this reality every day and are always aware of unresponsive and anti-democratic hierarchies of power that privilege the White minority over the Black majority.

Even though the point that Freire makes regarding the movement from a naïve to an emergent critical consciousness may appear to be minor, it underscores the point that Dr. Prinsloo makes, in claiming that, unlike Freire's work in Brazil, educational classes in South Africa, by virtue of differing contextual elements, would *not* be the source of social movements aimed at creating greater democracy for all citizens. Dr. Prinsloo believes that mobilizing educational classes to promote greater critical literacy and, hence, greater demands for democratic governance was clearly overstated in the South African context.

Even though the security police felt threatened by the work that was being done by Mastin Prinsloo and others, working at the margins of society, Dr. Prinsloo states that his work was really about maintaining, working with and encouraging small, marginalized groups of people. By his own admission, Dr. Prinsloo notes that this work was not going to change the political climate very much, particularly since the more powerful social movements were at sites such as trade unions, church movements, and conservative and left-wing organizations where people were becoming socially organized and challenging undemocratic government processes.

Critical Literacy in Theory and Practice

In order to better understand Freire's position with respect to social activism, Professor Prinsloo and colleagues developed a research project to study how adults with little or no schooling relate to print-based activities. Research participants were recruited from workplaces, formal settlements, townships, and schools. Research questions focused on how the participants tend to communicate, how they deal with print material, how they deal with bureaucracies, with their children at school, and with people at work. It is at this point that Professor Prinsloo's work appears to align with Freire's perspective.

What emerged from this research initiative was the approach of studying literacy as part of situated, communicative engagement. What Mastin Prinsloo felt he was able to contribute was related to context in terms of how social placing, social inequality, and social hegemony influence the process and practice of reading and writing. It is at this point that Dr. Prinsloo refers to culturally relevant and responsive schooling as he recognizes that the educative process is enacted and performed differently in different contexts. He needed to go no further than his own community of Cape Town to establish that the experience of schooling is very different for the small group of culturally dominant and wealthy White attendees than it is for the mass schooling of the Black majority. To view Video-Clip 4.11, please go to:

https://youtu.be/OnzzxM58nZM

Dr. Prinsloo goes on to state that both schooling and the pursuit of literacy are very different commodities when the people engaging with these constructs come from extremely dissimilar backgrounds. For each group, there are differing possibilities, largely due to different settings, resources and backgrounds.

It appears, then, that the key to such issues relating to social diversity and education, according to Mastin Prinsloo, is to provide an educational approach that is not based on diversity, but is attuned to providing effective education for "conditions of massive social diversity, institutionalized, deeply embedded, social inequalities" (Prinsloo, Interview). As Dr. Prinsloo outlines the problems with standardization measures and state curricula, he states that they really run counter to realities and challenges associated with social diversity.

For example, he notes that, particularly with regards to literacy and language in all its forms, people bring into focus their potential and their capacity to read, write and speak. These potentials and capacities are often very different from what the educating institution expects them to have. To put an even finer point to this argument, Mastin Prinsloo addresses the case of multilingualism. As an effect of globalization, not to mention a number of additional complicating factors, diversity in languages spoken at home is increasing throughout the world. Dr. Prinsloo suggests that people do not bring anything close to the standards of language and literacy expected by the educational institution in which they are in attendance. Unfortunately, the institution itself compounds the issue by not recognizing the diversity inherent in the school

population. As a result, people become marginalized because, as Professor Prinsloo claims, their habitus – lifestyle, values, dispositions and expectations of particular social groups acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life – is, more often than not, incongruent with the field into which they're being inserted.

Further to this, Dr. Prinsloo claims that typical professional development programs for pre-service teachers do not equip teachers to understand that they need to forge connections between the resources that students bring with them in terms of their linguistic preference and the challenges inherent in the process of their schooling. In short, it seems to prove the point that it is easier to get *to* school than it is to get *through* school.

Professor Prinsloo points to a language "prescription" in South Africa, which says, *"Languages are all equal. Everybody needs to be able to work in the languages that they bring."* However, he notes that the reality is often completely different because, typically, language resources of the South African people have been completely marginalized, even to the extent that you can easily find teachers, who do not have proper English language resources themselves, teaching in monolingual English to children who don't have adequate English resources, either. Furthermore, teachers frequently prevent and disallow children from speaking the languages that they do have. While this can be said of education in general, it also applies to the teaching and learning relating to literacy. Dr. Prinsloo closes this segment of his interview with the comment that anything that is not standard is seen to be "bad, inadequate, incompetent, wrong." While he may not use the term "culturally responsive education" here, it is clear that Mastin Prinsloo sees the need for an approach to learning, language and literacy that is not monolithic, standardized and exclusive for all but a minority of people.

In the following video-clip, Mastin Prinsloo returns to his research initiative and provides some background for the project. He notes that this project took place in the mid-1990s, at a time when there was huge socio-political change in South Africa, as the country was moving from apartheid to a post-apartheid phase. To view Video-Clip 4.12, please go to:

https://youtu.be/FgoMfi_F4Ws

The research initiative facilitated by Mastin Prinsloo provides a fully detailed ethnographic account of what it is like to be living as ordinary people in South Africa at that particular time. It also provides a sense of how reading and writing are deeply embedded in socio-cultural political practices in forms of engagement or disengagement. Dr. Prinsloo makes note of the understanding that people who were unable to obtain schooling were, unlike Freire's principle, not helpless, disempowered or marginalized people. In appreciating such contextual differences between the Brazilian migrant workers in Freire's view, Mastin Prinsloo claims that, while the majority of South Africans suffered serious social inequalities, they nonetheless led rich lives through their own highly developed and sophisticated cultural resources and forms of engagement. Ironically again, these very resources

and forms of engagement often remained largely invisible to the mainstream, dominant culture, middle-class society.

Carolyn McKinney, also from Cape Town University, provides a practical counterbalance to Mastin Prinsloo's theoretical rendering of critical literacy, literacy, language and learning. In the following video-clip, Dr. McKinney defines critical literacy as a critical orientation to knowledge and, consequently, a critical orientation to text, whatever that text may be, regardless of whether it be in the reading or in the producing of text. As such, Dr. McKinney brings a critical view to knowledge and its generation.

While Dr. McKinney draws a distinction between the work done in North America, based on the critical literacy work done by Paulo Freire, and the British and Australian traditions which, she notes, are more text-focused, she has brought both of these traditions together in the work that she does. The learning tangle for Carolyn McKinney is that, if one brings a critical perspective to knowledge and its development, how, then, does such a critical orientation operate within the text itself? Ultimately, the key is about change because, as she claims, all learning is about change in some way, shape or form and, with critical literacy, the objective is to provide people with the opportunity to interrogate their own assumptions about themselves, one another and about the world itself. To view Video-Clip 4.13, Carolyn McKinney, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/56UI2DJM3bg

In discussing what it is that teachers (and "would-be teachers") need in order to become more effective at teaching, Professor McKinney echoes Professor Prinsloo in suggesting that educators of every stripe can benefit their students most by gaining an understanding of the principles and skills relative to critical literacy in order to be able to work across the various curricula extant in schools. She comments on the unfortunate fact that, in South Africa, unlike Australia, critical literacy is not widely featured in teacher education programs.

It is as a result of this that Dr. McKinney feels that, even though it has become "taboo" to talk about race, South Africans are still very much immersed in racial thinking. Consequently, different accents, the way people speak and the way they use language is used to categorize and make judgments about people. For example, if English is spoken is such a way as to approximate White South African English, that is considered to be proof of education, intellect and membership in the "legitimate," (Bourdieu, 1990) or dominant, culture. In short, resonating with the notion that "language is power," the "correct" accent, use of words or phrasing can be used to imply that the closer one is able to replicate the dominant culture language, the more worthy one is in terms of that society.

This, by the same token, applies equally to teaching, Dr. McKinney claims. She is currently investigating how teachers position young children from their earliest years in school, according to their language resources, and how this creates inequalities. The ways in which children bring and are allowed to bring their linguistic resources

into schooling results in valuing some linguistic resources over others. In short, certain linguistic resources are recognized while others are not.

CANADA

Canada, after Russia, is the second largest country by territory in the world. Canada is comprised of ten provinces and three territories and stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west. Its northernmost reaches extend into the Arctic Ocean. Canada's border, shared with the United States, is the longest border, world wide, shared by two countries. Also, Canada has the longest coastline in the world. Canada's population density, at 3.3 inhabitants per square kilometer, is among the lowest in the world. Winters can be harsh in many parts of the country, particularly in the interior and Prairie provinces, where average daily temperatures can drop below -30°C with severe wind chill. About four-fifths of the population lives within 150 kilometers of the United States border, possibly due to economic opportunities and the intense cold farther north. Summers tend to be much better than the winters.

For millennia, since at least 24,500 BCE, Canada has been inhabited by numerous Aboriginal groups and takes its name from the Iroquois Aboriginal word "Kanata," meaning "home" or "settlement." This Aboriginal society boasted, among other artifacts of cultural capital, permanent settlements, agricultural initiatives, complex societal hierarchies, and extensive trading networks. By the time the first European settlers arrived, it is estimated that Canada was home to between 200,000 and two million Aboriginals. However, due to repeated outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as influenza, measles, small pox, scarlet fever and the common cold that they had no immunity to, Canada's Aboriginal peoples decreased in number by up to 80% after the European conquest. Today, the Aboriginal people include the First Nations, the Inuit and the Métis.

The first attempts at colonization by Europeans were by the Norsemen, who settled for only a few years in present-day Newfoundland around 1000 AD. The cold Canadian winters encouraged them to abandon plans for further colonization and it was not until John Cabot, in 1497, five years after Columbus' expedition farther south, explored and claimed the Atlantic coastal regions for Britain.

In 1535, indigenous inhabitants of the village of Stadacona, now present-day Quebec City, used the word "Kanata" to direct the French explorer Jacques Cartier, who explored the St. Lawrence River and claimed this territory for France, to their home. Cartier later used the word "Canada" to refer to the entire area. By 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert established St. John's, Newfoundland, claimed as the first English colony in North America, followed in 1603 by Samuel de Champlain, who established French colonies at Port Royal in present-day Nova Scotia, and Quebec City in 1608. The competition between the French *Canadiens* and the British would heat up significantly over the next 150 years. For now, however, the French colonists settled along the St. Lawrence River and the maritime provinces while the British

tended to settle further to the south, establishing the Thirteen Colonies, also known as New England, in what is presently the northeasterly part of the United States of America. The fur trade was an especially lucrative business for both British and French, while catholic missionaries sought to convert the Aboriginals from the Hudson Bay, along the Mississippi River and into Louisiana. However, this uneasy arrangement exploded into war over the control of the fur trade, and ultimately led to the fall of Quebec.

Four wars erupted in colonial North America between 1689 and 1763, constituting the North American theatre of the European Seven Years' War, as England and France attempted to exhaust one another by attacking colonies in North America in order to require each side to send troops to protect its overseas investments. After the fall of Quebec to the British in 1759, during the period known as the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) (MacLeod, 2008), France ceded virtually all of its holdings in North America to Britain with the exception of two small islands off the coast of Nova Scotia, St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands.

To appease the French majority in Canada, the British victors passed the Quebec Act in 1774, expanding Quebec's territory to the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley, and re-established the French language, Catholic faith, and French civil law in this area. This angered residents of the Thirteen Colonies and further fuelled a growing anti-British sentiment, which eventually culminated in the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776. Many individuals, loyal to Britain, moved northwards into what is present-day Ontario. In 1783, the Treaty of Paris established American independence and ceded territories south of the Great Lakes to the United States. To accommodate English-speaking Loyalists in Quebec, the Constitutional Act of 1791 divided English-speaking Upper Canada (Present-day Ontario) from the French-speaking Lower Canada (Quebec). Each province was granted its own elected legislative assembly.

War broke out between Britain and the United States in 1812, followed by large-scale immigration to Canada from Britain, Scotland and Ireland, partly as a result of the "Potato Famine" in Ireland in 1845 and the years following. Following rebellions in both Upper and Lower Canada by people seeking political reform, the Durham Report recommended "responsible government" for all British North American provinces. It was at this time that the Oregon Treaty of 1846 paved the way for westward expansion to the Pacific Ocean.

In July 1867, under the British North America Act, the Dominion of Canada was established. The newly minted Canada had only four provinces, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In 1870, Métis' grievances under the guiding hand of Louis Riel ignited the "Riel Rebellion" (of which there were actually two rebellions), which led to the creation of the province of Manitoba. Other provinces joined confederation through the years, with Newfoundland being the last to join in 1949.

Under the leadership of Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, Canada's resources were protected and a trans-continental railway was constructed to

join the provinces of Canada together against the possible threat of the westernmost provinces ceding to an eager United States. The North West Mounted Police, now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or "Mounties," provided a modicum of law and order to this new country and were particularly useful in the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 in the Yukon Territory.

In spite of all of these events identifying Canada as its own country, Britain still maintained control of Canada's foreign affairs under the Confederation Act and, at the inception of World War I in 1914, Canada was obliged to join the "Allies." Of approximately 625,000 Canadians serving in World War I, approximately 60,000 were killed and another 173,000 wounded.

The continent-wide Great Depression, engineered by banking potentates in Europe and the United States (Bryson, 2013), resulted in the disastrous New York Stock Exchange Crash of 1929 and led to an economic downturn, which in turn led to hardship across the country. Farmers throughout the Prairie Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were especially hard hit as wheat prices tumbled. In response, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) political party was formed. In the 1940s and 1950s, under the guidance of Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan, a Baptist minister turned politician, many elements of social democracy were introduced.

In December 1939, Canada once again joined Britain in declaring war on Germany. Canadian troops played key roles in many major battles of the war, including the raid on Dieppe, the Invasion of Italy and the landings in Normandy. As an antidote to the Great Depression, the Canadian economy boomed during the war as its industries manufactured military ordnances and other wartime materials for the Allied forces.

Today, Canada is represented by a federal parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state for Canada as well as for 15 other countries, including Australia and South Africa. Canada is a very ethnically diverse and multicultural nation and has two official languages – English and French. This ethnic and multicultural richness is the product of large-scale immigration. Canada's population currently stands at over 35 million people and has an advanced world economy, which is one of the largest in the world due to its abundance of natural resources and trade networks. Additionally, Canada, except for brief periods in its formative years, has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with its neighbor to the south, which has, in turn, had significant impact on both Canada's economy and its culture.

Canada is widely recognized as a developed country and is, by any measurement, one of the wealthiest nations word-wide with the eighth highest per capita income and the 11th highest ranking in the Human Development Index. Canada also ranks very highly in international measurements of education, civil liberties, quality of life and economic freedom. As such, Canada is considered to be a middle power and has membership in a myriad of international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Canada also belongs to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the United Nations (UN).

The Office of the Prime Minister is the most powerful institution and initiates legislation for parliamentary approval and appointing, among others, the heads of Crown Corporations and government agencies, up to and including the governor-general, who is the Queen's representative in Canada. Canada's federal powers divide government responsibilities between the federal government and the ten provinces. For example, education is regarded as a provincial matter, although transfer payments from the federal government are a feature of the Canadian educational system.

John Willinsky was born and raised in Canada and, as a proud Canadian, offers an informal history of critical literacy in Canada. Dr. Willinsky's Video-Clip, 4.14, may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/48pn9RFpb2c

Professor Willinsky identifies the roots of critical literacy as emanating from Canada's well-known prairie socialism. He also notes that the east coast of Canada has also added to our understanding of critical literacy through a co-operative movement that had its genesis in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, with St. Francis Xavier University, formerly a Jesuit university, being known as the home of the "Antigonish Movement," which blended adult education, co-operatives, financial initiatives and community development in order to assist small, resource-based communities improve their economic and social situations. Between the co-operative movement and prairie socialism, John Willinsky claims, the historical roots of critical literacy were planted early in the twentieth century. Professor Willinsky cites Louis Riel as the founding father of critical literacy, and comments on how fascinated he was by Louis Riel's revolutionary acts, such as his capturing the printing press in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

As an interesting (to me) historical aside, Robert spent most of his public school years in Winnipeg. As an elementary school student in a grade five class in 1960, he studied the Red River Rebellion, led by the Aboriginal-French Métis leader, Louis Riel. The events related to the 1869 establishment of a short-lived provisional government by this Métis leader at the Red River Colony in what is now Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Riel Rebellion was the first crisis faced by the government following the confederation of Canada in 1867.

In 1960, Louis Riel was deemed to be a mad man and a coward. He was considered to be a low-class rabble-rouser, based on his disorderly conduct and outspoken views. He was supposedly under-educated, desultory, not very bright and even his personal hygiene was suspect. After all, this was proven by the fact that he stupidly captured a printing press, of all things – not something that would be considered a danger if it fought back. However, ten short years later, when Robert found himself studying at the University of Winnipeg, a stylized statue of Louis Riel was erected at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, adjacent to the legislative buildings.

In just ten short years, Louis Riel had become a guiding light, a symbol of democratic thought. He was now brilliant, well educated (He had been groomed for the priesthood and was considered to be very proficient with languages.) and brave, in attempting to secure and preserve Métis rights and culture in the face of the development of the newly founded nation of Canada. His retreat to Montana in the face of overpowering odds has been re-envisioned as strategic; and, not surprisingly, his personal hygiene had also mysteriously improved. Even his capture of the printing press became more adequately understood.

As Dr. Willinsky notes, that printing press was seen to be a seat of power. Whoever controlled the press, controlled the social media of the day. In John Willinsky's own words: "As badly organized as the west was in those days, and as terribly as the Métis and the Aboriginal peoples were being treated, he [Riel] understood that there was an instrument of power." In revisionist terms, the capture of the printing press was a strategic and brilliant move by a man who knew the power of the printed word.

American-born Valerie Kinloch adds to the picture of the development of critical literacy in North America. In her work, Dr. Kinloch looks at a variety of differing practices and stories related to critical literacy, and applies this to her perspective on this topic. For Professor Kinloch, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the open admissions policies at various universities in the 1970s are significant formulation points. She notes that the Civil Rights Movement in the United States had its inception in the Poor People's Campaign, and comments on the impact of the arts-based and aesthetic movement as it related to Civil Rights. Housing struggles, particularly for people of colour, and low-income areas have all had an impact on the development of critical literacy in Canada and in the United States. She sees that the past as well as the present conditions of society will influence the future of critical literacy and how scholars will interpret, engage with and enact it. To view Valerie Kinloch, Video-Clip 4.15, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/frWYikhkEZk

Dr. Kinloch acknowledges that there is a long history of critical literacy in North America and that much of it is related to the pursuit of a democratic society. However, she also cautions that this history has not been adequately attended to and that, if we are not attentive, we are not going to be able to move towards greater equity in the realities of people's lives.

As an educator, Dr. Kinloch wants her students to become critical readers, writers and thinkers but, in order for this to occur, she must enact culturally sustaining pedagogies within her classroom. And, to ensure that this actually transpires, she must become aware of who her students are and to engage with the realities that they bring with them to the classroom, knowing full well that many of these issues have their genesis outside of the classroom walls (Cooper & White, 2004). As she notes, the "No Child Left Behind" legislation of 2001was intended to do just that, but she claims that many of the marginalized groups of people are going to be left behind.

Her position, as she sees it, is to try to ensure that these people are not left behind to fall victim to unattainable standards and unreachable goals, as dictated by the state.

As Dr. Kinloch notices, the legislation has become contradictory, due, in large part, to the fact that this piece of legislation is not accomplishing what it set out to do. In order to do a better job, Professor Kinloch opines, we must be better prepared to identify what it is that we truly need and how best to pursue it. We must eradicate those political agendas that serve the privileged minority and that undermine those who struggle for greater equity, freedom and democracy. For each and every one of us, she claims, our literacy practices and education experiences define who we are on a daily basis. Valerie Kinloch offers up the caveat that, if we are not meeting on a collective basis

> … To talk about the ills of our educational system, and hence, critical literacy's role in this work, then this work will go on without us, but it will be about us. And we cannot continue to have that happen. (Kinloch, Interview)

Professor Kinloch is adamant that educators must take on this role. She believes that we must engage in such conversations with others in order to help make better-informed decisions about how literacy, in general, affects people's lives. And it is not enough to talk *about* those who are most affected by literacy or the lack thereof, it is necessary to have conversations *with* those people. They must all be a part of the conversation. Dr. Kinloch closes this segment of her interview by noting that we, as educators, must work harder at this type of endeavor in order to ensure that students are also invited into this conversation, rather than being forced into positions that they are less than comfortable with, as this is oppressive rather than democratic, regardless of the intent.

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CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICAL

> No one pretends that democracy is perfect all-wise.
> Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government
> except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.
> —Winston Churchill, House of Commons (November 11, 1947)

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

It has been said that politics, by its very nature, is never neutral. It can also be claimed that politics is omnipresent in the lives of every citizen in today's society. Whether it be personal politics or those of a more general nature, it is important for researchers, educators and the general public to recognize the political nature of everything one does, both from the point of view of the observer as well as that of the participant. Recognition of the political aspects of engaging in or performing at any level in the society allows the individual to bring additional perspectives to bear upon the issue at hand. Thus, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests, everything, including political matters, has meaning and points to underlying structures within relationships.

There is definitely overlap between things political and things historical. However, as Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May (1990) point out, in describing the nature of transactions, while friendly transactions and business transactions have some characteristics in common, one would never mistake one for the other. So it is with history and politics. For example, one's birthday is an historical event but it is not usually a political event. However, many political events are also of historical note, as will be observed as this chapter unfolds.

So, would the concept of democracy be considered an historical event or a political process? In any instance, it may well be considered both historical and political. It is historical in the sense that it has been around in various permutations for more than several millennia. At the same time, it is unequivocally a political process, and, as it is engaged with and performed, it has gone through a number of transformations. In the past, democracy was seen as participatory and representative in turns. Since the inception of the postmodern era, however, democracy, according to Michael Apple (2013), has developed a new wrinkle. As the result of neo-liberal and, perhaps to a lesser extent, neo-conservative ideologies, things democratic have been modeled on a consumerist philosophy.

One such permutation is typified as "democratic capitalism," or "capitalist democracy," depending on which aspect, democracy or capitalism, that one wishes to emphasize. Democratic capitalism is a combination of political, economic and social systems ideologies that features a market-based economy based on democratic policy, which encourages pluralism. As such, the capitalist free market economy is supposedly subject to a democratic political system. This construct has been contrasted to authoritarian capitalism in terms of its apparent limiting of influence in the political sphere from special interest groups such as lobbyists (Prindle, 2006). As time passes, however, it appears that the distinctions between democratic and authoritarian capitalism are becoming more and more blurred.

Perhaps a naïve questioner would wonder how a capitalist economy could be at once capitalist *and* truly democratic at the same time, particularly as capitalism has been seen to be decidedly anti-democratic (Cooper & White, 2006). This is because, in any market-based economy, particularly capitalist economies, there is always the spectre of inequity. Some people simply do not have the economic or financial capital to compete in the marketplace. If it is assumed that equity and equality are the same then the spirit of meritocracy comes into play. As the bumper sticker reads, "Get your truck the way I got mine – Work for it!"

There are many people in the society who would love to be able to work, let alone get a truck. However, there are many mitigating factors that the meritocratic soothsayers carefully ignore. To be sure, there are really only two ways that individuals and groups of individuals become marginalized – either through physical limitations, including physical abilities or anomalies, skin colour or other physical conditions that may prevent them from competing in the economic and financial market, and by social factors, such as social standing, economic status or cultural capital – not that one requires a lot of cultural capital in order to purchase a truck. In essence, it comes down to how the individual is positioned in society, by his or her own volition or by the will of others.

AUSTRALIA

The following video-clip features Allan Luke describing how people are positioned by real or metaphoric "texts." Professor Luke reminds us that critical literacy, far from being concerned only with books, is fundamentally an understanding of how to read the world around us as well as being able to rewrite the world as "text" in our own interests (Freire, 1970). Professor Luke continues by stating that being critically literate is also about understanding how such texts work in particular and specialized ways to represent the world and position the individual and groups of individuals. To view Video-Clip 5.1, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/2ykH67Lgybo

Allan Luke also comments that the texts that are represented by reality and which represent our reality are never free from context. They are always situated within

historical and cultural institutions and have become so embedded within these institutions that they have become a part of that institution's matrix (Winner, 1997). Essentially, they have disappeared from sight and have become normalized as a part of the agenda of the culture in question. In providing an example of what he means by this, Dr. Luke notes that Western literacy began with the Greeks, proceeded through the Lutheran Revolution, which introduced Protestantism to the Western World, and into the Enlightenment, the Literary Romanticism Movement and the European Revolutions of 1848 (the most widespread revolutionary wave in European history), into the Twentieth Century. As a result of this chain of political events, modern Western society has inherited a number of contending models of democratic processes that have been passed on through the generations and which have become normalized and naturalized within our very processes of reading and writing.

This brings Allan Luke to a discussion of how schooling assists in the acculturation of various individuals and groups for the benefits of belonging to the dominant culture or for the exclusion of those individuals and groups from the dominant society. Even though, as Dr. Luke avers, in spite of the fact that schools have become fairly successful at establishing functional literacy for 90% of students, the current system of schooling does not attend to specialized disciplinary knowledge. To view Video-Clip 5.2, please see:

https://youtu.be/pZUqfoO3vcM

This tends to occur, according to Professor Luke, because school systems tend to invest heavily in early childhood literacy and then, for the most part, ignore adolescent literacy, perhaps believing that early childhood literacy will naturally grow into the specialized kinds of text forms that are required for success in secondary school and beyond.

Returning to the notion that institutions, such as school systems, as well as corporations, churches and universities, constitute social fields of cultural exchange (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), Dr. Luke notes, in concurrence with Bourdieu and Passeron, that these social institutions function as regulatory bodies for the exchange of cultural capital and for other forms of capital, as well. What this means, according to Allan Luke, is that the development of literacy is actually an exchange process. It is a process of the exchange of capital in that students bring their particular and secularized ways with words into schools or other institutions of learning, which recognized or refused to recognize those ways with words that students import along with their presence. This, then, is how such institutions function as regulatory bodies, allowing access to the dominant culture for some, but denying it for others. Consequently and as a result of this process of recognition, transference, transformation and exchange of capital, the key to critical literacy is located beyond systemic functional grammar.

Returning to his Four Resources Model, Dr. Luke states that this recognition demonstrated that, in order to be critically literate, one would have to be able to recognize this – that texts are never neutral. To become critically literate, one has to

be able to read the world (Freire, 1970). What this means is that the individual must be able to critique ideologies, identify the extant relations that the individual shares with the text and to deconstruct that text or recognize the bias that is being presented and which inexorably affects that individual. Because texts comprise part of institutional life worlds, and represent fields of exchange in terms of the transference and transformation of capital, one must come to understand the regulative rules of the social institutions where the texts are being employed.

Peter Freebody furthers this commentary by adding that one facet of critical literacy is to ponder and inquire about the conditions under which texts – such as films, books and pictures, children's books, multi-modal and online representations, including advertisements, wikis and blogs, to mention only a few – are produced, and how they get distributed and used differently in different places. Video-Clip 5.3 may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/hrBAdQ2dcuk

As Peter Freebody notes, texts and textbooks are written, distributed and adopted for use in classrooms not necessarily because they're the best texts or the most accurate. The reasons for this, he claims, are varied, and part of understanding the role of literacy in society is to recognize how a text has survived through a variety of processes to appear before the reader, ready for use. Dr. Freebody goes on to note how newspaper headlines, nearly ubiquitous in developed countries, state that illiteracy is costing a tremendous amount of lost earnings or productivity, as for as the economy is concerned. He suggests that the country in question actually believes that whatever the insufficiency is, it can be resolved by providing more of it because any deficit is detrimental to the economy of the country. In short, he claims, education has become financialized, commercialized and, ultimately, politicized.

Further to this, Dr. Freebody offers a caveat that builds on this politicization of critical literacy by stating that some of what youngsters will be exposed to and will have to deal with in a practical manner in order to protect themselves and their own interests is being produced and marketed by people and corporations that do not have the students' moral, psychological or financial wellbeing at heart. Additionally, he notes, the critical movement in general, and critical literacy in particular, from a North American context, represents an outgrowth of an identity politics that is inexorably caught up with the politics of racialization. This, of course, is a common theme everywhere, including South Africa, most dramatically, as well as in North America and in Australia. To view Video-Clip 5.4, please go to:

http://youtu.be/N5-4eg2K8VU

Professor Freebody then asks the question about how one can build on critical literacy in order to move it forward as an agenda that connects to other critical questions. And, he asks, how can that be operationalized and enacted in settings such as school systems that are notoriously rigid institutions? To cement this notion, Dr. Freebody notes that if one were to build a system that was "antithetical to the critical approach

to anything," and literacy in all its forms, including critical literacy, along with its fundamental medium of operation and assessment, one would end up designing a school.

Barbara Comber takes this idea forward by expressing the idea that when teachers come to understand that everything can and should be questioned, and is able to pass that stance along to his or her students, this is how critical literacy becomes enacted or performed. When teachers and students recognize this, no text remains sacred. The text in question may be as close at hand as the authorized school geography textbook or history book, but it may also extend to other texts, such as those texts that comprise the world in which we live and the institutions, constructs, and values that we live by. All texts are open to questioning.

For Barbara Comber, there are three key elements that underscore any critical literacy endeavor. The single most important thing to do first, she states, is to collect the perspectives of the students, particularly those who are most disadvantaged or marginalized. As a corollary to this, she also notes that it is important to respect the minority use of language and literacy as these may not be and are unlikely to be uniform across cultures. The second key element for Dr. Comber is to position the students as researchers in order to avoid establishing normative, politically correct positions. This also has the benefit of encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own educations. However, this may be daunting for a couple of reasons. First of all, students who have come up through a system that values the transmission model may not be willing to accept such responsibility. Secondly, students who do engage with the critical model will eventually interrogate the teacher.

In either case, it becomes essential for the teacher to not take the abnegation of responsibility nor the student challenges personally. Both cases are predicated upon the development of responsible and responsive uses of power – the empowerment of students to be all that they can be, regardless of systems of oppression that may not be universally apparent. And the third key element is to interrogate texts of all kinds, including those that appear in forms unfamiliar. As Helene Cixous states, the entire world can be viewed as a text (Cixous, Personal Communication, 2008). Video-Clip 5.5 may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/nPTt4Z6aIcc

These three key elements, as noted by Dr. Comber, are essential to the development of critical ways of thinking and being in young students. She believes that, without utilizing these three components, there is no way to move forward, as it is the teacher who must model these elements. She goes on to make the statement that, as Allan Luke has also noted, critical literacy is a stance. It is an attitude, which influences a teacher's pedagogy. Dr. Comber concludes by identifying some of the pedagogic strategies she uses with critical literacy. She identifies the teacher's behaviour towards the topic and towards the students, the teacher's classroom discourse, and the necessity of making the curriculum open to critique, rather than as an object of

study in terms of something that will be delivered – similar to Freire's critique of the banking model that presumes a deficit of knowledge on the part of the students. Dr. Comber ends by stating that critical literacy is very much about making not only texts but critiquing systems and, indeed, placing the object of scrutiny within the critical gaze.

But what is the purpose of becoming critically literate? Isn't it easier just to let things occur as they may? Let us return to the old adage that states:

If you think education is expensive, try the lack of it.

But education is not monolithic. In fact, education has had many defining moments and just as many definitions. Here, for example, are some of the definitions of literacy over the past half-century:

- A literate person is a person who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life (UNESCO, 1951).
- Functional literacy is the ability to engage effectively in all those reading activities normally expected of a literate adult in his community (Hunter & Harman, 1979).
- [Literacy is] using print and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential (Southam Literacy, 1987).
- Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society (UNESCO, In White, 2008).

However, it is not merely for the sake of staying abreast of current technology that critical literacy becomes important. It is also important for the purpose of interrogating those who observe the populous and mobilize market forces to cater to every real or imagined demand (Bauman & Lyons, 2013). As societies in developed countries have responded to the crusade by market forces to "hyper-consume," we are bringing the global resources of our planet to its knees. As this becomes more evident through the process of climate change, the neo-liberal juggernaut shows signs of slowing, if for the only reason that the marriage of politics and capitalism is showing signs of stress. One reason for this, according to Zygmunt Bauman is the fact that market places are international but governments are not (Bauman & Donskis, 2013). Allan Luke attests to this with his comment that we are actually experiencing neo-liberalism as a failed governance project. To view Video-Clip 5.6, please go to:

https://youtu.be/hruTSLAxH8A

The failure of neo-liberalism does not have to be contested on ideological grounds, claims Professor Luke, simply because we can see that it has failed – not only in

Australia, but everywhere that it has been promoted. He sees this in terms of an opportunity and says that there is a lot of political work to be done and battles to be fought at all levels. Interestingly enough, Dr. Luke makes his point by citing the new, national Australian curriculum, which, under the influence of the Murdoch Press, has removed any reference to critical literacy from the national curriculum. While this may be noteworthy, it is not particularly important or even relevant, in Dr. Luke's opinion, because he is confident that there are tens of thousands of teachers who are going to keep working with these models of critical literacy whether they are identified in the national curriculum or not.

SOUTH AFRICA

In our next video-clip, Hilary Janks picks up on the view that there is no such thing as a neutral text. She claims that if one were to begin with a specifically designed text and, if that text were to be deconstructed and analyzed, and eventually re-designed, what you have is essentially a new text, which is, itself, open to deconstruction and redesign. Hence, a truly neutral text is as rare as hen's teeth. Video-Clip 5.7 may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/yYJG3MippuM

In fact, as Dr. Janks notes, people very happily will go along with viewing texts critically until such time as they review a text upon which their own identities are predicated. This is anything but neutral, and in fact frequently becomes a point of resistance, as people's identities are sacred to them. People have to hang on to who they believe themselves to be and this causes difficulties for them when they see themselves portrayed in ways that appear alien to them. Dr. Janks refers to Carolyn McKinney's identity work with Afrikaan students towards the end of apartheid. Dr. Janks recognizes that those students were initially resistant to this identity work because they did not want to be blamed for their fathers' and fathers' fathers' transgressions. Afrikaan students not only had to contend with this, they also had to confront their own Whiteness and sense of privilege, something that is often extremely difficult to incorporate into one's own schema. For more on this topic, please see Carolyn McKinney's chapter in *Critical Literacies in Action* (Cooper & White, 2008).

Consequently, according to Hilary Janks, it is often much less difficult to engage in critical literacy activities with those who have been disempowered, rather than those who are at the opposite end of the power spectrum. Those at the more powerful end of the power spectrum often take their power and privilege for granted says Professor Janks. This is because their power is, more often than not, normalized by the society within which they live. As such, it is not recognized as power but is associated, rather, with "the way things are." As has been noted earlier, such power matrices disappear into the culture where they become difficult to detect by those

who enjoy priority and privilege. This also works in reverse in many cases, as Paulo Freire (1970) noted, when he recognized that the migrant farm workers with whom he was working maintained a "naïve consciousness" about their plight, until such time as that could be developed into a "critical consciousness."

Professor Janks, in speaking about the disenfranchisement of the Black South Africans, refers to her Master's thesis as documenting a critical analysis of the language of the state, specifically as it pertains to the Bantustan policy that they referred to as their "Homeland Policy." The sad irony here is that many of the marginalized people who were returned to their "homeland" had never seen their homelands. Consequently, the language spoken became the justification for sending people "back home" to a place they had never come from. Such malfeasance is not without its precedence in Canada with the expulsion of the Acadians (1755–1764) to lands they had never visited, including their ancestral home, France (Grenier, 2008), and in the United States by the "Long Walk to Bosque Redondo" of 1864 to 1866 by the Navajo Aboriginals from present day Arizona to New Mexico (Bial, 2003). In Australia, regulating where aboriginals could live and work, what jobs they could do and who they could marry was in place by 1871. The "Half-Caste Act" of 1886 removed aboriginals of mixed descent from reserves to force them to assimilate into the dominant culture. This policy was reversed successively in 1909 and 1970. However, it has become known as "The Stolen Generation" (Marten, 2002).

Returning to the South African context, Hilary Janks comments on the "Extension of Universities Act" of 1959, which effectively closed universities to Black students. By this time, she notes, critical linguistics was under critique and Professor Janks felt forced to move to looking at larger structures like critical discourse analysis, which she addressed in her teaching, research and publishing. It was this shift that helped to bring into focus her consideration of a critical literacy for reconstruction or redesign of the African National Congress (ANC) program known as the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). This was the inspiration for Professor Janks to develop the idea of critical literacy for reconstruction, echoing the ANC's policy aimed at reconstruction. Dr. Janks speaks to the positivity of reconstructing during a time in which so much had been deconstructed. It was at this juncture that she endeavoured to develop a critical literacy that aimed at building something up rather than tearing it down. Professor Janks notes that this became her life's work "for the next decade or so."

By this time, she had already been hard at work on the politics of identity and identity work and was engrossed with identities that were empowered and those that were disempowered, generally along racial lines. At a time when colleagues in critical literacy were working with sexual, gender or class identity, it struck Dr. Janks that the best work stemmed from those who had, in the past, had some struggle, situation or issue that they wished to exorcize.

Mastin Prinsloo picks up on the thread that had been disaggregated by Hilary Janks. Dr. Prinsloo believes that the idea of criticality applies to anything worth engaging with intellectually. He emphasizes that his approach differs from that

which engages with the print literacies in that he prefers to regard literacy as situated in social practice, by drawing students' attention to the way that reading and writing are contextualized and shaped by particular types of social practices. For example, when people are reading and writing, they read and write in particular ways, within certain kinds of social identities for particular social purposes. Consequently, all forms of literacy are shaped by concerns about power and struggle over resources, which results in literacy always being implicated in struggles over inequality and social power. To view Video-Clip 5.8, please go to the following:

https://youtu.be/JdALKtfL6LI

Dr. Prinsloo feels that much educational development and developmental work has been predicated on the mistaken premise that literacy has some sort of inherent capacity and power and that providing people with the basic knowledge of coding and decoding will make a difference in their lives. While this may conform to the first two points of Luke and Freebody's Four Resources Model, and that this addresses the literacy component without attending to the critical part of the model, Dr. Prinsloo believes that it is extremely necessary to recognize that people who can't read and write are not necessarily socially helpless and voiceless, or even marginalized. His point is that, if they are unable to read and write and also are suffering social disadvantage, it is not the result of their inability to read and write, but the result of a variety of other socio-political consequences. Dr. Prinsloo suggests that there are people in society who are considered to be functionally illiterate but who, at the same time, embody other forms of social power. While this is true, it is not the norm because, if it were, there would be no need for critical literacy at all.

However, Professor Prinsloo continues to make a point in saying that South Africa faces a challenge that is not shared by the Australians nor the North Americans. This challenge, however, can be seen as an intensification or clarification of challenges and questions dealt with in these other two geographic settings. The challenge is simply this – South Africa is attempting to deal with a large mass of people who are educationally challenged in the conventional sense and who haven't experienced the substantial, quality schooling that the wealthier White minority has the privilege of enjoying. In other parts of the world, the issue, though similar, is different in that Australia and North America are dealing with a minority of people who are in this circumstance. However, in South Africa, the challenge is to provide a critical education to those who are not representative of the middle class minority, and who are marginalized in some way, shape or form. The problem in South Africa is a question of how to provide education to the majority of its citizens, let alone a critical education.

In the video-clip following, also featuring Mastin Prinsloo, he notes that South Africa wants to make a stronger commitment to social justice and to furthering the interests of marginalized people in a variety of ways. However, he says, literacy is a problem because we tend to attach so much meaning to it as if it is the only lifeline available in an ocean of perpetual ignominy. Dr. Prinsloo uses he metaphor of

literacy being like a Rorschach inkblot because we bring to it our own expectations, hopes and values. To view Video-Clip 5.9, please go to:

https://youtu.be/Zx-aStkTzow

Professor Prinsloo refers to "The Australians," Peter Freebody and Alan Luke, who have eschewed speaking of the components of the Four Resources Model as separate entities – coding and decoding, meaning making and analytical work, in particular critical literacy and attendant political reverberations – because all these components are a part of what we do. He also claims that, even though each of the four components is important in and of itself, each one is given a different value depending on the conditions, notably the teacher, the student and the cultural context within which the individual is operating. Dr. Prinsloo agrees that we should be making our own pre-service teachers aware of the political nature of reading and writing, and we should ensure that they can effectively teach reading and writing in order to ensure, in turn, that their students can read and write, understand alphabetic principals, have print awareness, and this represents the first components of the Four Resources Model. However, pre-service teachers must also be taught to ensure a focus on what one does with reading and writing and how different forms of reading and writing have different kinds of social consequences.

Carolyn McKinney picks up on this point by noting that, even after apartheid, there remained a number of issues at the university level. Part of the problem was the idea that the university wanted to maintain its position of privilege within the South African society, so it was very careful under the "Extension of Universities Act" of 1959, as mentioned earlier, to not open its doors too widely to Black students and to maintain an Afrikaans instructional policy. The effect was to exclude most students who were not of the elite White minority. Carolyn McKinney can be viewed in the following Video-Clip 5.10:

https://youtu.be/NBNyw_FK_qg

Although Dr. McKinney notes that, by 1995 when she began her work at the university, while there may have been good arguments for the "Extension of Universities Act," the exclusion of Black students permitted her to design a "bridging" program for Black students coming into what, she states, was a fairly hostile environment. Hilary Janks provided an inspiration, as Dr. Janks was involved in the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), part of which was a committee known as the People's English. As Dr. McKinney states, this was before she, herself was involved with the need for an education for all in South Africa, as she was too young at that time. However, she claims, Dr. Janks provided her with an outstanding example of what could be accomplished. Professor McKinney goes on to comment about the Freirean tradition of problem posing as an approach to adult literacy. This was sufficient for her to see critical literacy as emanating from two different sources, one through the Freirean adult education tradition and the other through People's English. Dr. McKinney credits Hilary Janks for the links forged to critical language awareness in the United Kingdom.

A Small Reflection

As we were preparing for this set of interviews, Karyn and I had the opportunity to travel to South Africa. Never having been to Africa before, I was very excited to learn some things about this marvelous geographic area. We landed in Johannesburg and travelled to Cape Town, an apparently thriving city, situated in an exquisitely beautiful setting with the huge Table Mountain seemingly almost in the middle of the city. But appearances can be deceiving.

On the first day of our arrival, I did what I always do. I walked the city, trying to decipher its secrets and learn more about how people live and what they do. I started out with the idea that I would look for schools in order to get an idea of what the educational experience of the South African youth would be like. As I walked, I found numerous private schools but not one public school. I ruminated on this for a while and began to understand that the private schools were not socially stratified places that catered exclusively to the White dominant minority. However, these schools may just as well have, because tuition to private schools would likely be beyond the reach of many Black and coloured families in the area.

Consequently, when we talk about the lack of opportunity for the Black majority and the desire to educate them so that they can become fully participating members of a democratic society, so much of this sounds like words without substance. It appears to me, and I must take responsibility for my own views, that there is currently little opportunity for the majority to obtain an education of any sort. While there are concessions made for Black students to attend university, I would imagine that the actual attendance of Black students is quite minimal when compared to the dominant culture. All this to say that this walk through a beautiful city with so many lovely people resulted in a sad realization that advanced schooling, or any sort of schooling for that matter, is simply out of reach for all but the most wealthy of the Black majority. Without an equal opportunity for education, how can South Africa ever attempt to become more democratic? As South Africa struggles to grow its democracy, one of the ways that I feel that this could be done best is by investing in good quality public education, for all. While the same sentiment could be voiced with regards to schooling in the United States and Canada, as well as in Australia, it is the enormity of the issue that stands out in stark contrast to other nations, given that the Black population forms the majority of the populace in South Africa. In other countries in this study, the marginalized people tend to be in the minority, a significantly different issue that may be somewhat easier to resolve.

NORTH AMERICA

As a counterpoint to post-apartheid South Africa and the continuing struggle for greater democracy, Valerie Kinloch discusses her practice with respect to critical literacy education. Dr. Kinloch speaks specifically about teaching and teacher education and, under these North American circumstances, how power becomes

engaged with and enacted, and how it gets situated in conversations with both pre-service and in-service teachers. Of specific interest to her are the ways in which curricula tends to privilege certain perspectives or points of view over others, particularly in terms of representation – that is to say, what is excluded and what is included? Using this as a departure point, Dr. Kinloch then proceeds to ask how we perceive engaging with, thinking about, performing and enacting reading and writing. In fact, she notes that particular discourses incur specific practices, stances and dispositions, to mention a few points that one must consider when thinking about preparing pre-service teachers and even in-service teachers to participate in a critically literate democratic citizenry. To view Video-Clip 5.11, please go to:

https://youtu.be/p_YdK720lqg

Professor Kinloch claims that the answer to these and other questions lies in how we interact with each other in the world. The first steps, she notes, are to name extant power structures alongside these selfsame practices in reading, writing and thinking. It is unnecessary, according to Professor Kinloch, to be retiring or non-committal about positions, permutations and questions of power. Issues which span the spectrum relating to educational access and equity or whether students are reading at grade level become irrelevant, unless we actually get to the heart of the questions being asked. These questions need to be asked of all the stakeholders in the educational system and beyond and need to be asked of teachers, parents, community members and, particularly, students. All of these people, she states, must be included if we are to move towards a society that takes critical literacy seriously.

Conversations with such individuals and groups of people are extremely important in order to understand more completely what it is that our faculty of education, our teacher education programs and our literacy graduate programs need to have in place. Becoming more flexible in order to embrace doing things differently than the way that they have been traditionally performed is at the heart of educational change. As such, being able to do things differently encompasses how we engage in conversations with different groups of people. As a caveat to this, Dr. Kinloch adds that engaging with, enacting and performing things differently is not meant to be taken as a way to maintain dominant narratives or mainstream discursive practices relating to literacy in all its aspects, but is meant to be seen as a vehicle for inviting different perspectives, the views from the margins, in order to gain more accurate and valuable information about how to proceed with the teaching and learning as it relates to literacy in general and critical literacy in particular. It is the work of critical literacy, she states, to reach for something more than what we already have, not exclusive of others but with them, in order to gain a deeper understanding of who we are, and who the "others" are in relation to ourselves and to the rest of the society.

Dr. Kinloch does not see this as a large change, but she does see this as an opportunity to ask certain types of questions about power, to take certain types of actions, and to allow certain types of conflict to be central to the act of teaching and learning. It is in this way, she claims, that the continued development of critical literacy and

the philosophical nature of critical literacy encourage us to grapple with questions of democracy and power. Many of these questions have been asked previously but Valerie Kinloch states that these questions must continue to be asked, not to merely recycle them but to ensure that they have either been answered to the satisfaction of all or that they are still current questions that require action, engagement and resolution. However, as Dr. Kinloch avers, many of these questions have not been answered, and the ones that have been resolved have not greatly altered what we do or talk about when we address the multiple issues relating to literacy within, not only the school system itself, but teacher education programs, as well.

In thinking about the political nature of critical literacy, particularly in North America, Dr. Kinloch refers to a resolution on student rights that was passed in the United States by the Committee on College Composition and Communication. This occurred in the early 1970s after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. The political climate in the United States during that particular time and the students' rights on language as one policy statement exemplifies the political nature of critical literacy because that policy attempted to get groups of people, as well as teaching and teacher education and literacy studies, to become more attentive to the language and cultural practices of students. As can be seen, attempts at developing culturally relevant education are not merely a recent innovation but have a political history that dates back to a time of civil rights activism.

This adoption of the resolution on student rights was about access to education and equitable opportunities for education. It also marked the beginning of a journey that would help people begin to think more deeply about the need for critical literacy relative to large numbers of diverse populations entering university, particularly in the United States. To illustrate her point Professor Kinloch asks a rhetorical question relating to how we think about

> …Preparing all people, particularly racially and ethnically diverse students, for the demands of universities and, hence, the workplace and society by not marginalizing them and by not marginalizing the communities from whence they come and their families and their experiences… (Valerie Kinloch, Interview)

In short, Dr. Kinloch suggests that, until we understand how to work with people across a variety of contexts, we can not get beyond affirming and tolerating people, as opposed to recognizing and acknowledging who we all are in our collaborations with each other. Dr. Kinloch sees the act of affirmation as an act of patronage rather than as an act of understanding. Toleration, she claims, suffers the same fate, as it falls short of acceptance of difference. However, to recognize and acknowledge goes much further along the road to achieving true empathy with others and moving beyond lip service to a fuller understanding. In fact, Dr. Kinloch suggests in closing, it is life work.

It is at this point that John Willinsky returns the discussion to specifically Canadian literacy traditions by introducing the works of two great Canadians thinkers – Harold

Innes and Marshall McLuhan. Harold Innes was, until his untimely death in 1952, a professor of political economy at the University of Toronto in Canada. Professor Innes wrote a number of extremely important works on the theory of communication, media and economic history. In his work, Innes (1952) notes that the balance that existed between oral and written language in ancient Greece helped the civilization to flourish in the fifth century BC. Having said this, he notes, however, that our current civilization is threatened by the "…continuous, systematic, ruthless destruction of elements of permanence essential to cultural activity" (p. 15). As such, Professor Innes saw universities as important sites of critical thought, which he saw as being essential to the continuation of Western civilization. Not surprisingly, Marshall McLuhan, one of Canada's greatest thinkers, was a student of Dr. Innes. In fact, Professor McLuhan, in his book, *The Gutenburg Galaxy* (1962), sought to further the inspiring work begun by Harold Innes. Marshall McLuhan (2005) is remembered for his coining of terms such as "the global village" and "the medium is the message," as well as predicting the Internet thirty years ahead of its time. In this segment of the video interview, Professor Willinsky points out the distinctly Canadian tradition that is represented by both of these great scholars. Video-Clip 5.12 may be viewed below:

https://youtu.be/HcNfF4NB1po

Both of these scholars, according to Dr. Willinsky, drew attention to Canadian "myths" and promoted truly Canadian sensibilities. Another volume noted by Dr. Willinsky is Edgar Z. Freidenburg's (1980) book, *Deference to Authority: The Case of Canada,* as a definitive statement on Canadian sensibility, defied repeatedly by Canadian Aboriginals from Louis Riel to the current protests, such as the "Idle no More" Movement that attempts to engender some form of equity for aboriginals within mainstream society.

Professor Willinsky notes that this represents a part of Canada's intellectual tradition that was begun, in part, by Harold Innes, who connected notions of communication and empire. This work has been instrumental in establishing the dominant view that other scholars, such as Manuel Castells, for example, has moved forward to look at global domination as a matter of communications. In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society,* Castells (2000) provides an account of the economic and social dynamics in the new "information age" in formulating how information technology influences the contemporary world, establishing the media as the main political arena, which, incidentally, is not answerable to democratic forces.

Harkening back to Marshall McLuhan (2005), Dr. Willinsky comments on McLuhan's clarity in identifying the politics of control over the media that is turning it back on itself, revealing how media, and those who control it, attempt to turn ordinary citizens into its instruments. All of these perspectives, according to John Willinsky have been and continue to represent elements of Canada's political scenery. In providing an example of this, Dr. Willinsky points to the critical literacy

elements and the political dichotomies that are apparent in Canadian tradition, along with the contention around so many different issues such as extremes of poverty, lack of social support, and the struggle over Medicare and other nationalized health care plans.

By way of summation, the specific political issues extant in each of these countries contribute to the freedom or continued oppression of citizens, be they in the majority or in the minority. Fortunately, there is always a counterpoint to the issues that oppress. However, there is also the reality of the scarcity of time, energy and resources needed to ameliorate suffering, injustice and inequity. Political issues are never devoid of history, particularly in this postmodern era within which we are currently living. It is hoped that the future will lead us to a more democratic way of living than the past has provided.

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CHAPTER 6

THE POSTMODERN

> I'd love to change the world but I don't know what to do, So I'll leave it up to you.
>
> —Alvin Lee, "Ten Years After"

THE POSTMODERN CONTEXT

Since we live in postmodern times, this context is an important consideration to any form of inquiry. This context relates to the eighth moment of qualitative research as identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). In this postmodern era, it is helpful to realize that many things are not as they used to be. It is now more difficult to compartmentalize almost anything into neat, mutually exclusive domains. Through the lens of postmodernity, everything and anything can be questioned. For example, even time-honoured child development theories, specifically those propounded by such scholars as Jean Piaget, have recently been deconstructed (Cannella, 1997). In this configuration, no longer is child development seen as a lockstep progression from child to the final stages of the "complete" adult. In short, these stages are said to exist concurrently within the same space, time and individual.

Also, there is far more choice available among products than there has ever been before, even though there is a caveat attached to this. Not many of the things that we are given choice over are particularly important. A favourite example is the search for mustard at the local supermarket (What makes it "super?"). You have the choice of honey garlic mustard, Dijon mustard, Grey-Poupon, Keene's Hot Mustard and so on. However, none of these choices are paradigm shifters (which may be beneficial. Imagine if your choice of mustard did have the ability to change the world. What an awesome responsibility that choice would be). Perhaps it was always thus and we are only now beginning to recognize that the messy, descriptive nature of present day living is the norm. In that sense, an understanding of these postmodern or "liquid" times (Bauman, 2000) can assist the reader in seeing the interaction between critical literacy and democratic values in all of their complexities.

AUSTRALIA

Allan Luke comments on the current process of standardization, a relic of "Thatcherism," imported to many countries from Britain. Thatcherism has been described as a political ideology that supports the view of free markets combined

with governmental fiscal restraint (Lawson, 1992). While this process had begun as early as the mid-1970s, the current neoliberal climate, as represented by the collaboration of government and capitalistic interests, is but a continuation of the same thinking that "Corporate Darwinism" will allow the best of everything to rise to the top. What remains true is that only the most successful (just one definition of "best") will attain the topmost position on the pinnacle of achievement. The unquestioned assumption here is that the terms "successful" and "best" are conflated and used interchangeably. In a purely postmodern frame of mind, the question must be asked, "Is being the most successful the same as being the best?" Also, "Who gets to define these terms?" and "Has everyone's perspective been considered in this view?"

It is but a small leap to recognize how democratic values seem to have been omitted from the equation that compounds governance with various forms of market place values such as consumerism, commodification and corporate interest. In educational systems around the globe, the end results of neoliberal thought have produced standardization, which includes endlessly revised curricula and attendant policy "initiatives," "teacher-proof" lesson plans, Internet lesson plans of the one-size-fits-all variety, an invocation of the transmission model that Freire eschewed, standardized testing on a large scale basis and the desperation of teachers who must teach to the test in order to avoid reprisal in the event that their students do poorly (McNeil, 2000).

As Allan Luke claims, standardization comes about through literacy and the written text. It is for this reason that Dr. Luke has relentlessly struggled to maintain an open version of critical literacy. Video-Clip 6.1, Allan Luke, may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/DTvt7bE7uDo

In discussing this point, Professor Luke makes the observation that schooling and literacy are a deadly combination for the standardization, commodification, and control of knowledge. Peter Freebody agrees with this view and takes it further to point out that, in the developed world in particular, we all live in societies that are awash in all kinds of literacies, particularly those of an electronic nature. In the following video-clip Dr. Freebody claims that it is nigh on impossible to conceive of Canadian, Australian, or South African society independent of the effects of technology, both in terms of what it has accomplished and how it has influenced us. Technology, in particular miniaturization and the development of the microchip, has been responsible for issuing in the postmodern era along with its "All for one and one for profit" mentality. Consequently, living within a technological society, according to Dr. Freebody, bespeaks the basic evolutionary value of needing to understand the technology within that society. It becomes, hence, a basic form of literacy, not unlike a textbook or a painting or any other form of literacy that one can think of. By "understanding" technology, Dr. Freebody cautions that he does not simply mean this from a romanticized viewpoint or from its tremendously positive potential and capacity, but to recognize that it also poses considerable threats.

This theme is taken up and explored in depth in Bauman and Lyon's (2013) book, *Liquid Surveillance.* To view Dr. Freebody, Video-Clip 6.2, please go to:

http://youtu.be/S5lEury_Z2k

As Dr. Freebody explores the issue of standardization, he concludes that national testing has become a serious issue for a multitude of reasons. As a function of postmodern times, the standardization movement has fostered grade wide testing at the national level in Australia. This has resulted in threats of political action from teachers who simply want to provide the best education possible for the students in their care. National testing has also prompted industrial action against both literacy and numeracy testing. This apparent contradiction in opposing what purports to be in the students' best interests has drawn fire from a number of Australian sources as it is seen by some as an attempt by the Commonwealth to dictate educational policy to Australia. Even though Queen Elizabeth still appears on the obverse of Australian coinage, they are adamantly opposed to further attempts by the British Commonwealth relative to what is perceived to be an encroaching (re)colonization of Australia. Peter Freebody views this move towards national testing as a falsification of values in that it supposedly is being utilized to provide parents with information about the well-being of the school and the school system in general. Unfortunately the sum total of information is reduced to this one measure of literacy and numeracy, which Professor Freebody refers to as "simple-minded." It is measures like these, he affirms, that can serve to frighten parents. Other points not in its favour include the fact that it represents a consumer choice, but not the kind of consumer choice that really counts for much, simply because test scores really only represent a proxy for what it is that the students have (apparently) learned. As such, national testing really is representative of the encroaching corporatization of education. At some level, even sub-consciously, it is clear that national testing platforms often serve to marginalize some students, while others who have more social, cultural or financial capital in terms of privilege or access to certain kinds of dominant culture knowledge are deemed to be more successful.

In summing up this point, Dr. Freebody points to national testing as an impediment to education in general and to all forms of literacy in particular. He claims this by recalling the restrictive and reductionist notions of literacy that some governments rely on as measures of the wellbeing of the school. Although this is apparently instituted to give parents choice, it only describes the state of the school in terms of comparisons with other schools and says very little about how their own children have fared in the face of national testing. As such, Dr. Freebody notes, this is a very conservative model of education. And so, in the final analysis, according to Professor Freebody, national testing has become a mere mockery that attempts to make schools more accountable, albeit just in a business sense. It is this very notion of corporate accountability, he states, that many teachers regard as relatively trivial and not in any way a definitive measure of anything, rather than an accurate measure of how well students are learning.

Barbara comber agrees with this assessment and adds to it by claiming that, not only in Australia, but also worldwide, the political economy of testing regimes has become intertwined with literacy in all its forms and, as a result, is something that teachers must indeed be very vigilant about. Because such testing regimes can help to determine what passes as literacy, and critical literacy in particular, teachers and the society in general must be prepared to contest such programs to the best of their abilities. Dr. Comber makes note that, over the past decade or so, neo-conservative governments have assembled policies that have concentrated the control of education in the hands of the federal government.

As a minor footnote, neo-conservative governments attempt to move education "back to the basics" – a stance that many question, because it appears that schooling today has ignored the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic that have been so time-honoured in past iterations of how knowledge is represented. Teachers, on the other hand, for the most part, suggest that they have never departed from the so-called "basics" and that, in the increasing decline of social structures and institutions such as recreational centres and churches, schools are one of the few places remaining where large numbers of students congregate. Consequently, it is little wonder that schools have been asked to take on more and more educational services that were once provided through other avenues. Schools now-a-days routinely institute career choice programs, single parent programs, courses in law and finance, and family life programs that incorporate pro-social and sexual choices. It is these very items that come under scrutiny when neo-conservatives call for a back to the basics educational system. Unfortunately, one cannot reverse the cycles of the sun.

Neo-liberals, in comparison to their neo-conservative counterparts, seem less interested in what is on the menu at school in terms of educational programs. Their interest lies in measuring the school's ability to educate children. However, it does not stop there. This is where the two agendas seem to mesh and to collide at the same time. Both neo-conservatives and neo-liberals want certain things to remain on the curriculum or to be placed there in case they have not been attended to. These items are particular to each agenda and may not necessarily be congruent with one another's educational philosophy. The neo-liberal agenda calls for an army of creative, compliant employees, capable of working obediently and also able to resolve problems on their own (White, 2009). However, in many areas neo-conservative thinking has been absorbed into the more economy-focused neo-liberal agenda.

In designing her argument, Barbara Comber makes note of this point when she states that there is an entire range of agenda items that extend from school choice and high stakes assessment to the development of national curriculum, as well as other policy initiatives that have come together. In counterpoint, she observes that, while in the past, teachers enjoyed a great deal of professional autonomy, allowing them to be innovative and creative, and to develop programs, curricula and pedagogies that do respond to their students' needs and values, their communities and lives, things have changed, but not for the better. Now, along with many countries in the

western world, educational discourse is becoming increasingly dominated by issues of standardization and accountability. This is not merely an anomaly relative to processes of schooling and education, she notes; it has also become part of wider order cultures. Even though, as Allan Luke has stated earlier, neoliberalism has failed, it still maintains a death grip on educational systems that are only just now beginning to realize that the returns do not warrant the cost of doing business – in schools, at the very least. In short, while everything may be able to be commodified, there are some things, like education possibly, that should not be included in a consumerist, neoliberal, market inventory. Barbara Comber, Video-Clip 6.3, may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/pU_xzqozw-k

Dr. Comber believes that we have now come to a point where none of the neoliberal machinations can be taken for granted. We must ask the difficult questions of who benefits and who is left out, what the rationale for this new world order is, and whether societies can become more democratic. Barbara Comber is not unhopeful that there are spaces where this may happen; however, she states, educators of all stripes will need to be very proactive in finding those spaces.

Currently in Australia, she notes, there are still major issues relating to class, gender, race and location. If we were to look at the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) results, she says, Australian high stakes testing assessments would reveal that the most vulnerable children are Aboriginal children who are impoverished and who live in remote areas or rural environments. Congruently, she adds, there are strong correlations between youngsters growing up in rural or regional areas and youngsters who do not complete schooling or who do not attend university. This makes critical literacy all the more important, Dr. Comber states, because this statistic represents an example of continuing inequities and injustices. Dr. Comber is quick to point out that statistics such as these are not only specific to the Australian context, these inequities and injustices occur all around the world, particularly as greater and greater wealth is being concentrated in fewer and fewer pockets. The inevitable result is that more and more people are living under impoverished circumstances – impoverishment that is unlikely to change as it tends to become an intergenerational malaise.

In today's world, Dr. Comber is concerned that even wealthy nations are being exploited for their resources. This has always been a part of critical literacy, she claims, and is characterized by the necessity of contesting the domination of workers, the exploitation of individuals and groups of peoples, contesting issues relating to appropriate stewardship of the lands on which we depend for our livelihood. None of these points are minor items. They are major issues on a worldwide basis and must be considered in light of democratic perspectives – if only among those nations claiming democracy as a guiding principle.

The answer to these major issues, according to Barbara Comber, is to democratize the production of knowledge. However, this represents a major issue as well. At

question is how experienced teachers who have a wealth of experience might be teamed up with beginning teachers who have all sorts of new and exciting knowledge in order to access, preserve and build on "insider" and "incoming" knowledge (Wenger, 1998) in order to find ways to ensure sustainable knowledge mobilization practices. This is not only a tall order in and of itself, but it is compounded in the face of a variety of government demands for ever higher levels of accountability, not only for children but for teachers as well. As Dr. Comber ruminates over this issue, she comes to the conclusion that, looking back, it would have been beneficial to answer some of the questions around how resources are shared, how to lessen some of the isolation that is felt by teachers, and how to create spaces for ongoing teacher dialogue and research, since she believes that these things are becoming increasingly endangered. The main reason why this is so important, Dr. Comber claims, is because of the very small number of people in the world today who are in control of vast resources and, conversely, the vast number of people in the world today who control a very small number of resources, if any. To put it bluntly, Dr. Comber claims that we have not done a good job of this anywhere. The world is still a largely inequitable place and people in power are not willing to part with that power any time soon. We still have to contend with issues such as injustice and inequality. In fact, except for a few, the ravages of poverty are on the rise. As an ironic note to the end of this interview segment, Professor Comber notes that Australia (and many other parts of the "developed" world) has done very well at producing large pockets of sustained poverty that become entrenched in rural or regional areas that work their way into the culture of the area and result in poverty that becomes inherited as it is bequeathed from one generation to the next one in line. Finally, Dr. Comber does not fail to notice that these economic injustices go hand in hand with significant and disturbing environmental injustices. The resources of the world are being depleted in the name of the wealthy, who conscript those who are less wealthy to produce an endless supply of goods for themselves. There is nothing fair about how that is being accomplished. Unfortunately, it is the same story throughout much of the world. South Africa, which we will visit next, is no exception.

SOUTH AFRICA

Hilary Janks opens her next interview segment with a comment by students that, because of her teaching, they can no longer ask questions. Dr. Janks interprets this to mean that what they really mean is that their normal way of asking questions has been interrupted. But from here, Dr. Janks feels that the way of moving forward is to teach educators how to ask critical questions. Her next endeavor is to come to terms with questions such as "How do you learn to ask critical questions?" "What do critical questions look like?" "How are they framed?" and "What distinguishes critical questions from other questions?" As questions of this nature reveal, they allow Dr. Janks to view critical literacy through the lens of access

rather than through the customary lens of power differentials. So, for the moment at least, issues of access, and program design and redesign are within her focus. Dr. Janks describes people as moving towards a greater stylization of identity, and towards questions of rhetoric and ethics. This Video-Clip, 6.4 is available at:

https://youtu.be/ECsWABush9M

Dr. Janks refers to her book, *Literacy and Power* (2010), which, in the final chapter, deals with the question of why we still need critical literacy. She claims that we need critical literacy because one of the most common denominators throughout this postmodern world is the constancy of change – change in contexts, changes in theories, in pedagogies, and in the way in which critical literacy has to move and flex with those changes. Dr. Janks states that:

> …We still live in a very unjust, very unequal, very differentiated world, where there are still haves and have-nots, where there are still people who have power over other people… (Hilary Janks, Interview)

In South Africa, as is true in many other countries around the globe, there are huge inequities and inequalities that impact the very nature of the country's system of governance. Current injustices, poverty and power differentials between individuals, groups and classes of people encourage a deeper look into what constitutes a democracy. For whom is it democratic? Is it more democratic for some than for others? In what ways does the society mitigate against greater democracy in terms of culture, social structures, or governance? These and other issues are current in any country that claims to be democratic, giving credence to a comment made earlier in the opening sections of this volume that democracy has to be practiced, engaged with and performed on a daily basis.

According to Hilary Janks, South Africa is in trouble. She observes wryly that the "health service is in a mess, the schools are in a mess, the infrastructure is starting to crumble." She is unequivocal in laying the blame at the feet of the government. This is what happens, she claims, when governments systematically refuse to educate the population. This, she notes, is what the apartheid state did. "In some ways," she reflects, "I live in an anarchic society." Although this may be true, South Africa remains an example of how strong the urge for democracy has been and the recognition that there is still much to accomplish. Thus, we act and are acted upon.

Mastin Prinsloo picks up on this strand and comments that the point of the critical literacies project he works with shares similar concerns with all approaches to studying the socio-political and ideological nature of literacy and education. Dr. Prinsloo's point is that, when people engage educationally or intellectually, people also engage in writing themselves into the social context in particular ways. And the critical project, he avers, is always about attempting to understand how the social is also simultaneously "writing" us. It is not simply about reading and writing,

he claims, it is really about how certain kinds of readers and writers are identified as literate by particular social processes. This Video-Clip, 6.5, can be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/3NJYMeO239c

Dr. Prinsloo is very candid in his assessment that South Africa is facing a momentous situation where large numbers of people, up to 70 or 80 percent in some areas, do not have access to good quality schooling. The mass public school system produces only about a quarter of the population that have developed the resources in terms of educational, social and cultural capital required to enter the workforce with a meaningful career. Also, as has been noted in other countries such as Australia and Canada, significant numbers of the populace live outside of the formal urban sector. These people who reside in rural or regional areas, according to Dr. Prinsloo, are being trained for unemployment.

Perhaps the school system has become irrelevant to the needs of the students. If an educational system can not meet the needs of the students in terms of either the employment needs of the dominant power bloc within that culture, and it can not provide students with the tools to make them critically literate in order to hold those who have the power to become more accountable to them, perhaps the relevancy issue should be more carefully addressed. Unfortunately, at the same time, South Africa's national curriculum values the practice of standardization. As Dr. Prinsloo believes, this curriculum "pretends" that schooling is the same across middle-class and working-class contexts. This national curriculum, he continues, along with the prescribed methods of teaching, have been based on the best forms of progressive, critical education available in the best schools in Canada and the USA, requiring progressive, interactive, learner-centred educational practices.

This is a drama that plays out in numerous countries worldwide, particularly those countries that are in the process of becoming developed. For those countries, which are unable to support a complete educational infrastructure, numerous pedagogical and curricular components are imported from other more developed countries. Then, as Shimizu (2001) has already noted in this volume, large-scale reform is not truly or completely replicable from one location to another that is culturally or even geographically different from the original source. The problem is surprisingly common – when component parts are "parachuted" into place, there is often no support provided to help teachers understand what is expected of them. In this case, Mastin Prinsloo maintains that teachers have no idea how to match their instructional beliefs or philosophies of education with their pedagogical beliefs or the policies, procedures and practices that are implicit and occasionally explicit in the South African national curriculum.

Who is to blame? Is it the teachers' fault? The fault of the policy-makers, or of the society in general? Although any or all of these may be factors mitigating against the implementation of the national curriculum as it was envisioned, one crucial issue is the fact that, here in South Africa, there is no exemplary teacher training program that will help pre-service teachers to develop their capacities for critical literacy. In fact,

the new national curriculum attempts to ameliorate pedagogic problems of the past by "teacher-proofing" the new curriculum. Whereas the previous curriculum was felt to not give teachers enough advice regarding the sanctioned pedagogic practices of the day, the latest curriculum provides a far more prescribed curriculum, even while still not teaching them how to achieve their pedagogic goals. In fact, it is not possible in South Africa, at this time, to develop a mass critical education program simply because the teachers do not possess or even have access to the background, personal experience or resources that are required in order for them to understand, appreciate and accept such a critical literacy program as even being worthwhile, let alone possible.

Dr. Prinsloo firmly believes that educators must engage with the social nature of literacy and language because literacy and language acquisition are fundamentally social activities. However, to understand and identify ways in which spoken and written texts are fundamental forms of social engagement requires an understanding of the political nature of these texts – a catch-22 situation – and also to understand that reading, writing, and speaking in situations of multilingualism and diversity happen in terms of people relating differently to different ways of speaking, reading and writing. When people are speaking, reading, writing differently, such differences tend to become translated into deficit terms. Difference is frequently translated into inferiority. Consequently, educators are often at work with forms of reading, writing, and speaking which are constantly and instantly being processed, socially and individually, in terms of what resources these texts carry in terms of social capital or the absence thereof. Because of this, educators and teachers of teachers cannot teach reading, writing or language on the assumption that they are simply providing valued resources to people. Dr. Prinsloo, comments, from the outset, it is necessary to understand the political nature of teaching. However, he also offers the caveat that, if educators claim they are providing high status resources, they must also recognize that those who take on the resources provided will have to pay a price for the newfound resources by identifying their previous resources as being inferior or at least of lower status. As a result of this shift in understanding, those who accept the new resources will have to take on certain kinds of (new) identities to engage with the new resources. Those resources, which were previously held, will be left behind in some way, shape or form, as newer kinds of investments and identity work are called for in order for the individual's new resources to be congruent with the status accorded those resources, be they critical literacy or other forms of highly valued intellectual or cultural capital. By way of summary, Dr. Prinsloo concludes that not only must educators engage with those powerful resources they can give to people, they must also engage critically with the prices investments, and inequalities that people must pay when they come into educational institutions and wish to receive these critical resources.

Carolyn McKinney recognizes that one of the impacts of globalization that has helped to spawn a variety of post-modern texts in varied contexts is a kind of heightened consumerism that she feels is very important to the study of critical

literacy, as more and more children are interpreted and interpolated as consumers who will buy toys, clothing and accessories from the very moment that they can even look at texts. Dr. McKinney notes that in South Africa, where there are such engulfing inequalities, a very few are wealthy and exist in the same country alongside, but insulated from, massive poverty and inequality. Video-Clip 6.6, Carolyn McKinney, may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/0aI5Ef3kSF8

Because of this systemic inequality, it is very difficult, claims Dr. McKinney, to encourage wealthy students to develop a critique of overconsumption. Simply put, many of these students are unable to see their own position of privilege, particularly in relation to those who are not in similar positions. Carolyn McKinney offers the following:

> It's almost as if you're saying "Well, you know, now apartheid's over," and you're saying, "Well you've had the goodies for a long time and now you're saying well, actually it's not good for us to have those goodies. Well, I want the goodies, too." (Carolyn McKinney, Interview)

Professor McKinney identifies the point that, while it is difficult to get people in positions of privilege to interrogate their own privilege, it is even more difficult to accomplish this when those in positions of power and privilege feel threatened that the source of their power is no longer secure, that it is being questioned by those who garner less power and privilege. It is also difficult, she states, to get people who have just moved in to the middle or upper class to interrogate their new privilege in terms of their own patterns of consumption or how they feel about their newfound positions within their communities. In South Africa, and in many countries worldwide, Professor McKinney sees a pathologization of the poor, who are frequently seen as less than full citizens and are often blamed for their poverty as if this is the state of grace that they have chosen for themselves rather than having been unable to access the various forms of capital required for them to advance their status. Meritocratic thinking is alive and well in all parts of the world, it seems. Those who are standing on the side of the road begging or who do not have a home are often seen as not working hard enough or not caring enough about themselves, family or friends, rather than recognizing that the unemployment rate is as high at 40 percent or more, and that it is unlikely that people who are marginalized at the best of times would somehow do better in times of uncertain and unstable national economies in countries with no social systems or security nets to help those who require assistance the most. Dr. McKinney acknowledges that these are all extremely complex issues made more complex by global patterns that are influencing macro-politics at the international level, as well as at the local level in a trickle down effect.

How do we, as producers and consumers of texts, as Dr. McKinney asks, engage with the huge amounts of text that have become so quickly available to us? This is why critical literacy is so important, Dr. McKinney claims. Critical literacy is

the vehicle that will empower and enable students to discern which texts are worth engaging with and which ones are not. At this point, Professor McKinney cites a research study where the researcher was describing how he had encouraged upper primary students to do research, using Google, on the Holocaust. However, the first three sites that came up were Holocaust deniers' accounts rather than actual accounts of the Holocaust. The concern, of course, is that, in circumstances like this one, if the first three "hits" are congruent with one another, it is tempting to accept that as the orthodoxy, the "real" version of the events past, rather than searching to the eighth or ninth hit, for example.

Dr. McKinney asks how we can get students to explore the topic fully, rather than merely accepting the first information available, or even the most prevalent point of view. In answer, she avers that this can only be accomplished through teaching students to become critically literate and by reading critically. Dr. McKinney also asks about the resources that they could call upon in order to construct and produce their own texts. It is this technological perspective, she claims, that presents the greatest challenge, as well as the largest change, in considering some of the impacts on critical literacy.

NORTH AMERICA

In North America, technology has also heavily influenced critical literacy. Since Canada imports much culture from its neighbor to the south, much of the impact that technology has had is similar in both locales. In Canada, however, with only one tenth of the population of the United States, perhaps the saturation point is not quite so high. Valerie Kinloch speaks about those who see themselves as scholars of the "new" literacies and notes that they, in response to new technological innovations, focus heavily on digital and multimodal literacies. This is important work, she agrees, because this is an area of critical literacies that have not yet been explored. Dr. Kinloch does not separate the new literacies from other, more traditional types of literacies because she does not view either as distinct and separate entities because they both represent sociocultural orientations and ways of thinking about literacy. To view this Video-Clip, 6.7, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/9clu_rg7qvI

But when it comes to the critical part of critical literacy, Dr. Kinloch relies heavily on the work of Paulo Freire (2000) and some of the antecedents to his work, particularly in terms of his views on thinking about the word, about the world, and about oppression. She asks about how, in attempting to reach a higher state of consciousness relating to the numerous social issues which plague societies around the world, can that work be accomplished through literacy of any kind? The new literacies present similar questions, although the answers to these questions posed by the new literacies require a significant amount of thinking around multi-modal forms of communication, and about how different linguistic channels of communication,

including digital technologies influence the communication itself. While people such as Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innes before him may have described the phenomenon, much work in that area has already been accomplished, specifically in terms of expanding the working definition of what it is that constitutes being literate. This is of particular importance in today's society when literacy in reading and writing is taken for granted, but to be truly literate, one must also have oracy, numeracy and computer technology at the ready (White, 2008).

Professor Kinloch then moves to a discussion of how these technologies change the way we understand social justice movements and issues around equitable treatment for all people. First, we must be able to come to grips with how critical literacy has historically been represented within the North American context and how it needs to change. This is a framing that is essential in order to get us thinking about issues related to reading, writing, doing, thinking and other functions associated with critical literacy. What this needs to become, she states, is a more robust theoretical framework and an approach that really moves us from the schools to the communities, both locally and on a global level, in order to actually engage and work with marginalized people and with people of all backgrounds. Rather than merely reading about, discussing or viewing peoples' experiences vicariously, Dr. Kinloch claims that we need to become a part of such experiences – experiences grounded in a history of Civil Rights movements. And, as the plight of marginalized peoples becomes more clearly understood and felt, the result would be a push for equity in educational spaces. Hence, she asks, "How do we contribute to this history of critical literacy in ways where we're actually in communities and in schools?" Adopting an agenda of taking action alongside other people is a far different strategy than merely bringing our own favourite perspective and depositing this atop what everyone else is thinking and doing and how they view the world. By simply putting our own perspective into play and even by "affirming" the histories of those who have been or who continue to be marginalized merely replicates those power dynamics and structures that we already have in place. It is these power dynamics and structures that we need to dismantle, according to Valerie Kinloch.

By way of a "reality check," Dr. Kinloch asks aloud if things are still the same as they have always been. Do we still have those same demands and the same questions? Do we still engage in conversations and experience realities within different educational spaces where students are historically marginalized or are from historically marginalized backgrounds? Do they still walk into our classrooms and do we still have no idea what to do with diverse and different students because we have failed to equip ourselves with understanding difference and diversity. As Dr. Kinloch claims, these are still ongoing problems that require redress. And they need to be addressed now, not in the future. If we fail to deal with the issues as they present themselves to us at the present time, how will we address them in some future iteration? The alternatives to not addressing such issues of democratic rights are, for the most part, unattractive. As one pundit acidly observed, "We must take care of the poor people, before they turn on us." Dr. Kinloch muses on how different

historical moments lend themselves to how we think about racially, linguistically and ethnically diverse individuals who populate schools and communities in North America today.

Professor Kinloch concludes this video-segment by noting how important it is to model our approaches to critical literacy. She uses the example of not being able to talk about equity in the classroom with pre-service and in-service teachers and then go home to engage in inequitable behavior. If equity is the issue, then it must be approached and attended to wherever it is, even in one's own home. We cannot afford to be equivocal about this issue, she points out, or contradictory. This is life work, this project in humanization. And, she adds, it is a social enterprise. We must come to understand how to engage and interact with this work with other people because, if we are not engaging in this work with other people, we are all alone on our very own little island.

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CHAPTER 7

THE PHILOSOPHICAL

> Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time.
>
> —E. B. White (1946)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

But what does it all mean? It is the philosophical context that binds the previous contexts together in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities associated with conducting, engaging in and performing critical literacy activities on a daily basis. This context allows for the necessary introspection and thoughtfulness that may aid in delving into deeper philosophical questions of meaning. Through the philosophical context, one can contemplate those deeper issues that texts may embody. Acting as a binder to the aggregate of the other contexts, it is the philosophical context that compares and contrasts meanings, seeks patterns and attempts to come to an understanding of all that the research means, embodies and foreshadows. As such, these five contexts represent an orientation to inquiry that researchers, graduate students and professionals and practitioners alike may find useful.

As we burrow deeper into critical literacy and its power to create change, with each succeeding context, it is hoped that the reader will agree that critical literacy has the potential to interrupt what some may refer to as a downward spiral of (post) modern society. Merely by asking why such and such practices are in place and how they are affecting individuals and groups of individuals for good or ill, perhaps critical literacy may provide a ray of hope in attempting to regain good governance – governance that has the welfare, happiness and security of all its citizens at heart.

This chapter continues to preserve the format of previous chapters by introducing Australia first, followed by South Africa and Canada, respectively. Allan Luke opens the discussion with a revisiting of the notion of text.

AUSTRALIA

Texts are always situated in particular social fields, notes Dr. Allan Luke. They can be institutional fields, particular media environments, or institutions like schooling, churches and mosques, he states. Barbara Comber, in a preceding video-clip echoed these sentiments in her comment regarding the need to recognize places as spaces in their own right as sites of critical endeavor, engagement and interchange. Dr. Luke

explains why this is necessary as he adopts the stance that people are positioned within these institutional spaces and places to use texts in specific normative, regulative ways.

Because of these norming and regulating processes and procedures, literacy learning itself is a set of strategies and artifacts that is unnatural and artificial to the species. To clarify, Professor Luke identifies the fact that, because each and every one of us is a unique individual, there is, therefore, no natural way to read or write. This is because literacy, as a set of non-natural strategies and artifacts, can be considered a technology when compared with oracy, or "speaking," which is considered to be a species behaviour. Literacy, in terms of reading and writing, by definition, is not a species behavior because, as Dr. Luke points out that, by this standard, peoples and cultures which do not read or write, and which would be considered to be illiterate, would also be considered to be non-human. To view Video-Clip 7.1, please see:

https://youtu.be/J0vBtGH7iBM

Dr. Luke has created an "illogical" syllogism that runs something like this: 1) All cultures which speak, read and write are human, 2) some cultures do not read and write, 3) Therefore, some cultures are not human. Clearly, while it is a chilling notion that not all cultures are human, we can easily falsify the syllogism by recognizing that reading and writing, a particularly colonial type of literacy, are not essential to the concept of humanity. This, then, is what makes literacy, of the reading and writing variety, an artificial, in terms of its non-natural strategies and artifacts, technology. What we get, then, when we begin to study literacy, according to Allan Luke, is an historical technology of texts emerging in various cultures. We take these technologies of texts as the taken-for-granted ways that different people in various cultures read and write.

Dr. Luke moves on to describe the critical literacy agenda as he sees it. He believes that a part of this agenda is not merely a critique of texts and their accompanying ideologies. Even though this is a part of the Freirean Agenda, as well as numerous other approaches to critical literacy, this critique of text and ideology represents a de-naturalization of, or a criticism, if you will, of taken-for-granted ways that people and cultures in many societies have come to read and write. While these ways may serve to define, at least in part, their societies and cultures, they in no way serve to define the citizens of that culture or society as human or inhuman.

Literacy practices, then, are culture-specific ways of viewing, constructing meaning and interacting with texts. Since texts can also be seen as comprised of innumerable social elements, it is easy to see that a particular way that a society responds to a text of any sort is a function of the society within which the citizens live, and this is why many kinds of texts can be read as normalizing and regulative in function. Because of this, Dr. Luke comments that, as one comes to understand the ways that texts are handled, they can be recognized as being bequeathed to citizens within a society by various societal institutions, and within those institutions are traditions of reading and writing which have been selected from any number of

possible alternatives. As a result, claims Dr. Luke, the very worst scenario that could occur to critical literacy would be a checklist of how critical literacy could be understood, utilized and personalized. Again, by virtue of its definition, critical literacy should become an evolving process of critique, dissonance and abrasion against dominant agendas and ways of reading and writing, as well as with the spoken word.

Peter Freebody agrees that critical literacy is, in a deep sense, a way to draw attention to the nature of interpretation, claiming it as a mode of inquiry into the process of interpreting any given text. Video-Clip 7.2, Peter Freebody, is available at:

http://youtu.be/bF1C51-PHN4

Critical literacy, when viewed in this way, as a mode of inquiry into the process of interpreting any given text, serves as a lightening rod for other kinds of understanding, as well. By way of identifying some examples, Peter Freebody sees it as a trigger for such issues as the disciplining of young people, the standardization of standard English as the only acceptable Australian language, and the socioeconomic and cultural access and privilege which attend certain ways of using language. Dr. Freebody also sees that critical literacy is not just limited to schooling, but to education in all its forms and in all walks of life. He says that a part of any understanding of literacy must also include an understanding of the role it plays in governmentality, and in politics, as well as in the ideological trinity of cultural diversity, migration and economic performance. Unfortunately, regulated as they are by the hierarchical and power-laden nature of schooling, interactions within and outside of the classroom cannot easily be reconciled with education for democracy and egalitarian relations (Giroux, 1983). Consequently, overcoming these limitations require that the roots of hegemony in schooling and beyond its walls, into the larger society, be uncovered, challenged and redressed.

Dr. Freebody acknowledges that there have been repeated and systematic attempts to de-professionalize teachers through the relinquishing, by educators, of assessment in core areas such as literacy and numeracy to governmental bodies. He notes that responsibility for assessment represents a position of power, for assessment "is where we show our hand on what really matters" (Freebody, Interview).

Critical literacy, it seems, can also look quite different in differing contexts. So, for example, Dr. Freebody notes that that a historian might engage in an act or process of critical literacy that may look very different from the ways in which a biologist, an economist, an art historian or an English literature specialist might do those sorts of things. Thus, critical literacy is not a prescription, a methodology or a recipe but, as has been noted previously, it is a stance, an attitude or a state of mind that embraces a notion of equity and, ultimately, of equality for all.

What Peter Freebody finds fascinating is the ability of literacy to be used for good or for ill. Citing Rosalind Thomas's (1992) book, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece,* he states that the technology of literacy in its many different forms has been

used throughout history to oppress and marginalize people as much as it has been used to emancipate and empower. He says:

> … It just depends on what the society does with it and how they set up the apprenticeships for their youngsters to understand this set of technologies and means of participating in the world. (Peter Freebody, Interview)

These two contradictory potentials are always available in any literate society. And, continuing to follow the examples set by ancient civilizations, specifically the Ancient Greeks and Romans, there are constants in the way that literacy has been employed. The "constants," as pointed out by Thomas relate to the tremendous capacity that occurs with a mastering of literacy and, in particular, scribal literacy and control of the media of dissemination to oppress further the already marginalized and disenfranchised individuals and groups. The power of the word has a tremendous ability for continuing to vilify other groups and to allocate blame for social and economic failures into these "convenient corners" of the society. In juxtaposition, there is an equally powerful capacity for individuals and groups to understand the process of critical literacy in order to emancipate and empower themselves in order to gain true equity with other more privileged individuals and groups. However, such a critical stance towards literacy is often a difficult attitude to foster.

Barbara Comber makes note of the fact that teachers are less able to explore and to be creative and authentic in their teaching than has been the case in past decades. She feels that teachers are more overburdened now than in the past and, consequently, are less able to make the time for critical literacy. Perhaps partly due to standardization projects that dot the globe, with Australia being no exception, Dr. Comber suggests that there is more pressure on teachers nowadays to focus on the decoding and encoding elements of reading and writing, even while the national *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Barr et al., 2008) still pays lip service in support of a more critical approach to literacy. Further to this, in support of the fact that it is not an *absent* discourse, Dr. Comber points out that the new Australian curriculum, known as the National Curriculum, maintains a focus throughout the grades and in many subject areas on children learning to become creative and critically literate. However, even if it is not an "absent" discourse, there are many different approaches to literacy and learning that obviously are in competition with one another. This is because, she suggests, the federal government in Australia has enormous power over what actually transpires in schools. This power comes from economic/financial sources as, according to Dr. Comber, test results and the capacity for states to improve test results are tied to "reward" funding initiatives. The focus then, shifts from what children need to learn to how it is that children need to be taught in order to improve test scores (a wildly inaccurate proxy for learning) in order to garner more lucrative circumstances for their schools and, indirectly, for their students. She says:

> So the whole political economy around education and what counts as a proper education for our kids is really up for grabs in a different way than I've experienced throughout my life as an educator. (Barbara Comber, Interview)

To view Video-Clip 7.3, please go to:

http://youtu.be/wxny1O_6A2o

Dr. Comber recognizes that this scenario is not exclusive to Australia, but is being enacted and performed in numerous countries in a variety of ways throughout the developed world. She points to the notion that, in times of increasing diversity, governments tend to become more directive about processes relating to standardization and about standardization itself. During such times, governments often become more concerned about fostering competition in the belief, presumably, that competition is more productive than co-operation. It is also an interesting move to link standardization to competition. A third point that Dr. Comber mentions is the growing focus on security during times of increasing diversity. This last point requires no further comment on the juxtapositioning of newcomers, and diverse groups of newcomers at that, with issues of greater security.

Perhaps, rather than assuming that standardization of curricula and other elements of schooling are what is needed in order to harness this runaway diversity and commodify education to ensure full employment for everyone, curriculum and schooling should be looked at from a more "salutogenic" (Kelly, 2014) perspective, as opposed to the current "pathogenic" approach.

Salutogenesis (after Antonovsky, 1979) promotes a focus on health rather than on disease, but acknowledges that both "healthy" and "diseased" states exist on the same continuum. Pathogeny, on the other hand, where many schools currently situate themselves, sees issues in terms of how diseased or unhealthy they are. In other words, schools commonly regard "dis-ease" as a departure from the norm and as something that must be cured. Salutogenesis, on the other hand, views dis-ease as the natural condition. This simple flip of the coin changes everything, as health becomes something to be created. In terms of curriculum and matters of schooling, including educational leadership, this latter approach views schools as inherently imperfect and chaotic sites. The aim then becomes to create a more desirable, yet still inherently unstable condition. The pathogenetic approach, on the other hand, assumes the natural state to be inherently stable so that the function or purpose of curriculum and matters of schooling, including educational leadership, is to prevent or neutralize any form of malfunction – an attitude that seems to be very much in concert with the neo-liberal agenda.

The challenge for educators is to consider what it is that "diversity" means for curricula. Although Barbara Comber uses the word "proper" to describe what the salutogenic curriculum should be, it is fairly certain that some elements of culturally relevant discourse, strategies and pedagogy would become a part of such

a "proper" curriculum. This ideal curriculum would also contain a critically literate stance towards schooling and towards the greater democratic society, of which schooling is a part. This, it is supposed, would make the fine art of curriculum construction a "moral" enterprise, in Bauman's (2013) sense of the term "moral." Such a curriculum would provide accessible knowledge that does not favour or valorize one perspective over another. This curriculum would be inclusive of everyone's culture. Of value here is the notion of differentiated teaching and learning, which allows for non-transmission style teaching, investigation that is student-centred and, above all, information that is culturally responsive, available and accessible to all, in whatever format is currently in vogue at the time. Such a curriculum would be a moral curriculum because it provides choice in the form of alternatives to the transmission model and values student knowledge that they bring to the fore as they gain greater knowledge through exploration, investigation and research activities.

Allan Luke agrees with this point of view as he states that, no matter what changes, internal or external to the school itself, are made, none of this will matter unless students are invited to return to the centre of the educational process. Dr. Luke claims that one can improve ever-dwindling budgets, provide anti-racist education or whatever is called for, empower principals, write different curriculum documents, script pedagogy, and develop a climate of high stakes testing, yet none of this will matter unless the culture of the school becomes one that is intellectually and culturally generative. In order to accomplish this, one must concertedly transform fossilized patterns of face-to-face direct instruction as a preferred form of pedagogy and also fundamentally alter the existing forms and pattern of teacher-student interaction to be more culturally relevant and critical in order to develop a system of schooling, perhaps one school at a time, that is, at once, both intellectually and culturally generative. That is to say, there is a need for schools to respond to the students needs, rather than to the needs of society, consumer-driven corporations and fiscally naïve governments, which have allowed the marketplace to gain an upper hand in the construction of democracy. To view Video-Clip 7.4, please go to:

https://youtu.be/5JVOoHrnxjk

Dr. Luke proceeds to comment on schools that seem to be getting better results with, for example, indigenous students. He believes that, for these students who are more definitely at risk of becoming marginalized in schools, this marginalization is merely a reflection of their status within society. Such schools, even though they tend to replicate dominant society values, can claim a better atmosphere in terms of school climate and ethos.

But what does it mean to have a more positive ethos? Dr. Luke provides examples of schools as safe places for students (and teachers) to be, schools that co-ordinate with their communities in order to create an open system rather than bounding the school so as to isolate itself from society, as so often happened in years past.

Of further significance is his comment about how, in some parts of Australia, there are “whole-school” and “whole-community” third-way governance systems in place. Simply put, the “third way” is a form of economic governance that attempts to reconcile the best elements of left and right wing policies. Third-way governance systems have been attempted in certain areas of the world, particularly in Europe prior to World War II. Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom advocated that his “kind of socialism is a set of values based around notions of social justice” (Hastings, Mason, & Pyper, 2000), presumably based on the work of Anthony Giddens (1998). Interestingly, there is no mention made by Blair of notions of equity, only equality, and, as we know, equality is the handmaiden of standardization, meritocracy and capitalism. Perhaps Blairs’s *third way* more aptly conforms to the notion of “democratic capitalism,” as mentioned earlier in this volume. However, in Dr. Luke’s view, the third way governance systems relate to a renewal of social democracy, one that is based on equity.

In addition to his views on positive school ethos and third way governance strategies that are occurring in Australia, Professor Luke also notes that, regarding pedagogies and teaching strategies, teachers’ face-to-face practices are a “site of construction that’s being altered and being rebuilt on a day-to-day basis” (Luke, Interview). What he is finding in his own school-based macro-quantitative research, Dr. Luke claims, is that pedagogy is the most important of all these elements. He is proud of his role in Australian educational reform and is somewhat taken aback that this work has been incorporated in other far-flung school systems and school districts, even though that was never the original intent. There is no magic or zealous conversion in this, he avers, as it is simply about working with schools and school children. Perhaps this could serve as a lesson for other educational jurisdictions in other parts of the world.

Dr. Luke uses the metaphor of the Chinese Boxes, a set of boxes of graduated size – each one fitting into the next larger size, much like Russian matryoshka dolls – in which nest, in descending order of size and, hence, power, system reform followed by school reform, classroom reform and, finally, teacher/student interaction. Each of these sites, he claims, represents a locus of intense political struggle. In retrospect, he notes, the previous generation, in the seat of power, did not understand the need to respect people at different sites along the way. As an example, Dr. Luke provides a voice-over re-enactment of people at each site within the nested boxes of educational enterprise that provides a fictitious, humourous, yet compelling view of the problems faced by each of the inhabitants of a particular site:

> People fighting at big policy level would say, “Well, you know, they’re just working at teacher-ed[ucation].” The teacher-ed people were saying, “Well, we do this every day. Nobody quite gets us and nobody loves us sufficiently. All they are is academics doing post-structuralist theory there.” (Allan Luke, Interview)

Allan Luke concludes this video-clip by pointing out that no one seems to understand that all of these different elements are required in order to provide a substantively broad educational reform agenda.

Peter Freebody considers the problem of assessment and signals the danger in reducing assessment to a set of rubrics that exclude elements that may not have been considered assessment material in order to validate others, quite arbitrarily upon occasion. The danger is, he claims, the problem of becoming trapped within one's own critique. However, he notes, there is significant pressure on those who have advocated for more flexible assessment policies, practices and procedures, to seriously address the issues that the problem of assessment has always posed – how can an evaluating system accurately provide a proxy for what the student has learned? He asks, even if one moves towards "rich, less formal, portfolio type assessment" that indicates positive growth in whatever area is being assessed, how do you really know that this truly represents student knowledge growth? In answer to his own question about how do you know the student is more knowledgeable than (s)he was even six months ago, or last year, or longer ago still, Dr. Freebody claims that we really should be able to articulate our assessment and evaluation processes better than is currently being demonstrated. To view Video-Clip 7.5, please proceed to:

http://youtu.be/zdcZqDpM0mU

Dr. Freebody goes on to state that governments are now looking towards, not evidence-based policy as has been popular in years past but is moving towards its inverse, policy-based evidence. There is an analogue similar to this in leadership circles that plays upon an absurdist twist to recommend, not data-driven policy making, but its evil twin, policy-driven data making. Peter Freebody claims that we now expect researchers in the sciences and social sciences to find evidence that the policy is positive, effective and actually works because it has become intensely political. We must either retain this government or win that election and so the policies must be proven to be effective in order for governments to be validated by them. The result of this charade at the school system level, at least, is policy-based evidence.

Consequently, according to Peter Freebody, it is therefore becoming increasingly important for societies to have a competent, literate electorate. The way for this to materialize, he suggests, is to develop critically minded graduates. Part of the issue for Dr. Freebody is the necessity of having the bigger picture of the historical moment which has been shaped and that is currently being shaped by the media use of politics. There is a dire need, he opines, for this competent, literate electorate to come to an understanding of what they are now expected to be in charge of, morally and ideologically, as well as the basic skills relating to the managing of budgets.

It is interesting that Dr. Freebody points to "the media use of politics," rather than the reverse that we have been familiar with in the past. In that time, we would

have referred to the "political use of media." However, in these postmodern times, or in these times of "liquid modernity," if you will, contradictions and anomalies abound. The media use of politics signals that the media is now in charge of shaping the political climate, with or without the consent of the politicians or of those most affected by it, the electorate. This signals a change not only in focus of the gaze (Castells, 2000; Bauman & Lyons, 2013) but also in the gaze itself.

Thus, according to Peter Freebody, multi-literacies including numeracy, oracy, and technological literacies (White, 2008) compel the appreciation of two aspects of complexity "that have traditionally been poorly represented in theories of literacy and theories of literacy pedagogy and practice as well" (Freebody, Interview). One such aspect, according to Peter Freebody, is the growing fluidity, complexity and manipulability of the texts themselves. Part of this fluidity is due to the medium in which the text(s) has been composed, echoing Marshall McLuhan's (1964) prophetic words about the medium being the message.

The fact that we can now compose, create, and access texts that we couldn't have imagined in years past and the fact that school children have grown up within this technological climate far outstrips the ability of educational systems to remain current. In fact, as Peter Freebody states, the way educational institutions understand the use of texts to build and generate knowledge, attitude, skills, and values is perhaps a half dozen generations behind current technological progress. Perhaps this is not all gloomy prophecy, however, as these very skills that Dr. Freebody speaks of are reminiscent of John Goodlad's (1997) perspective on the purpose of education to develop knowledge for its own sake, social skills, citizenship and employment opportunities (Hargreaves, 2000). This set of competencies represents a liberal education, one that has not yet succumbed to the "back to basics" movements of the neo-conservatives or which has not yet become so "teacher-proof" that any hope of becoming critically literate has evaporated in teacher-centred, teacher-directed instruction of the transmission model that Freire (1972) spoke so passionately against. Even though the educational institutions may be hopelessly out of date when it comes to understanding the new use of technology related to texts to build and generate knowledge, Dr. Freebody adds that teacher education institutions lag several generations behind this.

With a nod to the postmodern "condition," Dr. Freebody notes that the children in regular classrooms in Australia are now very multicultural and, therefore, very multilingual as well. There are high percentages of children whose presence in Australia does not exceed three generations. Even so, he says, even if they were Australian-born, they are still oriented toward their original culture thanks to media technologies such as Skype and the Internet. Even the cultures back "home" have changed and become "hybrid" as a result of the importation of foreign cultures through the effects of globalization. The movement towards globalized economies has also helped to spawn movements in ideas, people, media and entertainment events, which tend to encourage reactions of tribalization within segments of the society itself (Bauman, 1998; White, 2011).

Historians are in general agreement that, as society places increasing pressure on institutions to respond to societal needs by producing people who are literate in a number of qualitatively different ways, Dr. Freebody notes with irony that these people were not merely attempting to conform or to become more profoundly obedient. They were reading in a new zone, which represents a paradigm shift. Such paradigm shifts are not without precedence. According to Peter Freebody, this occurred in the 8th century in Western Europe, and again in the middle 1100s, when the monasteries actually started to become what we now think of as universities. It was then that people began to write specific programs and curricula for reading and writing – literacy, as it was then known. However, the texts remained the same. Until 1400, the Bible was fundamentally the major text in Western Europe, even though the ways of reading and talking about it had dramatically changed through two great occasions, or rites of passage.

Rites of passages are fundamental to any traditional society. A traditional culture will attempt to standardize its beliefs, values, mores and ways of doing things because one of the main points of a culture is that it tends to interpret events, artifacts, ideas and activities in the same way, consistently throughout the society with minor variations for those on the margins of the society or for those who have been disenfranchised by the society. Consequently, notes Dr. Freebody, the enforcing of a specific homogeneous interpretation of societal artifacts is merely an instinctive part of how a culture survives – through shared interpretation. Suffice this to say that critical literacy may be an issue whereby those who wish to deprofessionalize teaching can attack this as a site of contestation to show that teachers need to be regulated in their pedagogic practices.

Turning to the (de)professionalization of the teaching force, Dr. Freebody acknowledges that, at this point in history, teaching, as a profession, has reached a plateau where, for the moment at least, teaching is not about to become any more professional. Teachers are not going to be able to exercise greater autonomy in the development of their students' intellectual capabilities, nor will ideological orientations or the technical practical capabilities of teachers be able to evolve within the current climate of neoliberal interpretation, restraint, and standardization. And, in order to educate children properly, says Dr. Freebody, it is, as everyone knows, extremely expensive. This is a point of real ambivalence, he avers, because, in the considered estimation of the authors of this volume, if one thinks that education is expensive, the lack of it is even more so. In short, as Peter Freebody suggests, the debate that swirls around critical literacy is really a debate about what it means to be a teacher in the 21st Century.

Barbara Comber adds to this by regarding the plight of the Australian Aborigines. She claims that the Australian society is still very not doing a good job on any front in terms of Aboriginal health or education. Those statistics, she claims, continue to be nothing less than shocking. Also addressing the young immigrants or refugees who arrive in Australia from other parts of the world, most often from other Pacific Rim countries, Dr. Comber notices a number of issues arriving with them that the

host country must become aware of, particularly in terms of educational trajectories, real life choices they have, where they live, the kinds of work their parents do, and the quality of their lives in school and in the society in general. From Dr. Comber's perspective, critical literacy emanates from a very long tradition of considering the broader purposes of education, and about the relationship between education and social justice. So, in the face of significant inequities, Barbara Comber believes it is more urgent than ever before to ensure that the teacher candidates in pre-service education programs and those who are already serving in schools are provided with the professional development opportunities that they require in order to discuss such matters as mentioned above. It is important to ensure, she claims, that educators in any position are not so focused on the "next test or comprehension strategy" that they lose sight of the "big picture" or what the purpose of obtaining literacy is, in the first place. Video-Clip 7.6 may be viewed at:

http://youtu.be/aV3a0c6De-8

She goes on to say that, in her opinion, critical literacy has to have both content and context, as does literacy, *per se*. As such, this brings into focus the relationships between the content (What the teacher is helping them to understand) and the knowledge generating (What the objective of the study is) process, because content and knowledge, in the form of language and textuality is "never about nothing." Critical literacy, then, looks deeply into those relationships between the object under study (the text), in terms of content, and the textual practices associated with that text.

SOUTH AFRICA

Australia has set the stage for educational reform through critical literacy in Australia and abroad. Of course, strands of this have benefitted other countries, both developed and developing, around the globe, including South Africa. Carolyn McKinney looks to critical literacy as a resource in helping South Africa to move beyond it's apartheid past by helping to erase the rigid and stereotypical apartheid categories of race. Dr. McKinney philosophizes that South Africa's apartheid past helped to construct and impose a specific kind of life on the citizens of this country that carries forward to the present day. She reminds us that this is not merely a South African dilemma, but represents a much more global problem in terms of race and difference. While there is a multiplicity of categories of difference, according to Carolyn McKinney, in South Africa, apartheid continues to play itself out more in terms of race than any other category of difference. Video-Clip 7.7 may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/dGT_sz8bC9Y

Professor McKinney is optimistic that critical literacy can be of service in deconstructing binaries of difference, particularly in terms of "essentialist" categories. She believes that critical literacy tools are very appropriate for doing

the kind of identity work that is required. As well, she claims all of us, as global citizens, must take the concern over difference seriously. We must learn how to deal with difference and how it intersects with inequality through the utilization of power dynamics.

Looking towards the work of the New London Group of multiliteracy scholars, Carolyn McKinney reflects that, for her, they were positioned very much from a critical discourse perspective, the analysis of texts, and other types of endeavours that inform critical literacy work. The New London Group, composed of some of the most brilliant minds in Britain, Australia and North America, was responsible for coining the term, "multiliteracies" partly because of the rapid changes in the way people are communicating due to new and miniaturized technologies and also because of the shifts in the use of standard and "non-standard" forms of English within differing cultures. All these new ways of communicating require new ways of understanding a multimedia world (The New London Group, 1996).

However, Dr. McKinney feels, much of these earlier, critical literacy underpinnings have not been emphasized in later multiliteracies work. Current multiliteracies work "tends to focus more on the range of resources that people can draw on in meaning-making," and this means moving into design (and redesign) in new media environments. Here, Dr. McKinney uses the term "design" to refer to the process of how people produce their own meanings through text construction, such as through a story or an essay. However, this later trend does not mitigate against using multilitieracies to teach critical literacy. Depending on one's approach to multiliteracies, one may even choose to foreground multiliteracies approaches, even though the critical dimension may not be so readily apparent, particularly in terms of issues of power.

Hilary Janks continues the discussion about identity work in post-apartheid South Africa. She states that she began with her own racialized identity, replete with its position of privilege, particularly in relation to other people who were not White. From this point, she says, one moves out to other multiple identity locations as we encounter and integrate other identity positions, such as race, ethnicity and gender. Consequently, for Dr. Janks, identity and difference are closely related. During the course of each day, we enact and perform these various identities separately or in tandem, even collectively, in order to gain the appropriate access that individual or combined identities may provide us. It is in this way, Dr. Janks says, that one can clearly see the interrelationships between identity, power and access. Those who were born into positions of privilege tend to accrue more privilege, while those who have been marginalized tend to become more marginalized. This is the binary that needs interrupting and redesigning, according to Hilary Janks. As this model that she has been working on came slowly together for her, it formed the basis of her work over the next decade. Video-Clip 7.8 may be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/JIQUCihXy1U

The words “design” and “redesign” have been carefully chosen by Dr. Janks because, as she states, while one can read a book or geography, furniture in a room, the room itself, a house, or even an outfit that someone is wearing, one can’t actually write those things. The word “write” doesn’t work well across such different modes of texts, so for her, the word “design” accomplished what the word “write” could not.

Turning her attention to the past apartheid régime that continues to privilege the White minority, Dr. Janks suggests that this did not provide a very good example of democracy in action. She says that, if people are denied an appropriate civil status for nigh on forty years, status becomes something that is very important to them. As a result, she continues, the outward appearance of status matters tremendously. However, because of this, South Africa is experiencing terrible difficulties. She provides an example of how people want to gain positions of power, such as the position of principal, because of the status associated with this role, not because they want to benefit education in any way. As a consequence of this, any kind of appointment in schools, principal or department head notwithstanding is highly political and have even included threats of violence and death (Janks, 2006). Accompanied by all of this ugliness, she states, is a two-tiered system of education. Poor people, she notes, are still at the receiving end of a poor education.

Unfortunately, claims Hilary Janks, and disappointingly as well, in South Africa, critical literacy hasn’t really penetrated educational systems to the level of the classroom, even though it has penetrated deeply into teacher education programs and is now featured in pre-service curricula. This, she believes, is due to semantics. As she offers, the word “critical” is a slippery word that can mean many things, and educators in South Africa have not been prepared through professional development or pre-service programs to perform serious critical literacy work in their classrooms.

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

In Canada, John Willinsky re-establishes the philosophical and political foundations of critical literacy. Huge influences on the foundations of critical literacy include such heavyweight philosophers as Karl Marx, Michele Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. To view Video-Clip 7.9, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/zf7-uoKsNZA

In returning to his earlier notion of political economy, Dr. Willinsky makes note that an understanding of what we elevate to the world of ideas and culture remains very deeply rooted, philosophically. These understandings operate to systematize and organize knowledge within that political economy. Given this, for Dr. Willinsky, the philosophical foundations attributed to the work of Marx would most definitely include his views of historical materialism. By the same token, Foucault’s work on the genealogy of knowledge would also be a very strong element. Foucault believed

that the ways we think about ideas and the ways in which we value knowledge comes from a long series of social practices that we can excavate in order to think about how they have been constructed. The processes by which such ideas and social practices become validated and valorized are historical, political positionings that we can critique.

Turning to Socrates, Dr. Willinsky offers a consideration regarding a "much older tradition" of asking difficult questions, and of not taking the side of the authorities, consequences notwithstanding. As such, critical literacy has at its core a philosophical orientation in the broad sense that it asks fundamental questions – difficult questions that demand satisfying. Critical literacy asks what is at stake and what counts in satisfying, rather than merely answering, the question. While critical literacy can be deeply and inherently philosophical, it can just as easily be anti-metaphysical or anti-foundational. This contradiction, according to Professor Willinsky, is simply one of the ironies associated with postmodernity.

As philosophical as it is in its intent to introduce students and teachers to larger questions around agency, equity and democracy, John Willinsky claims that critical literacy also implies a type of historical materialism in terms of economics. This harks back to his earlier comments regarding the huge influence of Karl Marx on the field of critical literacy. Thus, as noted earlier, the philosophical foundations attributed to the work of Marx would most definitely include his views of historical materialism, which have found their way into considerations of critical literacy. Although this view is occasionally viewed as "vulgar" Marxism, according to Dr. Willinsky, in terms of its portentous assessment of the tyranny of economic determinism, there is also a much more nuanced approach to culture and to the construction of identity, as well as the relationship of critical literacy to ideas relating to the world of production, consumerism and economics. As such, critical theory from which critical literacy emanates represents a significant philosophical touchstone. Other significant influences for the field have come through the works of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and, more recently, of Jurgen Habermas.

In considering the might of critical literacy as a philosophical construct, Dr. Willinsky adopts the position that the philosophical aspect of critical literacy is less important for its own sake than as a teaching and learning construct. Its strength lies in the fact that it is a stance or an attitude that he feels would be valuable to introduce to students. And, as a stance, he notes that he must also be prepared to accept and respect their rejection of critical literacy just as he would enthusiastically embrace support for it, should that be the case. In any event, what he would want his students to recognize is that critical literacy allows one to regard different perspectives or standpoints, and to come to the realization that no single position should retain a privileged hold on the truth.

Dr. Willinsky proceeds to say that one can also become entrapped in the perspective that valorizes critical literacy as the single, metaphysical (in the sense that it connects reality with the sublime), overarching persuasion, thus imbuing it with the same privileged trappings that it seeks to discredit in other perspectives.

Professor Willinsky states that there is a danger that critical literacy can become trapped within its own critique, under such valorizing conditions. He goes on to say that this position is dogmatic and represents a stance he would not be willing to support. He would, however, recognize the provisional nature of any discussion of topics relative to critical literacy as a "tentative" stance that he would welcome being talked out of.

This reveals another aspect of critical literacy. This is reminiscent of Hilary Janks' comment that her students are unable to ask questions anymore because all their questions have become critical questions. By empowering students to ask questions of a critical nature to those who have varying degrees of power, it is only a matter of time before those who teach students to become critically literate are put to the test by the very students they have coached. While, at first, it may be somewhat unpleasant to be challenged about procedures, content or other artifacts relating to the educational journey, it is important to be able to accept and even embrace such challenges as evidence that the students have taken their lessons to heart. As John Willinsky suggests, "part of what's educational about it is that openness."

Turning to issues of globalism and globalization, Dr. Willinsky recognizes that there is a struggle on a number of fronts. First of all is the understanding that colonialism is not dead, but has issued in another more subtle form of empire building – post-colonialism. Another front is represented by the foment surrounding issues of communication – both in terms of the growing validation of English as a world language, particularly in terms of business, technology and science, as well as in terms of multiliteracies and new and emerging forms of technological communication. A third front is the struggle between the spirit of liberalism and the current neo-liberal juggernaut. Each of these fronts represents a significant facet in the struggle for democratic rights throughout the world. According to John Willinsky, these fronts represent the critical playing field today, in terms of literacy.

In short, it is a new form of warfare. It is a war without sovereignty, simply because it is a war of economics fought by mercenaries – and at stake is our very way of life. Compounding ironies compel us to remember that the previous two world wars, not to mention a good many in between, have been fought to ensure freedom and democratic rights for all. In World War II, the enemy was fascism. Is it different today, as corporations and governments unite in attempts to commodify freedom, to direct societal thought through consumer greed in massive social engineering experiments on a global scale? It is sad to think that so many lives were lost and ruined in the pursuit of a freedom that, barely 75 years later, citizen consumers would willingly abandon for the sake of greater commodification, more insignificant choice and an increasingly tortured environment. Is this what our forefathers proudly and obediently fought for – a supposedly democratic lifestyle, free from coercion and strong in matters of social justice? Citizens appear to have become insensitive – or worse, unconscious (Ralston Saul, 1999) and blindly accept consumerist doctrines, a reduction of freedom and a hollowing out of social programs and even pensions. Perhaps we should begin to contemplate our own positions on this topic. The authors

are in full agreement with John Willinsky's challenge – we would love to be talked out of this perspective.

Dr. Willinsky believes that it would be irresponsible for educators to not bother to address any of the great number of issues around globalization that swirl around students today. As an example, he points to how the English language serves as a dominant world language and how non-English speaking people are positioned as language learners or second language acquisitors and how they are relegated as part of that perspective. And critical literacy is part of that, as we think about multilingualism and of the multiplicity of ways in which the world may be represented.

Dr. Willinsky posits that, as educators, we literally are a part of a global system, or mechanism, for education. We need only consider the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), or Programs for International Student Assessment (PISA), or any aspect of the global testing movement, whether in agreement about standards or globalized textbook companies. Consequently, says Dr. Willinsky, to discuss national education, or even state or provincial educational perspectives, already invokes a false sense of divisions and boundaries. In fact, according to Manuel Castells (2010), globalization has called into question the very need for countries, for border security and for national identities.

Even so, most countries, in a kind of postmodern irony, maintain a brand of nineteenth century nationalism that concerns itself with questions of who counts as a citizen, who can participate, and who the state should be protecting. And to begin to think in terms of Emanuel Kant's philosophical concept of the cosmopolitan, the personal politics of the cosmos, is to move beyond those boundaries and to see ways in which eliminating boundaries is foundational to critical literacy.

Dr. Willinsky asks where the boundaries of these texts exist. He asks how they are bound and how they can be unbound and challenged. Although texts may not be subject to being unbound in every way, there may be a way forward in which these texts and others like them can participate in larger ways without losing their integrity. Returning this to education, he says that, regarding the list of issues around postmodernity, Dr. Willinsky points to post-colonial and post-national perspectives in education as a very strong and immediate challenge. He believes that what every teacher of critical literacy should be able to identify, during any given year, is where he or she has called those boundaries into question.

Valerie Kinloch takes this forward as she describes how we make connections across groups of people who are deeply invested in literacy and what we think about when we engage in a critical literacy project. For her, this connects directly to teacher development because she, like the teachers with whom she works, places the students at the centre of her work. In describing teacher development programs, she pointedly notes that we must think about what it is that our teachers need, what they already possess and are skillful at, as well as what they already know. All of these things factor into what educators must provide for their students when they attempt to enhance students' academic levels in terms of reading, writing, thinking and performing. Teacher development, according to Dr. Kinloch, has much to do with

how we think of our students in regard to these literacy practices of reading, writing, thinking and performing. It would behoove all educators to really think in large terms about the world in which we all live. We must think about forms of communication and how we participate in different spaces and in different geographies, and how that influences social practices and discourses that we participate in. All these, in many ways, Dr. Kinloch claims, deeply influence her own viewpoints about critical literacy. To view Video-Clip 7.10, please visit:

https://youtu.be/h0CwqdKDyts

Philosophically, for Dr. Kinloch, it remains essential that critical literacy continues to expand and develop because we have to account for the differences inherent in issues of diversity as well as for the changing nature of our physical spaces, not only as it pertains to immediate classroom conditions but to the environment at large. As well, we must consider our shifting patterns of demographics, particularly with regard to the current teaching population. In order to approach culturally relevant education for everyone, we must infuse greater diversity into our teaching force as well as to respond to those students within our purview. These changes, adjustments and recognitions must permeate public schools in urban, suburban and rural areas in order to make education more relevant for all. Dr. Kinloch points to discrepancies between community happenings and notes that schools are not yet connecting in meaningful ways to their communities, and hence are not connecting in meaningful ways to university programs.

Accordingly, Dr. Kinloch suggests that it is important to ask questions that relate to school and community relations and, ultimately, our relationships to higher educational opportunities, but it is also important to understand how to connect with people's "realities" globally as well as locally. By thinking globally and acting locally (Geddes, 1915), the realities of preparing teacher educators within the context of schools and, providing school/community connections can be recognized within their communities regardless of how large the school/community/environment system is, interconnections between individuals, educational opportunities and meaningful life circumstances can be more easily realized.

In thinking about the philosophical nature of critical literacy, Dr. Kinloch points, as many of the participants in this research have, towards identity as being an important philosophical consideration. Within this identity work, she includes the notion of "the sense of belonging," a fundamental human need. She recognizes that, although dominant discourses or narratives of success and achievement have greatly impacted and influenced the ways in which marginalized individuals have strived and succeeded, historically speaking, marginalized individuals and groups have not been granted access to academic spaces, as well as to many other dominions of power.

Dr. Kinloch returns to her previous stance regarding "affirmation" and notes that to affirm someone's identity or to affirm the story that accompanies that identity, simply means to hear the words spoken, to hear what is being said and not necessarily

to agree with it, understand it or even to be able to acknowledge it. Unfortunately, this is exactly what the dominant culture does, she claims. This is a dominant narrative that governs how the dominant culture tends to respond to minorities, the marginalized and those less fortunate. For Valerie Kinloch, this is very problematic as it pertains to issues of equity, as well as to one's stance relating to engaging critically and seriously with literacy practices, events and activities.

Take, for example, the following scenario. An individual from the dominant culture is in a position to provide assistance to another individual who has been marginalized. Immediately, it can be seen that there is a power differential in operation. When the individual from the "haves" kindly assists the "have-not" individual, equality is presumed. This, however, should not be taken for granted. The treatment received, although kindly meant, is neither equal nor equitable. It is not equal because the power possessed by the dominant individual is not shared equally. At the end of it all, the dominant person still tends to control more power than the individual who is at the receiving end of the transaction.

Neither is this equitable, because, by the same token, the individual who has received the "step up" is still less powerful that the person from the dominant culture. This is not to say that marginalized individuals should be shunned, not assisted and made to suffer, either. The help that is offered may have the power to change the course of an individual life. This help is welcomed, necessary and appreciated. However, the two individuals within this transaction tend to share, engage in and enact a continuing imbalance of power, whether it is acknowledged or not.

Continuing her discussion of the need for greater school reform, Dr. Kinloch claims that we need to embrace discussion about educational reform, as well as to inform ourselves relative to the innumerable legislative mandates and educational programs that continue to bombard educators. She feels that educators must become concerned about the implications that such reform efforts have, not just for teachers, but also regarding their impacts on the national organizations or governments responsible for creating them. Professor Kinloch cites the example of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation and asks what that means in terms of what has already happened. She notes that, in light of the need for such legislation, it was clear that some children had already been left behind:

> So now, today, we're going to say, "no child will be left behind." But yesterday, we left, like, 25,000 children behind. And, well, we're just going to have to pick up from where we are right now, today. That's very problematic. (Kinloch, Interview)

Dr. Kinloch troubles the notion that, in the United States, there is a national discourse around preparing pre-service teacher candidates and, therefore, preparing prospective teachers for critical literacy work or for the work of democratic participation in society. At the same time, she says, we are also acknowledging that some children have been left behind and we are not attending to what that means for them, their families, the school, the society at large, and, eventually, the future. Even as we

name the resolution, the document, the policy or the reform movement, we really are not considering the historical or contemporary implications that particular artifact may have for those who have already been left behind or for those who are yet to be left behind – for there will always be some – even as we make the claim that, this time, no one will be left behind.

While Professor Kinloch recognizes this as a problem, she notes that this example is not an isolated one. As she contemplates the language of other documents within the United States educational system, she problematizes the competitive language in another educational program title. “Race to the Top” is problematic, she says, because we are encouraging competition, which ultimately means that someone will be left behind or that we will “race on top of other people to get to the top.” Competition, the antithesis of cooperation, is a neo-liberal vocabulary artifact that encourages winning at all costs, self-absorbed individualism (rather than individuality) and ruthless opportunism.

It is time to think more seriously about not only how we name things but also, claims Dr. Kinloch, about how those things become identified as issues, engaged with and enacted or performed within our daily practices. These things, she avers, dramatically underscore how some students are unable to engage in classroom discourse practices. It is not because of not wanting to join in exploration of such practices or even not being able to join in. Neither is it a matter of not being brilliant or of not being able to understand. Simply put, Dr. Kinloch believes that it is a matter of mandates being developed that indicate what educators are supposed to be doing with students, and the threat of reprisal if the mandate is not carried out to its fullest extent. Dr. Kinloch’s comment raises the spectre of the de-professionalization of the teaching force, another aspect of the global war that is being waged all around the world, virtually undetected.

At the end of this video-clip, Valerie Kinloch asks:

> So what does that say in terms of how we respect or not respect teachers and teacher educators and researchers and scholars who are committed to this work of equity and preparing students to be critical literacy experts?

What does it say? Perhaps the notion of the de-professionalization of the teaching forces is more significant than previously thought. Perhaps it is not true that teachers and teachers of teachers are not all stupid, lazy, ill-prepared for their roles in society and are blemishes on the face of all things sacred or neo-liberal. Perhaps there is more truth to the idea that society has decided to shun teachers as irrelevant to the success of their children because they have been so directed by media sources such as newspapers and the television at the behest of government and commerce representing the neo-liberal front. If publicly sponsored educational organizations fail their students, perhaps private industry can improve on such a “flawed design.”

Schools are under siege even though Canadian (and Finnish) school systems currently enjoy positive global standings. By decommissioning the public school systems in this country, perhaps this would save the taxpayers money. In Canada,

that is not a particularly rousing thought, for every Canadian is aware that we pay socialist taxes (Canadians pay higher taxes than taxpayers in fully socialized countries such as Sweden.) for decidedly less than socialist initiatives. In addition, federal transfer payments to provincial school systems have dwindled over the past century and at least one politico, who has his eye on the Prime Minister's seat, considers himself part of the "political class," elevated somehow above and beyond the miniscule Canadian "upper" class. All this, at the same time that our highway infrastructure is in dire need of renewal, and development of more than a single rail line that unites this vast country from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans would allow goods and passengers a cheaper means of transportation than trucks and automobiles do currently.

Unfortunately, should the neo-liberal front manage to decimate public education, private schools would likely be a replacement, heralding in a school system that would resemble our already multi-tiered social health care programs. Such a school system would not provide universal access to education, as it would be regulated through tuition expenses, unaffordable except for the very rich or the very competitive. The loss of public systems of education would tend to result in the further stratification of a society that already views itself through a meritocratic lens. The society, then, would be easier to lead, control and threaten. Democracy would be available to those who could afford it, making democracy a mere simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1995). Pursuit of critical literacy would become an even more subversive activity than it is already considered to be. And who would suffer most? It would be the children, awash in more consumer goods than they have time for, as they must remain competitive and sharp in order to beat out the competition for the next tiny gold star, whatever it may be. As in any war, it is always the children who suffer most because they have the least amount of power.

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CHAPTER 8

DEMOCRACY REVISITED

> All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy.
>
> —Alfred Emmanuel Smith, (June 27, 1933), Speech

As we have moved through the various conceptual contexts, from the (auto) biographical to the philosophical context, we have burrowed ever more deeply into the connections between critical literacy and democratic life. We have explored how both critical literacy and democratic thinking require a presence, identity work, in order for us to recognize who we are and the need for mindfulness in making decisions appropriate to both being and becoming more critically literate as well as being and becoming more democratic.

Democratic thought is always in flux. What is democratic today may have been seen as draconian in years gone by. The converse is equally as true. In the words of Noam Chomsky:

> …[W]e live in a much more civilized world than not very long ago. Take some of the things I just mentioned before. For example, rights of women. This has changed enormously in my lifetime, enormously. For example, my grandmother, if somebody told her she was oppressed, she wouldn't know what they were talking about, because that's just life. You know? My mother knew about it and resented it but accepted it. My daughters don't accept it at all. Well, those are changes and it's not my family, it's everywhere. And how did that happen? It happened thanks to the work of people who didn't give up, who didn't assume that the structures of oppression and domination are permanent. They're not laws of nature, they could be challenged. And if they're not legitimate, they could be overcome. And that's happened in domain after domain, with the elimination of slavery, and with feudalism and kings, and so on. So there's good empirical reasons to think that there's a lot that you can do. And the kind of logical reason is that you basically have two choices. One choice is to say it's hopeless, nothing can be done, therefore I'm not going to try, and therefore I'll help insure that the worst will happen. The other choice is to say that maybe there's a chance. I'll devote myself to trying to overcome the pathologies of the society, discrimination, repression and so on, and maybe things will be better later on. Well, those are your two choices. You can't really know, you know, we don't understand enough to predict. But given those two choices, there's no real option as to which one you take. So that's a reason

> to be hopeful, because otherwise you're just guaranteeing that the worst will happen. (Chomsky, personal Communication. March, 2012)

We trust that the human emotions of compassion and empathy will prevail in order to encourage greater progress in terms of human rights, to challenge structures and edifices of oppression and domination, and to offer hope for the future.

HELLAS

Issues of democracy and democratic freedom have been extant throughout history, beginning with the ancient Greek civilization. Efstratia Karagrigoriou acknowledges that Hellas has a very long history, going from the prehistoric years until the current time. According to Dr. Karagrigoriou, Hellas' history extends over three thousand years. She notes that, as an educator, rather than as an historian, there are countless major events associated with democratic thought. Dr. Karagrigoriou identifies the Golden age of Pericles, in the fifth Century B.C., as representing the pinnacle of democracy. It was during this era that literature and the arts, as well as politics and philosophy flourished. Time passed and the Hellenic civilization waxed and waned, periodically, over the next millennium.

It was on September 3, 1843, that the people, who fought for the independence of Greece, demanded a constitution from King Otto of Greece. King Otto, under pressure of public protest acquiesced and provided a constitution for the Greek people. This represented the first official constitution of the newly independent Greek state, Hellas. A third important event in the history of democratic Hellas was the end of the dictatorship in 1974. Dr. Karagrigoriou notes that most historians agree that this was a result of the protests by students of the National Technical University of Athens. To view Video-Clip 8.1, please visit:

https://youtu.be/7Yn4rszwEaQ

Simply stated, and re-iterated, democracy, demonstrably, is a concept that can never be taken for granted. It must be invoked daily, engaged with and contemplated in order to be performed. Like critical literacy, democracy is a stance, an attitude that must be practiced, flexed and renewed, much as we exercise our muscles in order to keep them flexible, strong and robust.

However, was it the Hellenic democratic spirit that inspired the arts, literature, political thinking and philosophic reasoning, or were these the inspiration for the development of democratic thinking? Perhaps this is a spurious question as it is clear that, regardless of the impetus, democratic thinking flourished within a society that was wealthy enough to pursue the arts and literature and energetic enough to invest in political and philosophical endeavours. The real question is, "Where are we, now?" Do we still have what our forebears invented or have we become recidivistic? Are we still able to produce such magnificent works of architecture

as the Parthenon, the many temples to pantheistic deities, and other works of art similar to those produced by this civilization? Or would it cost too much? Would we apply the same "funding formulas" to such initiatives today as to our modern "profit sensitive" projects, or especially to those educational problems that are resolved through the same sense of economic frugality with which "the bottom line" is measured? Or would we recognize that Marcuse (1964) was on to something when he pointed out that culture depends on the arts and, without it, society is reduced to the culture of the "everyman" which, in the case of our (post) modern society is a consumer culture (Cooper & White, 2012).

While it may seem off-topic, considerations such as these are important, simply because, when we talk of political genres, the entire society and, to a greater or lesser extent today, in particular, social systems around the world are becoming less and less distinguishable from one another. Politics, particularly democratic thought, have become imbued with consumerist trappings and, as a result, policies that seek to guide and direct the populous are often consciously or unconsciously rife with social considerations that influence the way the arts, including matters of literacy, are perceived, validated and performed. Perhaps it is time to turn this equation around and, rather than allowing consumer-friendly corporations to dictate the terms of democracy, we should free democracy from the neo-liberal strangle hold that impacts considerations of social justice, equity and humanity. As Efstratia Karagrigoriou notes, in reference to Aristotle's *Πολιτική* (*Politics*, in English), two major values for democracy are freedom, first, and then justice. Interestingly enough, these two concepts are independent of any reliance on merit. They do not need to be "earned" but are givens. As Dr. Karagrigoriou states, upon these two words hang the notion of democracy. How do we revisit this in today's society?

Perhaps the concept of unconditional democracy is naïve, romanticized and unachievable, but, nevertheless, it is an ideal to strive for. For example, back in Ancient Greece, in the city-state of Athens in the fifth century B.C., when democracy was at its peak as a political system, there were simply not as many people. In short, the Ancient Athenians were able to enjoy a scale of economy that we are not subject to, as our world population looks back on six billion world citizens.

Things *are* different, now. However, as Dr. Karagrigoriou states, we still have democracy – a parliamentary, constitutional democracy. Back in the fifth century B.C., it was a direct democracy, a participatory democracy, also referred to as a "pure democracy," in which citizens decide, through vote or consensus, on policy initiatives. This differs from our more current representative democracy in which people elect representatives who then decide policy initiatives (hopefully in ways that reflect the constituents' interests). Of current political interest regarding the country of Greece is that, as a member state of the European Union, democracy is still performed but, as Dr. Karagrigoriou opines, under vastly different circumstances than previously.

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, critical literacy has been adopted into the regular school curriculum, although there is some concern that it has not yet been mobilized for the benefit of those students who would benefit from it most. The Aborigines of Australia continue to perform less well in schools and suffer from higher dropout rates than those students from higher socio-economic status families, typically those who enjoy membership in the dominant culture. Democracy is stable in Australia and there is no doubt that it will remain strong if only for the simple reason that voting in federal and state elections is mandated in this country. It is with a touch of irony that, in Australia, it is illegal to not vote. Currently, it appears that Australia is continuing to work towards greater equity among its citizens and to support the benefits that democracy provides, albeit allowing some individuals to have greater privileges due to their social standing as compared to the aboriginal culture and to groups of immigrants primarily from around the Pacific Rim.

SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, Hilary Janks continues to counter the view that critical literacy has had its day and is now no longer needed. Accordingly, she builds a case for critical literacy in claiming that it is no longer just about the unfair continuation of privilege, power and disempowerment, it is also about the devastation that is occurring to the planet as a result of the hyper-consumerism that runs rampant in developed countries. Dr. Janks cites Peter Freebody in commenting that, if a critically literate citizenship is not developed, we are unlikely to be able to make sense of the scientific arguments about the issues surrounding the debate about global warming. We need people who have this kind of critical literacy because:

> …[A]t the end of the day, they're the people who vote for people who make decisions, and who believe these different arguments from different sides. So he [Peter Freebody] sees it as a fundamental aspect of democratic citizenship. (Hilary Janks, Interview)

To view Video-Clip 8.2, please see:

https://youtu.be/DOQEINzjtXo

Regarding the situation in South Africa, Dr. Janks notes that the educational institutions have so far "completely failed to produce literate citizens." For example, in 2012, in the "Progress in International Reading Literacy Study" (PIRLS) test, South Africa scored second to last in comparison with all the countries taking that particular test. Only the African country of Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), a landlocked country in southeast Africa, scored lower than South Africa.

In the face of this disconcerting assessment, Dr. Janks attempts to explain South Africa's poor standing. Perhaps, she begins, the reason for this is the lack

of culturally relevant critical literacy strategies as South Africa persists in the vain attempt "to plug middle class, western literacies into communities that don't read stories to their children," or who do not think of text as permeable and "writerly" (Barthes, 2004, 1974), but who see literacy only as a source of information for work or as a source for accessing information. Part of the problem, she claims, is that we continually attempt to engage story as the only way into literacy. As well, the four resources model is not valued as a contiguous endeavor but, as Carolyn McKinney has alluded to earlier, basic literacy is attended to prior to a focus on critical literacy, which in the case of Black South Africans, often comes too late in an abbreviated education for it to be of any real significance. Dr. Janks notes that, "We kind of do reading first and, certainly in South Africa, kids have to be able to read and have to be able to spell, have to know some grammar, before we actually let them make a text. One strategy that Professor Janks is contemplating that may have the potential to overcome this tendency is to go into classrooms with newer technologies, such as the iPod Touch, which has multi-modal affordances, in order to try to engage students with literacy through technology, and to extend their perspectives surrounding the value of literacy.

Currently, in communities where literacy is not deeply embedded as a social practice, for many reasons, Dr. Janks believes that once teachers have taught their students to decode the written word, the teachers are really unsure as to what it is that should logically follow. Consequently, her intent is to "hook" students with the excitement of using new technology in order for them to engage with literacy and to utilize it for their own purposes; then, literacy may become a valued goal. Once it has become a part of the culture, she says, perhaps the current standards of literacy will improve. When she considers the literacy practices that occur in communities with exceptionally high cell phone penetration, she notes that everybody is using the cell phones for text messaging. Thus, she claims, people today are writing more than ever before. By building on existing text production practices, instead of attempting to impose non-relevant Western practices on South African students, there may be a positive outcome down the road and into the future.

Dr. McKinney, in picking up the same thread, suggests that South Africa is in a state of crisis, particularly in terms of student success and academic achievement because so many students are unable to perform at their appropriate grade level, even at elementary levels such as the third grade. In agreement with Dr. Janks, Professor McKinney states that, in system-wide assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the PIRLS test, mentioned above, progress in early reading for South African students is falling rapidly behind other countries, countries that spend even less on the education of their children than does South Africa. In addition to this or, perhaps as a result of this, this country has not seen the promised transformation of the education system that post-apartheid South Africa had hoped for.

There are still enormous divides where the small, but dominant, middle class, even though it has now expanded racially in composition but remains relatively

small compared to the general population, continues to maintain a good, strong quality of education. However, most South Africans are not receiving an education like this. Dr. McKinney states that she believes the answer to this predicament lies with critical literacy, actually with the way it is taught rather than with the concept itself. She thinks that the approach to teaching must change, instead of teaching students to read and write and, then, upon attaining mastery, they are able to move on to becoming "critical."

Dr. McKinnney adds her voice to others who have claimed, even within the narrow scope of this book, that the various components of literacy must be attended to all at once. The practice of teaching the mechanics of reading and writing are essential to becoming literate. However, furthermore, learning to analyze and (re)create what you have learned and experienced thus far is also essential to the understanding and furthering of even basic forms of communication and, hence, to the foundations of any society. Consequently, Dr. McKinney's view of reading, writing and literacy as a social practice, must become embedded within the culture. Within the culture is the tacit, and often explicit, call for interpreting, engaging in and performing literacy as a cultural signature or artifact of the culture itself. Thus, the definition of what passes for "literate" within society is self-defining, at least in part. And, to accomplish this, Dr. McKinney states, it can be and should be critical, right from the beginning. The authors of this volume could not agree more. To view Video-Clip 8.3, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/gJXUKeei9Ow

As for how to accomplish this task of developing greater critical literacy, Dr. McKinney has some suggestions or advice for teacher educators. One of her "Most Frequently Asked Questions" is from pre-service teacher candidates who are concerned with aspects of social justice, "Well, do you really want to expose young children to these issues of social inequality and poverty?" Professor McKinney's response was the recognition of the reality that these children, in the greater majority, wake up to on a daily basis. "These children," says Carolyn McKinney, "have no choice! It's only the privileged kids that actually have people making choices about what they're exposed to."

As a result of the crisis in governance, combined with the huge social problems in recent South African history, critical literacy is seen as a luxury. In the ensuing flurry of educational reform, policy makers returned to the neo-conservative model of "Back to Basics" rhetoric. Because of this, it was considered that children needed to be able to read, write and do math first, the basic literacies of (post) modern cultural interaction. Carolyn McKinney caricaturizes how we could possibly encourage children to interact critically with a text when they are not yet able to read or write. The level of mastery demanded for public accreditation for what passes as "literate," let alone "critically literate," remains elusive. As can be seen, anything critical was rejected as being separate from the basics and, therefore, superfluous.

Another serious impediment to the proliferation of critical pedagogy in South Africa is the issue of resources. As Dr. McKinney says, “Anybody who wants to do this work in their classroom has to do their own materials development.” This is just one of the things that she attempts to equip her pre-service teachers with whenever the opportunity presents itself. In concert with this point, Mastin Prinsloo adds that it is of great importance to encourage pre-service teachers to engage closely with what students are involved in outside of school. In order to meet student needs, newly minted teachers and those who are active in the profession benefit enormously from gaining knowledge about their students, particularly in terms of the potential forms of meaning making they utilize, their ways of knowing and how they interpret the world around them. Educators can use those understandings as bridges to learning to read and write in ways that are acceptable to the institution, representing established modes of communicating, generating knowledge and analyzing information. To view Video-Clip 8.4, please see:

https://youtu.be/i1LOHnNXd9A

As an example of exploring this potential source of information, Dr. Prinsloo points to primary school level children, living in shacks in “informal settlements” in Cape Town, who engage with cell phones and explore digital resources with interest. These children attach much value to the cell phones they use. However, they live with parents who don’t work, and this very much shapes their lives. As a consequence, one of the primary concerns within such communities is how resources can be exchanged for food and money. Thus, the play is moderated by a utilitarian notion, which, according to Professor Prinsloo, sounds something like the following:

> … If we got hold of a play station, we would be able to get other children to come and pay us some money to play these games and then we would have some money to go and do stuff with it.

In short, Professor Prinsloo observes that the pursuit of knowledge in all its forms, all the overwriting of experience and the various ways that people engage with literacy practices are mediated by the realities of their existence. It is for reasons such as this that it is essential for educators to understand that they must also learn about the students who they are teaching. Simply put, it is important for educators to understand that whatever they teach their students may not be interpreted or understood by students in ways that the teacher would ordinarily anticipate. Deeper knowledge of their students is required because, as Dr. Prinsloo suggests, if teachers view the forms of imparting knowledge as merely providing valuable and valued cultural resources to students in the classroom, effective engagement, learning processes and expected learning outcomes may not occur in predictable ways. Because of students’ lived realities, Dr. Prinsloo claims that, in South Africa, it is extremely difficult to do work that is, at once, of high quality and of social significance.

This is the reality of educators in South Africa, and in some ways it is the reality of teachers and teachers of teachers around the globe. Because of such exigencies, Dr. Prinsloo increasingly continues to work outside of the academic institution with literacy teaching and learning organizations. In this capacity, Dr. Prinsloo also works with small groups of students to help them to become expert researchers, as well as working with a small number of teachers to ensure that, in a limited number of schools at least, good work is being done. This is how change is created, he believes. And, in South Africa, small steps must be taken in order to build lasting foundations of literacy and to accomplish gradual social change – an evolutionary process that will, hopefully, ensure a strong and lasting democracy. Unfortunately, the challenges to achieving this end are enormous and are not being addressed by the current governmental structures that are in place at the time. In addition, Dr. Prinsloo cites the well-documented fact that, for a number of complicated reasons, it is extremely difficult to maintain any form of dynamic conversation between policy makers and critical educators.

DEMOCRACY REVISITED

From her vantage point in Hellas, Efstratia Karagrigoriou takes this point further by recognizing that policies and educational guides published by government, particularly in Hellas, commonly have significant input from the European Union, and, in other countries such as Canada, are strongly influenced by super- and supra-national organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO). Such organizations have influenced curricular documents in Hellas, not only in secondary education but also in kindergarten and primary grades. To view Video-Clip 8.5, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/37LYLqSOiQA

As an educator at the elementary school level in her native Hellas, Dr. Karagrigoriou attempts to educate the future citizens for whom she is responsible by promoting critical literacy right at the kindergarten level. Even though her students may not yet be literate in the conventional sense of the term, Dr. Karagrigoriou believes that it is important to encourage students not to be afraid to air their opinions and to speak up for their rights and freedoms. Particularly now, in the days of economic instability throughout Europe and much of the globalized world, she believes it vital to revisit essential notions of democracy and to practice those ideals on a daily basis – essentially, to engage with, to practice, and to perform democracy daily in the lives of her young students. This advice she offers to practicing teachers and to those who are preparing for their future careers. Dr. Karagrigoriou also confirms that, as a practicing teacher herself, she strives dutifully to put into practice the very advice that she offers to others.

In order to accomplish these goals, Dr. Karagrigoriou, in tandem with her kindergarten students, revisits the major notions of democracy, as referred to by Aristotle in his book, *Politics* (Lord, 2013). She reminds her students of their rights and responsibilities with respect to Aristotle's twin notions of freedom and justice. She encourages them to speak freely in an atmosphere of safety and respect and to not be fearful of stating their opinion. In practice, in her school, which is situated under the shadow of the Acropolis in Athens, where students can look up to see the majesty of the Parthenon, all of the teachers established a year-long project to inform the school children of their rights and freedoms. What surprised Dr. Karagrigoriou was the fact that not only were the students absorbed in understanding their position with regard to Hellenic society, the European Union and the wider world community, they were also vocal about their rights and the rights of their peers – not only insofar as it concerned one another but also with respect to the adults in their lives. In accordance, to inform citizens and the children themselves, the group of students and teachers took to the streets with handmade posters and pamphlets that included pictures and writings about the rights of students and, by extension, the rights and freedoms that we all should be able to enjoy. Dr. Karagrigoriou remembers this as an extremely fine experience, "not only for the children themselves, but also for us as teachers, adults, and some of us, mothers."

There is a sense of poetic justice that this school is located under the Acropolis, where Western democracy itself was conceived and born back in the fifth century B.C. This amazing experience of understanding children's rights and freedoms was an excellent project for not only the students, but also for the entire neighborhood for parents and for their children right under the shadow of the Acropolis, culminating in a huge celebration at the end of the school year where the children mounted a theatrical performance that demonstrated their rights to their families, to the school itself and to local dignitaries such as security people, clothiers, doctors and others who were in some way attached to the school.

It is a firm belief of Dr. Karagrigoriou's that it is of great importance for pre-service teacher education programs to provide instruction pertaining to critical literacy. Then, by cultivating critical literacy inside classroom settings, teachers and policy makers can begin to design curriculum promoting critical thinking and questioning. Efstratia Karagrigoriou notes that this is extremely important for these days in every country around the planet, simply because she understands that it is much easier to lead unthoughtful sheep than it is to lead critical leaders.

NORTH AMERICA

In North America, Valerie Kinloch believes that critical literacy has real implications for how we move from our current situations to various other situations through our work with people in trying to think through the actions required for any given situation, and the types of engagements we need to encourage in order to effect

change – socially, politically or educationally. In thinking about effecting change, Dr. Kinloch states that we invariably turn to different types of texts – whether they be print texts, oral histories, collective interviews or narratives. Such texts, she claims come from any number of sources – from local community members, from teachers and administrators, from university professionals and even from students themselves. All of these different texts, according to Dr. Kinloch, inform who we are as we engage in different critical practices, including critical listening. To view Video-Clip 8.6, please see:

https://youtu.be/p__c_u3Ydso

Professor Kinloch takes the pursuit of things critical back to the autobiographical as a way to understand and make sense of the critical issues that swirl around us. This, in some ways, resembles a critically focused "victim impact statement" in that all things, either critical or not, influence us and help shape the course of individual lives for good or ill.

John Willinsky makes note of the idea that it is not a difficult thing for teachers interested in these areas to recognize opportunities to think about critical literacy. In fact, he suggests, what may appear to be just the other side of conventionalism, of liberalism, and of traditionalism has within it opportunities to not only recognize critical points but also ways to encourage it by introducing, encouraging and modeling critical literacy to and for students within the teacher's care. Professor Willinsky claims that, although such opportunities are easy to recognize, teachers also have to be on the look out for these possibilities, these "teachable moments," these opportunities. To view Video-Clip 8.7, please proceed to:

https://youtu.be/reXMVa3NxBg

According to Dr. Willinsky, the best educators are opportunists. Why innovate when one can simply borrow? This is particularly true when it comes to politics because, as he avers, while most things can be learned, not everything is teachable. It is important, he notes, to look for material that is engaging and exciting for students. In addition, contrary to the view held by many educators, Dr. Willinsky does not shrink from identifying the teacher's position as being a valuable source of information. Education is anything but free from values, beliefs and recognized "best practices" and, as such, it is inauthentic to feign neutrality over political issues. Students should be entitled to hear the teacher's position. John Willinsky believes that it is important to provide students with the opportunity to view the teacher's perspective on such matters as being explicit. It is also important to recognize that, in so doing, the teacher is invoking a power differential that deserves to be challenged. It is important, also, to be able to embrace such challenges that often appear as a threat to one's authority. However, embracing such challenges and working through the differing perspectives on any given topic with aplomb, courage and open-mindedness will afford increasingly greater learning opportunities in the future, as well. Viewed in this way, Professor Willinsky is hopeful that teachers can further the tenets of critical

literacy with their students and, in the spirit of democracy, hopes that teachers, as well as their students "… can be accepting of critique of, or resistance, or even, heaven forbid, indifference" (Willinsky, Interview).

Another viewpoint is provided by Efstratia Karagrigoriou, who refers to her own thesis work using critical discourse analysis (CDA), a component of critical literacy made popular by noted scholars such as Norman Fairclough (1989) who, incidentally, has been enormously influential in the works of Hilary Janks and other critical scholars. In her thesis, Dr. Karagrigoriou concentrated on curriculum documents provided by the Ministry of Education of Ontario. While she claims to be able to speak only to that particular circumstance and that she can only speak about the public school system in Ontario, Canada, recent research tends to support a certain level of generalizability. Video-Clip 8.8 can be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/nRrV7HMGkEc

Dr. Karagrigoriou chose critical discourse analysis because this methodology is useful for peeling back successive layers of words and expressions that have the potential to reveal new meanings and understandings that can represent new knowledge that, in turn, can illuminate, support or contradict current understandings. For her, this represented an ideal methodology for revealing how government documents, inspired by other policies or policies recommended by super- or supranational organizations such as the OECD or UNESCO, organizations to which both Canada and Hellas enjoy membership, can influence educational policy in a variety of ways, both nuanced and overt. When she compared the geographic areas in her study, in this case Hellas and Ontario, Canada, Dr. Karagrigoriou recognized that many of the same subtle processes and recommendations were in place in both locales. Given that these geographic areas are far flung, one from the other, she was able to identify how such policies, supported by neo-liberal agendas, can "invade" school curricula. Such policy directives can "neutralize" the notion of democratic citizenship education. Ironically, it can also be seen from the neo-liberal perspective that these same policies can be viewed as supportive of democratic citizenship education, albeit redefined for the "new world order."

In her doctoral work, Efstratia Karagrigoriou demonstrated that there is an effort on the part of public school systems, at the behest of neo-liberal influences, to equate economic profit to social prosperity. However, the approach is different in each of the geographic locales. In Ontario, Canada, equating economic profit to social prosperity is promoted through efforts to approach democratic citizenship education through character education, while in the Hellenic curriculum for Kindergarten, efforts are made to emphasize the social sector of the curriculum. Thus, although there is a difference in the two approaches, the outcomes are not dissimilar. As a living example, critical discourse analysis provided a way to analyze educational documents and policies in terms of the content endorsed by neo-liberal organizations. As Dr. Karagrigoriou recognizes, this was quite evident by the words used in the curricular documents examined in the course of her studies. It is written, she states,

that citizens must work hard to maintain economic prosperity in our society. This is written clearly enough for everyone, including educators, professionals, and everyone in the educational sector to read.

RITES AND "RIGHTS" OF PASSAGE

Picture, if you will two triangles, or pyramids. In the first pyramid, the broad base at the top represents the "land," while the "people" inhabit the bottom or the pinnacle of this pyramid. This represents the harmony in which the Aborigines, the First Nations and the indigenous people of South Africa lived with the land. The second triangle or pyramid is inverted. Even though the people and the land are still represented in the same places in both triangles, the broad base of the pyramid hosts the populace, and the land is at the peak of the pyramid. This latter representation symbolizes the value that the people of Europe, bent on exploiting the land for its material wealth, placed in the land. Clearly, the difference between the values held by these groups of people led to a conflict of values.

Grace Karskens (2010) notes that, in the case of the first European colonists to Australia, they attempted to assess the availability of the land for their own purposes:

> [T]he litmus-test questions were these: did these people reside in one place? Had they earned a right to the land by exploiting nature? Did they cultivate the earth and make it theirs by mixing their labour with it? Did they build houses and other substantial dwellings? Had they developed complex social hierarchies and political organizations?" (34)

The answer to these questions was an unqualified no. Thus the Aborigines were seen by the Europeans as having no "rights" to the land on which they depended. However, what the intruders missed was the deep connections that the aboriginal peoples had to the land, which was the source of and inspiration for their entire culture, from the food the land and seas provided to the sacred stories they used as directions in a land bereft of navigational markers, often including geographical markers. This deep attachment to the environment was alien to a people who exploited the land in the name of civilization, as opposed to a people who attempted to live in harmony with it (Karskens, 2010).

The same can be said of the aboriginal peoples living in North America. In Canada, this harmony of living within the environment was deliberately disturbed by the advent of the residential schools. Forcing aboriginal children to attend residential schools far away from their homes, families and familiar environment was a deliberate attempt to interrupt and destroy the existing indigenous culture. This was perpetrated by the Catholic Church and endorsed by the Canadian government and such policies deliberately strived to assimilate these young students into the established Canadian social structure. By forbidding their indigenous languages to be spoken and by preventing parental contact, the intent was to destroy their culture. After the last residential school was closed in Canada in the late 1980s,

severe damage to the remnants of the original culture had already been done. After generations of anti-democratic and misogynistic treatment, Canadian First Nations aboriginal notions of nurturing, reclamation of indigenous languages and aboriginal ways of knowing are slowly being recovered.

But what was the genesis of such an unwholesome idea? The inspiration for what has been termed "Canada's Hidden Holocaust" had its inception in apartheid South Africa many years ago. Suffice it to say that notions of assimilation and destruction of cultures that were thought to pose a threat to the "advancement" of European civilizations were upheld by all three of the countries that make up this study.

In today's world these marginalized peoples represent a significant social, economic and political base. Their long history in each of these countries needs to be recognized and acknowledged. Retribution and reconciliation may be in progress but need to proceed apace. In this postmodern world, validation and marginalization continue to operate concurrently to the detriment of all. While topics such as these introduced in this volume may already be beginning to be addressed in our various school systems, much more needs to be accomplished in the name of democracy. To reiterate the quotation appearing at the beginning of this chapter, "all the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy."

If we are successful in endeavouring to teach our youngsters about the necessity of valuing not only differing but potentially conflicting or non-traditional perspectives, we may stand a chance at being able to raise conscientious, thoughtful and mindful citizens who will recognize the need to perform democracy on a daily basis. If we are successful in this, we may be able to value all members of society and ensure that the power within the society is redistributed equitably. With this hope in mind, perhaps we may be able to recognize the damage we have done to our environment and, similarly, to the indigenous attempts to reclaim a decimated and disappearing culture. Perhaps we can begin to take steps to ensure that democratic practices can prevent further destruction and erosion to our environment and may even, hopefully, allow us to begin to live in harmony with our environment, rather than continuing to exploit it to the advantage of a few and to the detriment of the many.

Critical literacy can be viewed as an essential assist in thwarting the threat of reducing our planet to environmental ruin. Unfortunately, it has become clear that neo-liberal regimes are committed to ensuring a profit for their shareholders. Should a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) suddenly experience a qualm of conscience and refuse to support the "bottom line" by providing a return for shareholders' investment, (s)he will be unceremoniously replaced by someone who will provide those returns. Governments are powerless in the face of corporations that are powerful and wealthy enough to topple entire governments (Castells, 2000) by moving the company from countries with restrictive policies to more lucrative venues in terms of tax breaks, more available raw materials or more plentiful sources of cheaper labour. It is a system that is locked into self-destruction.

Since we opened this volume with the sage words of Noam Chomsky, it seems only fitting that the last word should also be his. Professor Chomsky notes that, although much of his life has been devoted to activism, he does not believe that academic institutions, as an institution, should take a position on the issues of the day, the issues that activists would be committed to. It is noteworthy that this perspective does not eschew the vantage points that individual educators may wish to make public, but the institution itself should not be in a position to speak for its membership without consultation, encouragement and approval from its members. Also, institutions, according to Dr. Chomsky, should not become partisan, but should remain neutral in the interests of its membership. Sounding a cautionary note, Dr. Chomsky reminds readers that, when it comes to issues of governance, the consequences of what we do in the name of "progress" are enormous and have profound effects on the planet in innumerable ways. This has consequences for institutions such as school systems and universities and permeates all that we do, often putting pressure on such institutions to act or make a statement of support or otherwise for government policies, whether they have a direct effect on the system of education or not:

> Where the consequence of what you do are enormous, you should think about them. So what are the effects on the environment, on nuclear weapons, on all sorts of things? So now that's a central part of kind of the general culture of the institute, and permeates the classes, curricula, and so on. On the other hand, taking a position on, say, should we invade Iraq, I don't think that's the proper role for a university. For people within it, sure, and every opportunity should be available to debate it, discuss it, to have demonstrations and activism and so on. But the basic role of an institution I think should be just what we were talking about before, to try to cultivate and encourage independent minds, independent, challenging, creative minds. Then people can do what they [must], where their goals and commitments lead them. (Chomsky, personal Communication, March, 2012)

This trepidation on the part of the institution does not extend to citizens within these organizations, however. Professor Chomsky believes it is important and necessary for people to have every opportunity to study and make comment on policies that are handed down by government, ostensibly in people's best interest. However, it is for the citizens to decide exactly how such policies affect them and to insinuate themselves with regard to individual and collective interests.

As a final point, W.H. Auden's poem, *The Unknown Citizen* reminds us that the alternative to speaking out, to becoming critically literate, is to simply accept that which is passed along to the individual citizen in a "divide and conquer" kind of existence. One voice alone may be silenced, but many voices together make this task increasingly difficult as more voices are added to the critique:

The Unknown Citizen
by W. H. Auden
(To JS/07 M 378 This Marble Monument Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES

There is an ancient curse, often purported to be Chinese in origin, which states, "May you live in interesting times." It seems that these are very interesting times, indeed. As this volume has progressed, we have burrowed ever more deeply into some of the pedagogic and educational issues that come to bear on the interconnections between critical literacy and democracy over three continents and as many countries – Australia, South Africa and Canada (North America). The conceptual frame for

this endeavor was the (auto)biographical, historical, political, postmodern and philosophical contexts as developed by the authors in previous works (Cooper & White, 2012).

As we travelled to the various locales where we interviewed some of the most important scholars in the area of critical literacy, we met many people and had innumerable adventures and conversations along the way. One of the things that stood out more starkly than some of the other observations that we had was the fact that people around the world share more similarities than differences. This is but one of many wonderful awarenesses that occurred to us and speaks to the naturalness and authenticity of the notion of equity. In each location, the history of the people was very different but also had elements that were very similar. Each country has had its own version of exclusion of minorities, particularly aboriginal minorities. Perhaps this marginalization was the product of two very different paradigms. On the one hand, aboriginal groups in all three places had no codified form of the written word. Consequently, all agreements, or the lack thereof, were not material or "concrete" even though they were not "insubstantial." This lack of "hard copy" thinking may have been a main factor in leading to the marginalization of the aboriginals at the hands of European colonialists who made use of contracts written on paper, who viewed contracts as material exchanges between involved parties and to whom such contracts represented truth and proof of ownership.

The power differential that existed between the more technologized Western colonists and the more "primitive" aboriginal culture ensured that signed agreements would hold sway over the power of the "given word." In fact, this has held sway to the present day. Those who could not "sign on the dotted line" were illiterate and likely unknowledgeable, according to the wisdom of the day, simply because of the difference in the two paradigms – the written word versus the "informal" bond of the given word. Thus, the written word held tremendous power, given that it could be backed up with a great show of might, if need be. As time travelled on, not only aboriginals, but also minority groups of any colour, race or creed that was not "standard" were treated in the same fashion – as somehow inferior because of the "non-standard" manners of doing, speaking and writing they brought with them. It is interesting to compare the varying definitions, over the years, of what constitutes a literate individual. The stakes are getting higher.

From the other side, there were issues of governance. In all three countries, democracy was deemed, eventually, to be the preferred form of government, although it is played out differently in each locale. For example, it is illegal for citizens not to vote in Australia. In South Africa, democracy has been instituted but is struggling, still, in attempts to reconcile this country's apartheid past with the current requirements of moving towards greater democratic freedom for all. In the United States and in Canada, the situation is somewhat similar to that of Australia, in that the aboriginals and, to a lesser extent, newcomers to Canada, struggle with issues relating to their democratic freedoms and rights. In each location, there continues to

be significant systemic racism that has become so ingrained within the culture that it has become all but invisible.

And then there is the postmodern issue – neoliberalism. While this seems to be a major issue in North America, Australia and South Africa (to a lesser extent perhaps) also continue the struggle to maintain a healthy balance between the marketplace and the voting booth. Neoliberal rhetoric invades both the halls of power and the halls of learning. Governments are at the mercy of corporations who have more power than the governments that oversee the country in which these mega-corporations are located, and can threaten to leave that country, jeopardizing its economic vibrancy, unless governments are willing to co-operate to produce economic profits for these organizations. In fact, many such organizations are trans-national worldwide political forces, including the OECD and UNESCO. At the educational level, many such organizations are crafting policy for schools in the form of curricular documents that aim to streamline the goals of schooling in order to align them more closely with the goals of the marketplace. The more closely these goals align, the more successful the school system is deemed to be by those organizations.

Now, what is interesting to the authors of this volume is the idea that every "developed" country has entered the race to achieve the best, most vibrant economy of all. What happens when a winner is identified? Will the less successful countries be taken over in a hostile bid reminiscent of hostile takeovers in the business world? Was this not similar to the recent call for Greece to surrender its sovereignty if it would not accede to the demands by the IMF that would alter the Hellenic notion of democracy? Does this not call into question what a country is? Manuel Castells (2000) suggest that the concept of what a country is has become more porous than in the past and, in fact, the whole notion of country may well become irrelevant in the not too distant future. The features of economic conquest remain remarkably similar to conquests of yore, such as the crusades, World Wars I and II, and a variety of other wars since then that choose a limited arena of action and then destabilize the government of the target country in order to institute a puppet government that will bow to the whims of the conqueror. A quick peek into the future begins to look a lot like looking into the past. Using this metaphor and applying it to the school system, it becomes a concern that schools are being re-envisioned as training grounds for an army of soldier/consumers who will support the neoliberal agenda because it has been in place since their earliest school years and who will consume in the best interests of the society – in terms of the vibrant economy. Yes, this has implications for what a good citizen is, does and thinks (White, 1999). And, yes, it has huge implications for the environment and for democracies around the world as well.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Zygmunt Bauman (2013) claims that neo-liberal thought cannot succeed simply because Governments are national and corporations exist to become trans-national.

The two, according to Bauman, are incompatible. However, is there a vision of the future in which governments of multiple countries become governed by a number of megalithic corporations? Are governments going to become nothing more than the policy department of a huge supranational? Are we there, now?

Given the daily advances in technology, if we are not yet at this point, we may be there before we are aware of it. However, if the end goal is consumerism, what is the saturation point? Will it result in the utter destruction of the planet, beginning with the environment? Global warming is a reality. So is the reality that CEOs of corporations are locked into the prospect of providing dividends to their stockholders – at any cost.

The spiraling cycle of reviewing the five contexts within three countries, that we referred to as "burrowing in," is also a metaphor for the perceived downward spiral of worldwide fortunes at the expense of its inhabitants. Just as the history of civilization is a history of armed conflict intent on subduing competitive powers, up until this time, we now avail ourselves of technologies to fight economic wars. The purpose has not changed.

The irony in all of this is that many of the peoples who have become sidelined in the process of internationalization have become sidelined because they have been excluded on the basis that they have little or no economic power to contribute to the "war effort." Thus they are given little say in shaping their present or their future. However, these very people who are marginalized and discriminated against come from ancestors who lived in harmony with nature, that very harmony that is now approaching a tipping point (Gladwell, 2000).

So what do we have to be hopeful of? Admittedly, preceding paragraphs have been courting a dystopian vision of the future of society in democratic cultures. It is uncanny how many of the science fiction writers of the day, as has been noted by Allan Luke in one video segment, are often prophets of the future. Given modern surveillance techniques and the burgeoning technologies that support ever newer ways of observing and punishing (Foucault, 1977), of sorting the consumers from the powerless, and the technological censoring surveillance of developed countries, perhaps authors such as George Orwell (1949) and Anthony Burgess (1962) were on to something.

We believe that the hope lies within our educators, often castigated in the media as ill-educated, unmotivated, underprepared, and even overpaid. Government transfer payments to school systems appear to be ever-dwindling. Perhaps the objective is to render public school systems inoperable in favour of their more competitive counterparts, the private schools. As Tooley (2000) details in his book on marketplace aspirations for education, the marketplace will weed out those who are unprepared to take their places in the new economic reality from those who are, in a kind of weird educational Darwinism. However, South Africa and, to a lesser extent, Australia, have already embraced this reality. In countries like Australia and Canada, this phenomenon is tolerated by many and embraced as an alternative to the regular public system. In South Africa, the only people who are educated are those

who can afford it. The rest, mostly the aboriginals, remain uneducated and under-educated and eventually form a stratum of society that is considered uneducable by those who have more privilege. Democracy here is markedly different that the democracy of either Australia or Canada, and in the United States, perhaps because of the demographies surrounding ethnic and socio-economic make-up, as well as the colonizing histories of each of these countries.

In Canada, for example, the case that is made against teachers may, in some ways, be a blessing. Even as teacher morale suffers, as resources dwindle and as school systems are besieged by policy makers attempting to "fix a broken system," Canada still enjoys a prominent standing in international circles of education. This is likely in spite of neoliberal tinkerings. Teachers in Canada and elsewhere are still attempting to provide students with the basis of a strong liberal education. All of the innumerable policies that have come down from on high that attempt to divert this towards a "back to basics" education or to a more marketplace-based educational system seem to be merely creating a "stagmire" of conflicting messages and unenforceable procedures. In the face of all this change at the surface of the educational terrain, teachers still strive to ensure that their students are well-educated, however that is interpreted. Perhaps this is one of the greatest bastions against the neoliberal juggernaut and perhaps this is one avenue of exploration that may help to ensure a continued democracy that one could actually recognize as such.

Along with other thoughtful approaches to education, critical literacy offers a way to move student thinking from merely accepting an orthodox point of view to a more questioning stance. As John Willinsky has alluded to in one of his interview segments, there are no "sacred cows." With critical awareness, all things become grist for the questioning mind, even teacherly opinions. In an atmosphere of safety and security, not only asking about who has the power to make the decision but also about the nature of this power and if it is legitimate gives the critical questioner the required freedom to decide on the veracity of the claim or of the truthfulness or rightfulness of the decision and the decision-maker and returns power to the challenger.

Hopefully this volume has helped to illustrate the complexities and pressures that are affecting issues of democracy in each of these three countries. Very simply put, the three countries under study all espouse a commitment to the principles of democracy. If we agree with this direction on an individual basis, then we, the voting public, have the responsibility to ensure that the best possible conditions exist for the current and continued growth of democratic principles. We must do this by interrogating those things that we are not certain of. It is important to ask the questions that require answers and also to recognize that, occasionally, the hardest questions to ask are the most important ones to ask. The attitude of being critical is important to cultivate in order to ensure that democracy does not become further eroded, stolen or disfigured. It is important to not only uphold the ideals of the democratic state, but to engage, enact and perform democracy in all the innumerable ways that help to ensure equity and justice for all people, now and into the future.

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APPENDIX

Transcripts of Video-Clips

CHAPTER 1

Democracy and its Discontents

Noam Chomsky

Video-clip 1.1

These words, like, say, democracy, and in fact, just about every word that is used in political discourse, tend to have dual meanings. On the one hand, there's their literal meaning. On the other hand, there's the meaning that is used for what amounts to political warfare, propaganda, indoctrination, and so on. So take democracy. If you look up this thing about the meaning of the word, a country is democratic; there are many dimensions to democracy, but one of them certainly is that public opinion is reflected to some extent in public policy. To the extent that that's true, the country is more democratic. But that is certainly not the operative sense of the term democracy. So for example, the United States is hailed as a leading democracy, but there's always a significant gap between public opinion and policy, and now it's a total chasm. I could run through the details, but public policy is almost divorced from public opinion. And the reasons for that have to do with the mechanisms by which the nature of the government is determined and the constraints in which it functions, which reflect very substantially the distribution of power inside the society. So there's a very high concentration of economic power and that feeds directly to political decision making by all sorts of means. And it tends to drive policy towards the interests of the very rich and not those of the vast majority.

Noam Chomsky

Video-clip 1.2

In the Constitutional Convention, James Madison who was the main framer, he discussed this seriously. He pointed out that there is a fundamental flaw with democracy, which we have to overcome. The flaw is – he gave England as his example – that, of course, was their model. He said, suppose in England, everyone could vote – real democracy. Well in that case, the poor would use their voting power – they're the overwhelming majority – to encroach on the property of the rich. They would carry out the kinds of things that we now call land reform. And he said that would obviously be unjust because one of the main goals of government is to protect the minority, the opulent, against the majority. So we, therefore, have to organize the structure of the system so that there won't be much democracy.

Noam Chomsky

Video-clip 1.3

Aristotle's politics is the first major extensive book on different forms of political organization. And Aristotle discussed oligarchy and gangs and so on, and decided that, of all the systems, democracy was probably the best. He didn't love it that much but he said it's better than the others. But he pointed out the same problem. And he was talking about Athens, not about a country. But he said, in Athens, if everyone had the vote, the majority of the poor would use their voting power to take property away from the rich. And he also felt that that was unjust. And he provided a solution but it's the opposite of Madison's. Aristotle's solution was to reduce inequality so, then, the problem wouldn't arise. And he proposed what we would now call welfare state measures, common deals and things like that. And Madison's solution was – reduce democracy.

Noam Chomsky

Video-clip 1.4

And even some of the leading intellectuals discuss it. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, he discussed at one point, he said that he was a little surprised to see that leading political figures were so much in favour of education. He said well, the reason that they give is that we have to. He said that there are millions of voters out there and we have to educate them to keep them from our throats. It's back to Madison's point. If they're free and independent, they're going to go after our throats. So we have to educate them, but of course, in the right way, educate them to be conformist, obedient, not too inquisitive, just kind of accept what we impose on them. And those conflicts run right through the whole history of education up to this moment.

CHAPTER 2

What is critical literacy?

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip

I probably wouldn't define critical literacy because I see it as something that needs to be negotiated in actual places with people. Having said that, I think it's sometimes referred to as a family of practices. And for me, the kind of essential principles of those practices are that teachers and young people, if it's in a school context or another educational context, would be working on projects which would have them contesting privilege and injustice. So they'd be understanding, they'd be looking to understand the ways in which texts work in people's lives. They'd be looking at the relationships between language and power, they'd be looking at questioning, they'd be looking at doing research about why things are the way they are and how they came to be that way, they'd be looking at really rich dialogues where they were beginning to understand some very important questions about, as I said, language and power, language and identity. They'd also be looking quite a lot at their own positioning and the positioning of other people, how that's done in terms of language, how that's done textually, how that's done in terms of other kinds of text.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 2.2

With respect to defining critical literacy, twenty something years ago, Allan Luke and I developed a little set of job specifications for literacy programs. And they weren't specifications on how to teach or how to build curriculum or anything. They were in a sense high order job specs of what would any full blooded, whole hearted, contemporary and comprehensive program look like in terms of what it aimed to do at the very highest levels, what resources did it aim to develop. And that model got to be called the four roles model or variously the four resources model, and other things.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 2.3

I analyzed my own discourse, which was deeply uncomfortable. But looking at how is it that I, myself, am producing particular kinds of responses. And how do I weigh up this problem with, on the one hand, critical pedagogy which argues that you want to try and make the teaching and learning relationship more democratic and let students have the floor, and the right to speak, have voice. On the other

hand, as a critical literacy educator, I have a moral perspective and, you know, I take my cue from the constitution. And so it doesn't mean that any view goes. You know? Some views are privileged. But how do you enable that to be grappled with without silencing people and saying, "Well, that view is not acceptable within this classroom?" That doesn't help that student.

…I have used critical literacy resources, as I've said, to try and deconstruct these binaries of Black and White, oppressor/oppressed, or victim and oppressor. Because I think it's in trying to undo those binaries that we can actually, as people with very different histories, privileged and oppressed histories, come together and learn together and see how we can actually connect.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 2.4

I would say critical literacy has to do with asking questions about the nature of the text, getting beyond the author's purpose and thinking about how the text operates within the larger world of literacy. And thinking about its critical role and its contribution, the text's contribution, and seeing how it contributes to certain political ideas, how it contributes to certain knowledge economies, the way people think of and value knowledge. Thinking about it critically in terms of its role in education, the stances that it takes. I think of critical literacy as not losing the pleasure of the text, of not totally abandoning the intent and efforts of the author, but at some point stepping back and thinking about how this text operates as a political object, how it serves social interests? And what would be a contrary or counter-text? What's missing from this text? What would we want to consider for a moment as a series of opposing and as texts that would be critical of the work that we're reading?

… I think any program of critical literacy would have to give students some experience with what I might think of as easier texts to be critical about, giving them a chance to see how texts operate in a way that is politically and socially positioned. So decades ago, that would have been the editorial cartoon; that would have been a nice obvious one to start with. More recently, we might think about blog posts, we might look at social media. So the aspect is that the students both see the text for what it is, what it's trying to do, and learn it as a skill and as a practice, to raise questions about the nature of the text and how it operates, and who's excluded, where the standpoint of the text is, whose position it's coming from, what perspectives have been overlooked. So the way of structuring that, whether it's a Social Studies program or an English Language Arts program, would be to select, and this goes both ways, it would be to select texts that are both the canon and the norm, and to get critical about what's left out in those, and then to bring in what we might think of as radically new perspectives into the curriculum. And again, give students a chance to see what's being attempted here, and to be just as critical of those radical interventions as they are of the canon itself.

… I'm very encouraged by curricular moves and the legitimacy of those curriculum moves to expand the curriculum and to bring new texts in and new forms of texts, not just the printed page but electronic and digital forms. But I would always ask, and in many cases, these overlap easily enough, I would always ask about this critical perspective examination of the standpoints, the sense of what is urgent and what is at issue in the play of these texts. And what is pleasurable and what is, I mean, it doesn't always have to be this harsh political perspective. But I would think of satire and parody, I would think of the kind of play that we see in hip-hop and rap, as elements of introducing students to a critical literacy that is multi-modal and that fits within the new literacies. The one element of the new literacies I would point out, with credit to Alan Luke and others, is the sense of their concern with what I might call the occupational or vocational aspect of how literacies work in the world, a sense of how literacy involves professional media and the control and the kind of organization of that media. So that, to me, is a very positive addition to the sense of critical literacy in that it looks at this political economy of media control and the dominant messages. So it's messy and it's evolving. And to each his own label.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 2.5

And so bringing in the critical aspect and adding critical to literacy, for me, brings up issues of power because we have to talk about power and power dynamics. We have to talk about the ways in which people read and write and engage in thinking about the word, thinking about the world, which is Freire. We have to think about the ways people interact with each other and the types of questions that they ask. But all of these things in relation to critical literacy, for me at least, have a lot to do with who people are and the spaces they occupy with other people, how they think about the world, how they think about reading the world, how they think about thinking about text and not just print text but oral text and the text of our entire lives, the text that we see when we walk down the street that we don't even name as text.

CHAPTER 3

The Autobiographical

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 3.1

I'll tell you something. As a little Chinese kid, I learned which institutions were racist pretty quickly. Okay? I learned hidden codes of where I couldn't go. I learned what White teachers wanted and how they wanted me to speak. I learned that in my family and other families that we would speak differently than we would perhaps to some of those White teachers, etc.

…I always was interested in issues of recognitive justice, of the fact that I never saw a Chinese face in a book or in a movie. I read *The Three Chinese Brothers*, which was a racist thing, long before my father told me that my grandfather had a queue, and my grandmother on one side had bound feet.

…So I think that that part of American culture which has rubbed off on me in school, which was you are different; and I was angry, a little bit angry about that the difference wasn't acknowledged, but that you can read and write differently and that will be valued. And then I carried on with that. I wrote a lot of protest essays against the Viet Nam war when I was in high school. I was on the school journalism club and we were all thrown out of school for raising a stink against the war. So a lot of me was formed in the counterculture of the sixties, then. So the cultural difference was caught and codified when I had a movement to join. And that started for me probably in middle school when I was fourteen or fifteen. And the first, I had a gay English teacher. I had some other teachers; I had a lot of Jewish-American teachers who were harbouring a lot of things from the war. And they encouraged us to speak; they encouraged us to argue; they encouraged us to take positions of dispute. And that, so those things, I think, were the great things about American state public education in the fifties and sixties. Multicultural schools, Los Angeles, you know, mixed race schools, and multiple social access and the teachers encouraged us to argue.

…So that's where I think the critical literacy got its roots. It was historical moment, it was being a cultural minority, it was being a product of the sixties…. Remember when I said that critical literacy isn't a method? Well, it's a disposition, it's a product of a particular historical and biographical journey.… So critical literacy, you're right, it's a biographical journey; it's a generational journey; it's a cultural-ideological journey for a whole bunch of people. And it will need to be sufficiently malleable for the next generation and the next cultural cohort to take it and shape it in its interests.

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 3.2

So I guess, on the home front, I had two very articulate parents who were very critical of a range of systems, which enforced hierarchies, enforced privilege. So I guess I learned about critical literacy from watching my parents at the dinner table. And it wasn't until many, many years later, as a teacher and as a tertiary educator that I actually came across the term and got incredibly excited by Freire's work when I first started reading about the notion about reading the world as well as the word. And I guess there was some very strong, immediate connections for me, about language and power and who people could be.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 3.3

I never really recovered from having had a happy childhood. I had, through the parents, and I had no particular reason for my childhood and adolescence to feel any more or less marginalized or disenfranchised than anybody else. So I did not come from a sense of what we would now call identity politics, for me. I wasn't quite brought up White middle class, so there were aspects of my upbringing that you could sort of point to. But I don't think that was a real thing. I think for me was, and I think this is the case for a lot of people of my generation, the really big thing that hit me at the end of my teens and that I engaged in significantly, was early feminist writings. And I think, for reasons I don't fully understand, I think just accidental, I was reading Greer and Kate Millett and Marilyn French and people like that quite early in my life. And for me, that was the entry into a way in which people could use texts and use writing and posit a certain kind of readership to make some very, very significant points about key elements of our social organization and experience that held a whole lot of other things in place.

…I know that it was feminism that first made me see the ways in which the technology of writing and the conditions of production and dissemination of key texts could have profound changes on how people experienced, interpreted, every little thing they did during the day. And that was the first major impact for me, that realization. Plus of course, calling into question all the things that flowed from that, and the understanding and seeking of how is it that we work so hard to maintain the patriarchy in these kinds of ways, and the connection of those ideas with neo-Marxist positions.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 3.4

So, then, I was at university in the sixties. We were in different ways, my husband and I were, in different ways, involved in student government. I worked for a welfare organization that actually worked together with a community in one of the townships. My husband was on the students' representative council, so he worked more directly with the politics at the time.

…So, you know, we took part in protests. We had the students from Afrikaans University down the road, now the University of Johannesburg, standing on the island opposite where we were protesting, throwing rotten eggs at us and the police laughing and then firing tear gas at us. So, I mean, it sounds very brave and all of that, but that's what we did as students, then. We were fairly radical students and we didn't think too hard about the consequences if we got caught, and so it wasn't particularly brave.

…And we knew that fellow students were spies, we just didn't know who. So that wasn't fun…. By '85, there was a whole new round of uprisings. And—I don't know how to describe this. I needed to know what was going on. Funnily enough, the more I knew, the easier it was. You know? It just, I didn't like that we weren't being given news; that we didn't know what was going on, that the radio lied to us. We'd maybe just got television; it was used only if it was a government agency. I felt much less secure not knowing what was going on, than knowing what was going on. At that point, I had colleagues, not so much in the university, but in the some of the NGOs around the university or attached to the university. Black colleagues, you know, who could tell me what was going on at home and how they'd had to come to work having had to lock children into their homes, so that they didn't get hit by stray bullets. And they could still do that with a smile on their face. So I felt better with knowing what was going on. But, I mean, it was really risky. I mean, I had books that I shouldn't have had, you know, really dangerous books like Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and *Cultural Freedom for Action*, you know, those really dangerous, banned books. And you know, my family was at risk. So my husband and I took the decision, he was the main breadwinner, that if I wanted to become involved, he would be the one who didn't become involved because we didn't want both parents to be at risk for the kids. And I mean, I had been running workshops and stuff for the teachers' organizations, which were also very political in those days.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 3.5

I'd say my first experience with critical literacy was through Paulo Freire and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*…. because at the time I was working, well, it started in

probably my last year of undergraduate and then I did some work for an organization here in Cape Town, called YSWE, You Speak White English, and that was in the early '90s, so sort of at the tail end of apartheid, before the end of apartheid. And that was part of the kind of people's education move, which was people's education was aligned with a grouping of left and ANC-aligned organizations working in, it was called the NECC, the National Education Crisis Committee. And it was a kind of grouping of academics, intellectuals and also political activists to see what can we do around the crisis of education for the majority of South Africans. So at the time, apartheid was still going. So towards the end of that time, they were working on kind of policy proposals for what education would look like in the new democratic South Africa.

…And that was really using problem-posing kind of methodology, Freirean problem posing methodology for teaching English as a Second Language, which was aligned to the work I was doing with YSWE at the time…. And I published a quite a few pieces that came out of my Ph.D. research which looked at students' difficulties in dealing with the apartheid past as it was represented in South African literature. And so there, I was looking at the identity work that critical literacy asks students to do. And then, just coming out of that process, I came to realize that actually it wasn't just the students, that in fact, critical literacy really demands a lot from the teacher. And it assumes, in a way, that you have already the critical consciousness, you know, you have deconstructed the text in the many possible ways that it can be deconstructed and so on. But in fact, it's challenging for the teacher, too.

…So, I started to look at the problem of resistance, which had been, up until now, in critical pedagogy, talked about as a problem….and tried to push through that practitioner research, since I was the teacher, towards engaging with resistance and trying to see resistance as more productive. And I think in some cases, it's an inevitable, actually, part of the process of doing critical literacy work if you're moving beyond the superficial. Once you start to really get engaged in that kind of work. It is identity work, it is about change and resistance to a certain extent, you know, is inevitable.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 3.6

Being a child of the sixties, so I came of age as a teenager right through the sixties and into the early seventies. I was involved in the protest against the war in Vietnam, in Canada, but certainly in Toronto where there was social activism, there was an alternative counterculture and all those elements I was very drawn to. And then when I became a teacher, I didn't put it all aside, but I put a good deal of that aside to focus on trying to learn how to work better and how to work well with children, with students, and to bring some of these critical aspects to bear. But I think if I had to pick an autobiographical moment, in about the third or fourth, maybe the fifth year of

my teaching experience, an academic came to town named Edgar Freidenberg who had been, himself, very active in the anti-war movement and as an intellectual. And as a teacher sitting in the audience waiting for yet another professional development session, he stood up in front of us, this is 1976 or 7, and connected what we did in the schools to the war in Vietnam, to the oppressive nature of schooling and its relationship to the military industrial machine that was so very active in those days—still is today but in slightly different ways—and made connections that I hadn't thought about, and made it very clear that what I was doing in the classroom was still very much directly related. And so that was a critical moment for me, and I think it provided a turning point in terms of becoming much more focused and much less incidental in terms of the way I was approaching critical literacy.

…And I wasn't yet thinking about the way in which a long history of imperialism, for example, was playing its way out in the way we were teaching social studies and other elements like that.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 3.7

My father, who is currently 81 years old, is a retired truck driver. He was in the army for many years. My mother is a retired nurse, who is about 76 years old, and we're from the segregated south, South Carolina, in particular. And I have two older brothers. And so, in that context, we were always confronted with different realities in relation to segregation and discrimination, a sense of belonging or not belonging in different places. Thinking about issues of class, working class, poverty, what these things mean, or what other people think these things mean and the definitions that get imposed on other people's realities. Because, you know, there are so many poets who write about, "I grew up poor and Black, but I never knew I was poor until someone from outside came in and said that you are." And "I am? I don't think I am, because I have all these rich literacies around me and these different experiences." And so I make that connection because when I think about my familial background and I think about my parents and their various struggles, and I think about my two older brothers. And then I think about myself as this daughter, youngest person in this family, really sort of like sitting on the periphery in many ways, and looking at the experiences of everyone else, and looking at the experiences of everyone else in my family. I think about literacy, and I think about the stories that my father would tell on any given morning, sitting on the porch with his newspaper. I think about the stories my mother would bring home from the hospital and the stories that she would tell about work and ethics and responsibility. But also within those stories, I thought a lot about, and I continue to think about, issues of representation. How do people get represented within these stories? How do people make sense of who they are in relation to other people? And really importantly in this conversation, for me, is whose voices are heard and whose voices are not heard? You know? My father's

voice is heard in certain conversations and in certain circles, whereas and in other circles, his voice is not heard. And the same with my mother, and the same with my aunts and my uncles. And then, when we think about so what might literacy have to do with any of this? Literacy has everything to do with everything. [laughing] Did I just say that? Literacy has everything to do with everything. Literacy is not just about picking up a newspaper and reading it, it is also about having access to that newspaper and having access to understanding the words that are printed in that newspaper or the images that are printed in that newspaper. Literacy has everything to do with my father being able to tell the stories of his life in relation to the stories of my mother's life. And telling those stories, having an audience to listen and to figure out what those stories mean in relation to who these other people are. And these other people would primarily and particularly be me, or my bothers, or my family members, or community members. Literacy in that context had everything to do with space, sitting on the porch, you know, that familial space, that personal space, and having a sense of belonging. And then beyond that porch, that larger context would be this community that was primarily an African-American neighbourhood. And then beyond that context, it was the school community, going to an all-Black elementary school, an all-Black middle school, and predominantly all-Black high school, and then eventually going to a historic new Black college or university for my undergraduate studies. And not really thinking about privilege, not thinking about White privilege in particular, until I went away to graduate school in Detroit. And then thinking about the stories that I was told about belonging or representation in graduate school, that in many ways began to contradict the stories that, going all the way back to South Carolina, my father would tell me on the porch or my mother would tell me at the living room table. And I think about how these stories conflict. And then I go all the way to where I am right now, in terms of teaching in-service and preservice teachers and teacher educators and working with literacy doctoral students, and listening to their stories.

…And so, being the only one with a Ph.D. in my family, that comes with an added level of responsibility to not leave those realities behind, to not leave those stories behind. But to really understand the stories that I've been told, through a critical lens, that get me to really think about, within the spaces that my parents told us, my brothers and I those stories, what might it mean for them to have access to the things that I have access to now, and they didn't at that time? So, issues of access, issues of representation and responsibility, and action. So I take all of those stories, and I take those stories into my teaching. And those stories ground and guide everything that I do….

…And I think, if we're talking about critical literacy, and for me, through an autobiographical context here, that has everything to do with being open to thinking about difference, being open to thinking about diversity, but also being open to thinking about the ways that we have to hear and acknowledge and recognize—and not affirm, but recognize, because I think that gets us deeper to doing something

more than, “I affirm you.” Because you can’t affirm me. We can work to recognize each other. That gets us closer to recognizing the value of these stories.

…You know, I can’t do this work without thinking about my mother and my father and the opportunities they just did not have. You know, my father didn’t finish high school but, yet, I think he is brilliant. The way he works with numbers, the way he thinks about, mathematically thinks about ideas and concepts. I cannot even imagine how he does that. But it’s like that’s a brilliances that is undefined by this jargon that we use in education to talk about people’s capacities or abilities to do something. And for me, it’s sort of, I am an extension of him, yes. And so, how might I take what he’s taught me and bring that into this particular educational space in ways that recognize him but then push me to do more than what I’ve done.

Efstratia Karagrigoriou

Video-Clip 3.8

I was born and raised in Athens, Hellas, Greece. I would prefer to use Hellas, instead of Greece because this is the original name of my country. Democracy is a virtue that was not only provided me through my family but it is within our culture as well. So it is very essential to me.

…And what I wanted to do was to be an educator. So I studied education at the University of Crete. And then I got my Master’s and I was hired as a Kindergarten teacher in a public school in Athens. However, I wanted to see in practice how is multiculturalism is being facilitated in a classroom setting. Since, here in Greece, a few decades ago, the school population in the classroom was not as multicultural as in other countries it the world. So, what I tried to look for was to go to a country where multiculturalism was actually the basis of a school system and the culture itself. That helped me a lot to choose Canada, and especially Toronto. There I applied for a doctorate degree at the University of Toronto and I got accepted. So it was a perfect opportunity for me to experience multiculturalism in its essence in a very sensitive sector of education. Having the experience from the Greek education and then from the Canadian one, the Ontario one, it was the ideal place for me to look from a close perspective at theory and practice, not as much though, not practice as much as theory. I fulfilled all the requirements and then I came back to Greece, Hellas, that’s the Greek name of my country, the original name of my country.

…I found that it is hard to put theory in practice, but it was easier to accommodate in the classroom what you had been taught in a multicultural environment…. All this experience is my “treasure” that influenced my work as a teacher. And, hopefully, I will be better in my work as a Kindergarten teacher, here in my homeland.

CHAPTER 4

The Historic

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 4.1

And the beauty of it is that in spite of this Neo-Liberal movement towards global reductionist educational science and poor governance, we've got systems that are working. You know? And we've got a generation of teachers who are going to, remember I said critical literacy is about disposition, it's about stance. It's about, to use the term from feminist and indigenous people, it's about standpoint. It's about the kid who knows that texts are to be treated with some degree of skepticism, and the teacher who knows that.

…So one of the things that I think we've done here is we've managed to take critical literacy from ideology critique and critique of the state, very specifically, to a much broader definition of ideology of critical literacy as being a disposition of critique towards the state, culture, political economy, but also everything around you.

…. This is an open project. This needs to remain an open project. This cannot be codified into a set of tools. As soon as it does, it will lose something. You know? It will lose something in terms of its ability to adapt to new texts, to the changing technologies of literacies, and to new ideologies, to new forms of subjectivity, to new forms of oppression. It'll lose some of its flexibility and capacity.

…And the things that should remain canonical are the ones that actually are the tools that we're going to need to deal with a new set of problems…. What are the tools to survive? Understanding and being able to, again, using the theme that John Elkins and I used in the *Journal of Adolescent [& Adult Literacy]*, is being able to navigate this complex sea of texts and images that is going to try to position them, define them, and define their lives and their wants and desires at all times. And I think the other thing that I'd like my children and everybody to understand are the complex, well, I'll put it this way, political economies, but the complex interests that are driving those texts. So they understand, when they're purchasing particular things or engaging with particular texts, etc., that they basically are feeding an economy and feeding particular structures of power. I am very worried that the consolidation of print and digital resources into the hands of six to seven media barons, which the economists and others have pointed out, is akin to the reconsolidation of the print archive by the Catholic Church into the scriptoriums of the medieval times.

…The digitization of that archive creates the same problem as the digitization of voting. It means that a hidden hand can alter the archive of human history and that we won't have recoverable, contestable versions of it.… So we've got what was called in the eighties' communication theories, a pay-per-view universe emerging. Okay? Whether it's through Kindle etc., or the googlization of the archive.… Will it

be advocacy of open access to all this information, to access to information as long as it doesn't threaten particular interests or people?

…So we've got archetypal questions of control, access, ownership of information, of what our modes of production of information and modes of control of information. You asked me what am I worried about for my kids? I'm worried that my grandkids and their kids are going to have limited access, controlled access, and that between the State and corporations, we're going to get kind of dystopian information régimes of the kind that Orwell and Huxley and Atwood and Phillip Dick and all of the science fiction writers write about.

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 4.2

…We began to open that up in the '60s and '70s using models of critical literacy, and teaching kids that they can argue with texts, that texts are not to be loved…. I began to realize that texts were to be tussled with, that texts were to be argued with. And I think that's something that just came out of my own education…. So we began to show them how texts were positioning them, how texts were trying to sell them things, how texts were trying to convince them things, right at the sentence level. So in effect, what we did was we began to give them a tool kit for lexical and grammatical analysis of texts.… So we began to show them how functional grammar created the world in different ways. This was, to me, taking Freire to another level.

…So our agenda in critical literacy, then, began to solve the two problems that I had identified in my own work with the Freirean model. It took it away from being about the self, to being about how the text works on you and works on people. And it also took it away from an exclusive focus on narrative, to a focus on how there are different genres, but different genres require that you choose different words and master different forms of grammar.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 4.3

I suppose a lot of people would draw attention to what we would think of as the Vietnam era and the kind of disjuncture between our generation and previous generations on matters to do with Vietnam, and the ramifications of that disjunction for the gradual understanding of a wider range of social issues to do with equity and conflict, power relations, gender relations, race relations and so on. And a rethinking of those things and a recruitment of critical theories that had been around, in many cases, for a long time, and pedagogical practices that have been around for less of a time but nonetheless were available there, they weren't re-invented…. One of the things that the Vietnam war did was to, for the first time probably seriously since

the end of the Second World War, to throw into relief the potentially problematic relationship between our country and other, more powerful countries, economically, culturally, and militarily, more powerful countries that we were aligned to or, in the case of Asia, that we were near, that we were actually in the middle of. And the refusal, for most of its history, of Australia to recognize itself as being located in Asia.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 4.4

So there's a real issue there about responsibilities of schooling in that regard that goes way beyond just trying to produce an intellectual elite that can go on and be great scientists or great economists. We still want that, but the issue gets to be what the average citizen gets, what are they entitled to by way of their education. And part of that is the dispositional features and the skills and the resources to be able to compare and contrast and evaluate and find out about and write about these kinds of issues, to be active and agentive in modern societies. Otherwise, they will end up believing whoever is the most charismatic speaker or whoever can control the media and so on.… Through the 1970s and 1980s, with respect to literacy education, you had debates about whether or not a prime function of literacy education was fluency, decoding skills, and accuracy, whether it was the gaining of meaning, the making of inferences and so on, whether it was appropriate knowledge about the appropriate types of texts and the cultural and social work that they did and how they formed dynamic and moveable but nonetheless recognizable genres of textual practice, and whether or not the ideas under which that a reader would look through all of those cultural social activities as well, to look at the philosophical and moral and political and ideological features that made this text seem sensible in this place and this time. So there were people arguing for one or the other of these general four kinds of approaches. And I guess they were trying to clear the ground and make it clear that it was a legitimate thing. But each of them seemed to us to be based on the idea that because we could demonstrate that these were necessary aspects of participating in a fully literate society in a full way, that therefore each of them were somehow sufficient unto itself, that it could be the train that pulls along all the other carriages kind of thing. And that just seemed to us to be a really inadequate description of what the task of becoming literate in societies like ours was. So we wanted to say that each of these are necessary but not sufficient components, and the whole set taken together was at least beginning to look like a comprehensive program….

We came across people from different tribes and from different territories and in many cases attempted to form some general alliances that would penetrate what was then a kind of confluence of basic skills training, literacy as basic skills training, and literacy as having to do with the study of literature in a fairly romanticized, leave-aside way, which also sort of for the most part in Australian education, in the sixties

and seventies, sort of bleached it clean of any kind of historical, ideological, political analyses or anything like that. So trying to penetrate that unspoken alliance of what the scope and span of literacy studies and literacy education looked like was a kind of a loose and, at times, troubled set of relationships across these different borders of applied linguistics and cognitive science and anthropology and sociology….

So I think that was kind of peculiar to the Australian situation between the early 80s and the early 90s, and that's where this field developed as a recognizable field in Australia. And it also accounts for the fact that it has these different facets to it. It's not a field that's owned by one or the other of these discipline bases, or one of the other of these educational approaches. So I think that's been a bit distinctive in our development here…. So I think that was a peculiar thing here. I don't hear stories like that coming from North America or UK or South Africa, so much.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 4.5

But, I think also it was the fact that by the end of the middle of the eighties, there had grown to be a number of particular camps within literacy education within the academies. And they were to do with a fairly strong bastion of traditional educational psychologists interested in basic issues of acquisition of sound-letter combinations and basic comprehension issues, those kind of people. There were also people, you know, Whole Language people connected up, I suppose, with sort of heritage notions of literature and so on as well. There were people operating as applied linguistics in terms of genre, teaching grammar, strong form of grammar. And there were critical sociologists—Allan Luke came to Australia in the eighties as well—looking at critical sociological aspects of texts and of literacy as a sociological phenomenon. So there were at least these four camps that had, you know, that had we been in a country with five times the population, might not have felt the need to have much to do with one another. But it's a relatively small population and the academic conferences put these people basically in the same room as one another. Which led to all kinds of very robust debates, but also, I think, which brought people up against these boundaries issues, as well as starting to look at the fact that what we've been talking about may be necessary in terms of literacy development, but may actually not be sufficient in terms of producing a school graduate who we would like to think of as fully literate in the sense of fully functional, fully understanding the role of their agency in social and cultural structures and histories, and fully understanding the depth to which literacy has re-shaped them as persons and re-shapes the way they operate, and continues to set trajectories for their social experiences. That started to make people say, and that's where the Four Roles Model came out of, which was just to say critical literacy can be thought of as one necessary aspect of this sort of thing…. And

the Four Roles thing, which was really an embarrassingly simple model, really, except it was to say think about necessity and sufficiency, think about the fact that these things aren't necessarily engaged in some strict hierarchical, developmental thing,… That model took off so, kind of, quickly in Australia that most of the state and territory jurisdictions and departments had it in their curriculum programs somewhere or other, within about six or seven years. And, you know, it's gone other places as well. So I think, here, that gave critical literacy a sort of place in the larger orthodoxy by the late eighties – or by the late nineties at least.

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 4.6

I started to read the work of a range of people, including Allan Luke, who you'll also be talking with, where we could see that some of our progressive models of language and literacy pedagogy had blind spots, serious blind spots, about what they took for granted, what they celebrated, whose stories were being told, whose interests were being served. That came as, I must say, kind of a huge shock for me in a way, because I'd thought that politically, I had a particular stance toward literacy. And then to start to read the critiques of the ways in which some of these more progressive models of literacy still positioned working class kids, poor kids, indigenous kids as "Other," and still insisted on particular normative views of families, of schooling, of educational trajectories, was as I said, a bit of a wake-up call. And at the same time as Allan was starting to raise these questions about what's going on, Peter Freebody, who you'll have also spoken to, was raising questions about even if we looked at the innocent, supposedly innocent, classroom event of shared book experience, that we could begin to see the ways in which particular versions of reality, particular versions of normal life, particular versions of whiteness and so on, were being inculcated in children right from the start of school in supposedly progressive, democratic approaches to literacy. And Allan and Peter were at the forefront of this work and had a very, very powerful influence….

And the federal government, while it was involved in education, was not actually responsible for assessment, not actually responsible for evaluation, and not responsible for designing curriculum. So there was quite a lot of room to move in Australia for a very long period of time because of the ways in which the responsibilities were aligned. And so while we had our first language and literacy policy, our national language and literacy policy, the first one was, I think, in the early eighties, meanwhile, the states continued to design their own syllabuses, their own curriculum. And they had different histories, you know, partly associated with some of the work that was going on in the various universities, and partly because of the professional associations. And so for a long time we enjoyed enormous professional autonomy.

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 4.7

And for me, it was also Hilary Janks, who is a friend and fellow educator, who was working in the South African context, where English of course, was being taught and the curriculum was being taught through English, yet the children in those classrooms, and even their teachers, had English as a second, third, or perhaps even fourth language. And Hilary took that powerful work from Norman Fairclough on critical discourse analysis, and really developed a pedagogy for working in very challenging contexts, in the sense that the teachers were learners of English as a second or third language. And so, how do you think about interrogating texts in a language that is not your own? I think that kind of brought whole new levels of complexity to the whole question of critical literacy for me, which were very, very salutary and very powerful. And so I had a chance to work with Hilary over an extended period of time, and with Allan and Peter, and to really think about what it was that teachers needed to understand about language, what it was that teachers needed to understand about language and power, to really start to develop a pedagogical repertoire in their classroom. And that's ongoing work. We're not done with that yet, either….

So I guess what I'm saying there is that a lot of the work that's been done in critical literacy has been very much about looking at children's literature or looking at popular culture, studying those textual practices, thinking about, you know, who's represented, who's missing, what are the silences, and so on, you know, some of those questions that we're all fairly familiar with. But I've been increasingly interested in thinking with young people about the politics of places, and how places are always already constructed, you know, in particular interests.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 4.8

So, when I first started working with critical literacy, my main focus was on the relationship between language and power, or language, power, and context. But as I've worked in the area for some time now, thinking about all the roots that have influenced critical literacy, I've moved towards a model which argues that there are different elements that have to be taken seriously in critical literacy. Power, of course, is one of them. The other one, which in a way I suppose is an aspect of power, are questions of identity and difference, which, in the work that I've done I describe as diversity. It could equally be described as difference. The third is questions of access, who gets access to what? The fourth really works with a combination of design and re-design, because design is the productive end. There's no use really looking at what it is that needs to be deconstructed if you have no way of intervening and then redesigning whatever it is that you've deconstructed with a different set of

possibilities. So I don't think there is anything particularly new about that. I think that the difference is, my argument is that all of these are completely interdependent.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 4.9

The parents in the communities, I mean, the struggle had been led by the youth, the adults were not at the forefront of the struggle and they were deeply concerned about their children losing out on education. They have since been called "The Lost Generation" because they didn't have education. So the parents in Soweto formed the National Education Crisis Committee, out of which grew the People's Education movement…. So the National Education Crisis Committee was banned, the whole organization was banned, and we were told not to go on meeting anymore because it was too dangerous….

So I was invited to be part of the People's English group, there were four of us, and what we were trying to do was trying to conceptualize a very different kind of curriculum for Africa. The leaders of the National Education Crisis Committee were put in jail, eventually, or banned. The person who was running People's Maths was banned. I mean, that was a hard and tough time. Ironically, I also served on the State Syllabus Committee, okay, because what we were trying to do there was a different job. We were trying to insert gaps into the curriculum that teachers could exploit. So we worked very hard to include South African literature in the curriculum, and South African poetry, because a lot of the poetry at that time was protest poetry. So if we could get that into the curriculum, then it opened a space for teachers to do what the curriculum said they should be doing. So I mean, they were two very different projects….

We agreed that my contribution would be to produce these critical language awareness materials. So I had started working on them already, members of the committee had seen them. I mean, it helped to do that. So that's why I crafted research around these publications. And what was so interesting about it is that, at the time, in England, the government was very unhappy with the way the curriculum was going. And so, at that time, people were working on the Link materials for the government…. I was writing much more radical materials that we always intended to distribute underground. Okay? But by the time they were ready for publication, South Africa was changing. It was 1993. They got published and the Link materials in Britain got banned. So you know, there are ironies, ironies abound.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 4.10

I faced a dilemma of where I was going to work as an educator. And I nearly took a job in in-schooling because I wanted to teach and it seemed to be a nice school.

And I was persuaded by one of my radical friends to not take the job and to go and work in Swaziland in distance education projects there. I did that for a while and got committed to working in education outside of the schooling system. And then worked in South Africa when I came back, first in newspapers, and then in an NGO project called "Learn and Teach," which was an anti-apartheid adult literacy project using Freirean ideas to teach adults to read and write. And I worked for eight years developing this project as an adult literacy project developing Freirean methods nationally and also in regional, in countries around the borders of South Africa. So, I spent a long time working quite closely with Freirean methods of literacy teaching. So that's probably my closest experience of what would be called critical literacy.

It's interesting that Freirean work was almost illegal in South Africa, that his work was banned in South Africa and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, his book, arrived in a suitcase of Canon Collins who was a left-wing Anglican priest, who now runs the Collins Trust in the UK, scholarships for South African students. But he brought one copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and made five hundred photocopies. So it was buried in his suitcase, smuggled into the country. He photocopied five hundred copies and distributed them to mostly Black students, Black consciousness students, linked to SASO and Black People's Convention. And I came into this work through one of the church-funded literacy projects where the people running it were leaving and I took it over, and worked exclusively with young Black activists in developing this project. But I had major problems with the method, the Freirean methodology….

Freire's arguments are that there's a kind of assumption that people can't read and write have something which is called "naïve consciousness" and that engaging in dialogue will produce something called "critical consciousness." And this really is rubbish. But, in fact, it might have made some sense working with South American peasants in certain settings, who might have been seen by certain kinds of trained intellectuals in South America, as people who weren't thinking clearly. But unschooled, uneducated South Africans and migrants from elsewhere in Africa lived in a highly political environment. South Africa was a seething place of political unrest and turmoil. People didn't need to be told that their lives were shaped by political inequality. They knew this very clearly…

So the notion that these educational classes could be the source for social movements was clearly overstated in a South African context. And even though we were seen by our funders and by various people as doing wonderful work, and seen by the security police in South Africa as doing threatening work, this wasn't the case. We were struggling to maintain small marginal groups, which weren't going to change things terribly much. And social movements were happening where people were socially organized as sites of social power, trade unions, church movements, both conservative and left wing….

So I initiated and co-organized with a number of colleagues and academics a substantial research project, which studied what it is that adults without schooling do in relation to print-based activities. The research focused mostly in the western

Cape and was concerned with studying people in workplaces, in formal settlements, in townships, and in schools. And the question was "How do you communicate? What do you do when it comes to the print parts of your life? What do you do when you have to deal with bureaucracies, with your children in school, and with people in workplaces?" And it started a particular orientation to studying literacy as one part of situated, communicative engagement, and looked at how questions of social placing, social inequality, questions of social hegemony, interact with questions of reading and writing in those settings.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 4.11

We have to get past the notion that schooling is the same thing whether it's a very small rump of quality middle-class schooling that happens in certain suburbs of Cape Town and the mass of schooling that happens outside of that. That schooling and literacy are very different things when people are coming to them with very different backgrounds, with very different possibilities, in very different settings. So the post-modernist question is really a question of social diversity, social diversity and an approach to education, which is not based on diversity.

So I think that education is faced by major challenges to becoming more tuned to providing effective education for conditions of massive social diversity, institutionalized, deeply embedded social inequalities, and to find ways of making schooling education so attuned to those conditions. The problem with state curricula, with all kinds of standardized testing regimes, and so on, is that they run totally counter to the reality of social diversity, to the challenges of diversity, in particular, with regard to literacy, literacy and language, because people are bringing for the potential and the capacity to read and write, to speak, which are very different to what the institution expects them to have.

In particular, the reality of multilingualism, to the fact that people don't bring anything close to the standard language and literacy resources that the institution expects them to have and then teaches them as if there's only one resource to be got. The result is that people end up marginalized because their habitus doesn't match the field into which they're being inserted. And our teaching doesn't equip teachers to understand that they need to make bridges between the resources that students bring in terms of language and so on. We have a language prescription in South Africa, which says, "Languages are all equal. Everybody needs to be able to work in the languages that they bring." But the reality is that people's language resources are completely marginalized. Teachers who don't have proper English language resources themselves, teach in monolingual English to children who don't have adequate English resources and don't let them speak the languages that they have. And the same applies to literacy. If anything is not standard, it's seen to be bad, inadequate, incompetent, wrong…

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 4.12

And this work took place at a time of major socio-political change in the middle nineties in South Africa. So it was a time when political was moving from apartheid to post-apartheid. And this work is a close socio-cultural engagement with people in their settings and asking them very closely, “How do you live your life and how do you communicate? And how do you deal with the challenges and problems that face you?” So it’s a detailed ethnographic account which both gives a full sort of socio-cultural view of what it means, of what it meant to be living in South Africa on the part of ordinary people at this particular time. And also a sense of how reading and writing are deeply embedded in socio-cultural political practices, in forms of engagement, disengagement, and a very clear case that people who didn’t have schooling were, nonetheless, not helpless, disempowered, marginalized people. They suffered serious social inequalities but, nonetheless, had rich lives, fantastic cultural resources and certain forms of engagement, which were high developed and sophisticated, although sometimes invisible to mainstream, middle-class society.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 4.13

I think for me, critical literacy is really about a critical orientation to knowledge and then, following from that, a critical orientation to text, and whether it’s in the reading of text or in the producing of text. So, in the kind of different traditions that have informed critical literacy work, if one thinks about the North American work drawing on Paulo Freirean traditions, and then one thinks more of the British and Australian which is more text-focused, close work with text, I’ve kind of brought the two together in the work that I do. So I see critical literacy as, you know, involving both. It’s always about taking a critical orientation to knowledge, but then how does that work within text? And ultimately, it’s about change because I think all learning is about change in some way or another. And, with critical literacy, we are trying to get people to interrogate their assumptions about the world, about each other, about themselves.…

All teachers and would-be teachers that, I think, need to develop an understanding and skills in critical literacy so that they can do this critical literacy kind of work across the curriculum, in science and history, geography, as in the language arts. In relation to leadership, I have least to say because I haven’t really worked in that area. And in teacher professional development, I would draw on the same principles…

In South Africa, critical literacy is not foregrounded in teacher education programs.… What I am seeing in current-day South Africa, where named race is kind of going underground, it’s taboo to talk about race, but people are still very much entrenched in racial thinking. And so, the way that people use language, the

way they speak English, different accents and so on, is used to categorize all the time, and used to make judgments about people. You know? If you speak English in a way that approximates White South African English, that's the legitimate language, using Bourdieu's term, and that means you're educated, you're intelligent, you're more worthy of teaching me than somebody who speaks with a Black South African English accent, for example. So, I'm now using the resources, and that's what I'm working on. And also looking at how teachers are positioning young children right from, you know, early school through, in relation to their language resources, and how that's impacting on their, you know, the inequalities in the way children are allowed to bring their resources, their linguistic resources, into schooling, and what is recognized and what is not.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 4.14

My country is Canada. And, I may live in other places but, as a Canadian, I would say the history of critical literacy, I think there's an informal aspect. I would say that within Prairie Socialism, there are very strong roots. Within the co-op movement that we think of in terms of Antigonish and Nova Scotia, St. Francis Xavier is the kind of home of that. So between the Co-operative Movement and Prairie Socialism, I would say that's the historical roots, so rooted early in the twentieth century. I think that there is within the Canadian context also, very strong—Let me take a step back further. Louis Riel has to be the founding father of critical literacy. I was always very, very struck by, among all of his revolutionary acts; one was to capture the printing press in Winnipeg, if I have this right, and to see that that was a seat of power. And as badly organized as the West was in those days, and as terribly as the Métis and the Aboriginal peoples were being treated, he understood that there was an instrument of power.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 4.15

And so I take all of these different practices and stories about critical literacy, and I think about the history of critical literacy in this country. And I think it has a lot to do with, you know, we can talk about the 1960s and Rights Movement, we can talk about the 1970s and open admissions policies at different universities, particularly in New York City. We can talk about all the way back before Rights Movement, the Poor People's Campaign. We can talk about aesthetic and art-based movements in this country. We can talk about housing, the struggles over housing and equitable housing for people, particularly of colour and low-income areas. We can talk about all of these different moments within the context of the United States, and I would

argue that these various historical moments impact critical literacy as history, and as present condition, and also as future conditions that will eventually impact what we do as scholars in critical literacy.…

There's a long history of this work, particularly in this country, that we are really not that attentive to. And if we are not attentive to that history, I'm not quire sure how any type of action that we take today is going to move us forward in expansive ways and critical ways if we are not attentive to that history and if we're not attentive to the realities of people's lives. I want all of my students to be critical readers and writers and thinkers, I do. I do. But I also understand that, in order for that to happen within the space of my classrooms, or any classroom, I have to enact culturally sustaining pedagogies in my classroom. That has to be a given. I have to engage in understanding who my students are and what their realities are, within my context, within any type of context. And until I do that fundamental work, then I'm going to say "no child will be left behind," but I don't really know these kids, and I just see their faces, and for the most part, their faces are black and brown. And while we're going to leave them behind, but we're going to try not to leave this group behind. That is so contradictory. And I think we have to do a better job of naming what it is that we are after, of figuring out what it is that we really need. And we have to get away from these political agendas that undermine people and their literacy practices and their education experiences and who they are on a daily basis….

If we are not meeting collectively to talk about the ills of our educational system, and hence, critical literacy's role in this work, then this work will go on without us, but it will be about us. And we cannot continue to have that happen. We have to be at that place, in the conversation with other people, and helping to make decisions about the role of literacy in people's lives, because the people whose lives are going to be impacted should be there. And we should invite them to the conversation. I think we have to do a better job of that type of work in this country. And we have to do a better job of making sure that our students are invited into, as opposed to being forced into, something that they might not want to be a part of.

CHAPTER 5

The Political

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 5.1

So your question is what's critical literacy? It's understanding how to read the world around you and how to write the world in your interest, as Freire said. But it's also understanding how texts work in particular ways and specialized ways to represent the world and position you, and to position you in particular ways and particular interests. And it's about understanding, at the same time, that texts are never context free, but they always sit within these social institutions, these historical and cultural institutions, and are part of their normative agendas. Where I started the conversation from was by saying that really Western literacy started with, not just the Greeks, but really the ante was up to the Lutheran revolution. That the recodification of these particular culture-specific ways with words into what we now call Western literacy, began with Protestantism, ran through the Enlightenment, ran through Literary Romanticism, ran through the revolutions of 1848, and into the twentieth century. And we now inherit particular contending models and ways that have been naturalized as reading and writing, as it's generationally passed on in these Western societies.

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 5.2

Despite the fact that schools are relatively successful at getting ninety percent of each cohort past the functional decoding level. But we don't attend to the specialized disciplinary knowledge. So what school systems tend to do is invest massively in early childhood literacy and then do nothing for adolescent literacy, for the specialized kind of text forms that are required for success in secondary school and university….

But what Bourdieu teaches us is that institutions constitute social fields of exchange, whether it's the corporation or the school or the university or the family or the mosque, that these are social institutions which have regulative rules for the exchange of cultural capital for other forms of capital….

What Bourdieu got us thinking about literacy was that literacy was actually a process of the exchange of capital; that, in fact, students brought particular ways with words into institutions, which recognized, or misrecognized, or totally ignored their ways with words….

So this process of recognition, this recognition and transformation and exchange of capital gave us the other, I think, key beyond the systemic functional grammar.

And what it said to us was that, in order to be critically literate, yes, you had to read the world, as Freire said, yes, you had to be able to critique ideologies and see what your interests were in relation to a text. It also had to deal with being able to deconstruct texts or understand what they're trying to do with you, to do to you and for you, and against you, much as we developed later in the Four Resources Model. But, at the same time, the texts were part of institutional life worlds and fields of exchange; that is, they were forms of capital. So that you had to understand the regulative rules of the social institutions where the texts were used.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 5.3

One facet of this phenomenon we're talking about, critical literacy, is to think about and have people inquire about the ways in which texts, the conditions under which texts are produced. And texts, I'm talking about films and books and pictures, books for kids, and multi-modal, online stuff, online advertisements, online wikis, and blogs and all the rest of it. What are the conditions under which they're produced? How do they get distributed and how are they actually used in different ways in different places?

Textbooks get to be written and distributed and adopted and used in classrooms not necessarily because they're the best texts or the most accurate texts. You know? There are a number of features of these things. And part of being, of understanding the role of literacy in society, I think, is to appreciate that your inquiry about a text, your critical inquiry about a text, is to look at how it is that it has survived through certain processes whereby it finds itself in front of you, ready to be used by you.…

And we get, as I'm sure you do in your country, we get headlines about how illiteracy is costing Australia ten billion dollars a year in lost something, right, economic productivity or whatever. So whatever it is, there needs to be more of it and it's a good thing and it's terribly costly if we get it wrong and so on. So, it's been financialized. It's been commercialized, and it's now been, you know, and so therefore, it's been politicized.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 5.4

So I think there's an important way of thinking about critical orientations to literacy just as an expansion of that idea, to take very seriously the fact that some of what youngsters will become exposed to and have to handle practically to preserve themselves and enhance their own interests, has been produced and disseminated by people who don't necessarily have their moral or psychological or financial wellbeing close to their hearts.…

So, I think that the critical movement generally, and critical literacy in particular, that we see coming from a North American or a U.S. context, is usually, in a sense, growing out of an identity politics to do with race, for example, which of course is a huge live issue everywhere, in South Africa most dramatically, in the U.S., and here in Australia….

How do you continue to build that and take it forward as an agenda that connects to other kinds of questions, and particular questions that can be operated on and acted out in a setting as institutionally rigid as a school system. Which, if you had to design one system that would be antithetical to the critical approach to anything, literacy in particular, its fundamental medium of operation and assessment, then you'd design a school….

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 5.5

It's actually when teachers come to understand, and students come to understand at a very deep level that everything can be questioned, that no text is sacred, that whether it's the authorized school geography textbook or history book or whatever it might be, that those texts can always be questioned.…

Well, for me, I've always been thinking about this a little earlier. For me, there have always been three key elements in any critical literacy practice or families of practices. And that's always, for me, starting with the perspectives of the students, particularly the most disadvantaged students, respecting minority uses of language and literacy. So that's always a key move. A second key move, for me, is always about positioning students as researchers so that you're not just looking to establish some kind of normative, politically correct position. You're actually looking for students to really become people who can interrogate what's going on. So that's a very important second move. And the third move is clearly about interrogating texts, texts of all kinds….

Those three moves are really important and I don't think there's any way of doing that unless the teacher does that with students. I think that that's about modeling that kind of behaviour, it's about teachers' classroom discourse, it's about making the curriculum not the object of study in terms of something that will be delivered, in terms of Freire's point about a banking model, but it's very much about making texts and places and systems the object of study,

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 5.6

But my sense of it is that we're actually going into the last five to seven years of neo-liberalism as a failed project of governance…. We don't need to contest this

simply on ideological grounds. It's failed. And it's failing everywhere…. You know? There's plenty of battles and plenty of political work to be done at all levels….

And now, the new national curriculum, under the influence of the Murdoch press, has taken the word critical literacy out of the national curriculum. Well, I don't care. Because I know that there are tens of thousands of teachers out there that are going to keep working with these models, mixing and matching, under the radar, in the faces of the principals, whether those people like it or not.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 5.7

So, if a text is designed, and you unmake that text, you deconstruct that text, you analyze that text, and you redesign it, the new text that you've redesigned is itself another text, which is open to deconstruction and redesign. So there is no such thing as a neutral text.…

One of the things I learned along the way is that people are very happy to go along with looking at texts critically until such time as you hit a text upon which their own identities are predicated. And when that happens, you get a lot of resistance because people have to hold on to who they are and their identities and what's at stake for them. And in a way, that's where Carolyn's work has been very useful, because she did work with Afrikaan students, towards the end of apartheid. And those students were resistant because they did not want to be blamed for the sins of the fathers, so to speak. And having to confront their own Whiteness and their own privilege was not something that was easy for them. So, in a way, it's a bit easier to do critical literacy with people who are at the disempowered end of the spectrum, and it's much harder to do critical literacy with people who are the powerful end of the spectrum because their power is taken for granted, it's normalized, it's not actually recognized as power per se.…

My master's research was on a critical analysis of the language of the state. So for instance, they would talk about their "Homeland Policy;" they called their Bantustan Policy their Homeland Policy. Well, for many people who were repatriated to their homelands, they'd never seen their homelands. You know? So the language became a way of justifying sending people back home. But it wasn't home. The Extension of Universities Act was the act that closed the universities to Black students. So, there was lots to write about and talk about. So I really did start from a linguistic perspective working with critical linguistics and critical language awareness….

And, by that time, critical linguistics was already under some kind of critique and I had to move from trying to read meaning of the word to looking at it in context and looking at bigger structures like discourse. So, then I moved from critical linguistics to critical discourse analysis. And I did that work for a very long time, both as a teacher educator and in my own research and publications….

So it seemed to me that I needed to think through whether one might have like a critical literacy for reconstruction or redesign, called the RDP, the Reconstruction and Development Program. So I took hold of the idea of critical literacy for reconstruction. I kind of liked it because it echoed the ANC's policy at the time, but also because it was the opposite of deconstruction. You know, the two worked together. And so for some time, I tried to work out what critical literacy for building something, rather than breaking something down, might look like. And that became the project for the next decade or so….

So, I'd already started working with identity. And of course, I was very interested in those identities that were empowered and those that were disempowered. In South Africa, it was along the lines of race. Other colleagues in critical literacy worked with sexual identity, others worked with gender identity, other people worked with class identity. And it's always seemed to me that the people who've worked in critical literacy best are the people who have had some struggle, in which they themselves are invested.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 5.8

I think the notion of critical applies to anything that's worth engaging with intellectually, one needs to be critical. So, to emphasize critical I think is to place a different kind of emphasis to the one that I would place on the study and engagement with literacies. My approach to the study and teaching of Literacy Studies is to look at literacy as situated social practice, to draw students' attention to the way that reading and writing happen in ways that are contextualized and that are shaped by particular kinds of social practices; that any time that people are reading and writing, they're reading and writing in particular ways, certain particular kinds of social identities for particular kinds of social purposes, and, that all forms of literacy are shaped by concerns about power and struggle over resources. And, so, that literacy is always implicated in struggles over questions of inequality and social power….

I think that a whole lot of mistaken educational development and developmental work has been done on the basis that literacy has an inherent capacity and power and that giving people something quite basic along the lines of coding and decoding will make a difference to their lives. And, I think it's very important to see that people who can't read and write are not necessarily socially helpless, voiceless, marginalized; that if they are both unable to read and write and suffering from various kinds of social disadvantage, that's not the result of their inability to read and write, it's the result of a whole lot of other socio-political consequences. And, that there are people differently placed in society who cannot read and write but who nonetheless carry other forms of social power….

We face an interesting set of questions and challenges in South Africa, which are, in some ways, particular, in contrast to, say, Canada, the USA, Australia, but

in other ways, are an intensification and, perhaps, a clarification of some of the challenges and questions that are dealt with in those settings, because we have a far clearer sense of a large mass of people who are educationally challenged in the conventional sense, who haven't had the kinds of experiences of substantial, quality schooling. So, where lots of my colleagues in other parts of the world are dealing with a minority question of how do we deal with, how do we face the challenges of critical education in relation to people who are outside of middle-class processes and who are in some ways marginal, we face the question in South Africa of the mass of the population.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 5.9

We have commitments to social justice, to furthering interests of marginalized people in various kinds of ways. In terms of literacy, I think that literacy is a problem, because we can, we attach so much to it. It's a bit like a blob of ink. We bring our own stuff to it in certain kinds of ways….

The Australians, Peter Freebody and Alan Luke, in particular, have said it's silly to talk about critical literacy, or should we be focusing on coding and decoding, or should we be focusing on meaning making, or should we be focusing on analytical work, or should we be focusing on the political stuff? All these things are part of what we do. It depends on what kind of emphasis we give to them. But in terms of our teaching, we should be doing all this kind of work, making our students aware of the political nature of reading and writing, making sure that they can effectively teach reading and writing, or if they're students, they can read and write, they understand alphabetic principles, they have print awareness, and so on. But, they also are focusing on what you do with reading and writing and that different forms of reading and writing have different kinds of social consequences.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 5.10

But there were also a lot of problems at the university, at the time, around it maintaining its privileged position, maintaining, and very much being very careful around how it was opening access to Black students, maintaining an Afrikaans meaning of instruction policy, in a way that was excluding; there are good arguments for all that. And so in the bridging program that I designed there for this group of Black students coming into what, I have to say, at the time, in 1995, was a fairly hostile environment….

And, Hilary Janks was involved in the people's English. It was before I got into these things, I was too young at that time. But their work, both stands out as really,

I think, the beginning. And then, of course, there is another tradition, which I think Mastin might have spoken about more, which is the Freirean problem posing and the kind of approach in adult literacy. So I came, you know, to see the roots, if you like, of critical literacy in South Africa as sort of coming from two different streams, which then come together or don't for different people, the one through the adult education, Freirean, the other, people's English which, then, through Hilary Janks, I have to say, linked to critical language awareness in the UK.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 5.11

So when I think of critical literacy, especially in teaching and teacher education, I think about the ways we can come to think about how power gets enacted, how power gets situated in our conversations with students, and hence, with teachers, the ways in which our curricula tend to privilege certain perspectives or positions over others. And so issues of representation, what is left out, what is not left out? What is included, what is not included? And, then, how do we think about engaging in reading and writing and thinking and performing and enacting these particular discourses and practices and stances and dispositions and everything that we do when we think about preparing students or even teachers to participate in a citizenry that is about critical literacy….

But, it is about the ways in which we interact with each other in the world and how we begin to name these power structures alongside how we name these practices in reading and writing and thinking…. We need to not sugar coat questions about power. We do not need to talk around questions of educational access and equity. We do not need to talk around questions of whether someone can read on grade level or not. We need to actually get at the heart of these questions and we need to say, "I don't ask these questions in isolation of teachers and community members and parents and, particularly, students. I ask these questions in relation to all of these people." Because, if we are moving towards a society that takes critical literacy seriously, or critically, to play on words there, then we have to have conversations with groups of people and we have to figure out what is it that our teacher educations need to do, or our literacy graduate programs need to do, or our colleges of education need to do differently. And, I think, differently has a lot to do with how we engage in these conversations with different groups of people, as a way to not maintain dominant narratives, or not to maintain this sort of mainstream discourse practice around talking about literacy, but to invite these different perspectives in….

And as we reach for something more, we're not just doing this reaching in isolation of other people, but we are reaching for something more than what we have in order to get at a deeper understanding of who we are and who other people are and who we are in relation to one another. And I think that's the work of critical literacy. It might be a large charge, but I don't think it is. I think the types of question

that need to be asked, I think the types of action that need to be taken, and the types of conflicts that need to be at the centre of our practices, they have to all be at the centre of what we do and think about when we say critical literacy. And hence, the continued development of critical literacy and the philosophical nature of critical literacy just really gets us to grapple with questions that I think many folks think, "We've done that; we've answered." But we really haven't because those questions and answers to those questions haven't really greatly impacted what we do when we talk about literacy within schools and within teacher education programs….

And so, thinking about the political nature of critical literacy, particularly in this country, I've written about the students' rights to their own language policy which was a resolution passed by the four C's, the Committee on College Composition and Communication. And I think it was passed in 1970 or '72, and it was after the assassination of Martin Luther King, and sort of thinking about the political climate within the United States during that particular time. And I mention students' rights to their own language as one policy statement that gets me to think about the political nature of critical literacy within this particular country, because that policy had everything to do with trying to get groups of people and teaching and teacher education and literacy studies to be more attentive to the language and cultural practices of students….

Because, it was about access and equity, and it was about identity, but it also was about how is it that we begin to think deeply about critical literacy in relation to diverse populations of people entering into university in the United States. How do we think about preparing all people, particularly racially and ethnically diverse students, for the demands of universities, and hence, the workplace and society by not marginalizing them and by not marginalizing the communities from whence they come and their families and their experiences?

And until we understand how to work with people across our various contexts, then I think we're missing something. We're stuck at affirming and tolerating people, as opposed to recognizing and acknowledging who we all are in our collaborations with each other. So yeah, this is life work. And, you know, some folks have pushed back at that.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 5.12

This Canadian tradition, the distinctly Canadian tradition of, that is represented by Harold Innes and Marshall McLuhan, because I do think there is within that strand, again, both Harold Innes and Marshall McLuhan are kind of conventional figures in a way, the academics. But, they introduced a way of drawing attention within the myths of Canada, within the sense of Canada. And Edgar Freidenberg wrote a book called *Deference to Authority* as a statement on Canadian sensibility. And that deference to authority was defied, it 's been defied by Aboriginal peoples repeatedly

from Riel to the current "Idle No More," to the current movement today of "Idle No More." And it's also been a part of the intellectual tradition. And I think that Innes' connection of communication and empire was prescient in its time and now is a dominant view in terms of media, and Castells and others who look at global domination as a matter of communications….

But I think McLuhan's play and sense of the politics of control over the media and that is, defying it and turning media in on itself and making us much more conscious of how media turns us into its instruments, all of those perspectives have been an element of the political scene in Canada….

The critical literacy elements and the political dichotomies that I see here, and the struggle around so many different issues, the extremes of poverty, the lack of social support, the fight over Medicare and health plans was a good example of that.

CHAPTER 6

The Postmodern

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 6.1

So, the standardization of the word comes about through literacy and the written text and so forth. So, I guess the reason that I've pushed for an open version of critical literacy is that schooling and literacy are a deadly combination for the standardization, commodification, and control of knowledge.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 6.2

We all live in societies that are totally saturated with literacies, impossible to conceive of Canadian, Australian, South African society, somehow independently of what this technology has done for and to us. So, living in it as a basic evolutionary value is understanding it; and, understanding it, not from a romantic point of view and not just to understand its tremendous positive potentialities, but to also have a keen eye for the threats that it can pose….

I think the national testing issue here has become a real thing. There have been threatened movements among teachers, for industrial action against the national literacy and numeracy testing, partly because it's seen by some people as the Commonwealth's attempt to, kind of, steer from the back seat, and to give parents information apparently about the wellbeing of the school, just based on this relatively simple-minded measure of literacy and numeracy and things that can scare parents. It's part of the kind of consumer choice. It's part of the corporatization of education as an issue…

So I think if you had to name an impediment, you would want to talk about the restrictive, reductionist notions of literacy that governments, some governments, are tempted to rely on as measures of the wellbeing of the school, to apparently give parents choice. But this is a very conservative model of, you know, education…. And so it gets to be something of a mock, you know, thing where making schools more accountable just in a business sense, on a measure that an awful lot of teachers regard as relatively trivial.

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 6.3

Worldwide and in Australia, the whole kind of political economy of testing regimes and how that's hooked up with literacy is something that is very, very much needing

us to be vigilant about that, you know, and to contest it to the extent that we can. So, in terms of the political context, the really key thing in Australia, I think, that's happened over the last decade or more, is a neo-conservative government that managed to put together an ensemble of policies which meant that the federal government had a lot more say over what was going on in schools in Australia. And there's a whole range of things, you know, from school choice to high stakes assessment to the development of national curriculum, and so on, that have come together. So while we enjoyed, in the past, huge amounts of autonomy for teachers to be innovative and creative, for them to develop programs, pedagogies, and curriculum that really do take account of who their students are, who their communities are, we're now, along with many countries in the western world, our education discourse is increasingly dominated by standardization and accountability, you know, which is, of course, not just restricted to education, it's also part of wider order cultures….

And, now, I think we're facing a time where none of that can be taken for granted any more. And that's not to say there aren't spaces, but I think it's that teachers and educators will need to be very proactive in finding those spaces….

In the Australian context, then, the point I'm trying to make is that, as a population, we still have major issues that relate to class, that relate to gender, that relate to race, that relate to location. So, if we only looked at our NAPLAN results, our high stakes assessments, we would find that the children who are most likely to get the least from their schooling will be Aboriginal children who are poor and who are living in rural or remote circumstances. We would also find that, just statistically, and of course, there's always exceptions to this, that there are significant correlations between young people growing up in rural and regional Australia and not completing schooling, not going on to university. So, they're just two examples and I could go on and give others. But the big point I want to make about the reason for the importance of critical literacy is that there are still major inequities and injustices. And, it seems to me, that all the statistics that you can look at suggest, around the world, a concentration of wealth with fewer and fewer people, more and more people living in poverty. Even in wealthy nations, even before we think of other countries that are being exploited for their resources, which is another whole thing that's always been a part of critical literacy, has been about contesting the domination of workers, contesting the exploitation of peoples and communities and land….

So what are we actually doing to democratize knowledge production, I think is still a big issue for me. How might we put teachers who have got years and years of experience together with young teachers who are just starting out who bring all sorts of new knowledge which is exciting; how might we find ways of connecting those folks up in ways that are sustainable? And how can we do that in the face of quite different government demands in terms of high accountability – not only for children, but for teachers?

And I guess, if I look back, I'm thinking about what we might have done. I'm thinking about it might have been good if we'd been able to answer some of those questions about how we share resources, how we lessen the isolation that many

teachers feel, and how we make a space for ongoing teacher research and dialogue, because I think those things are really at risk of disappearing in certain places….

I think the main reason that it's important is that we have a very small number of people in the world controlling a very large amount of the resources, and a very large number of people in the world controlling a very small number of the resources. So to put it bluntly, we haven't done better on equity, anywhere. It doesn't look to me like, any time soon, we're going to have the rich offering to become less rich. So we're still doing really badly on questions of injustice, we're still producing poverty at very, very high rates. In a very wealthy country like Australia, we are doing really well on producing large pockets of sustained poverty that go from one generation to the next. Those economic injustices are connected in very significant and scary ways with environmental injustices, where the resources of the world and the people who get to produce things for the wealthy, there's nothing fair about how that's being done.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 6.4

I have students saying to me, "Hilary, I can't ask questions any more." And everybody in the class agree, "As a result of what you've done, I can't ask questions any more." And people think they can't ask me questions, and actually what they're saying is they can't ask questions in class any more because their normal way of asking questions has been interrupted. But I mean, from where I'm moving towards now, because I think that's the way to go, is to help teachers to ask critical questions.

So that's the next paper that I'm going to work on, is how do you learn to ask critical questions? What do critical questions look like? How do you frame them? When is a question critical and when isn't a question critical?

And so I'm now going into critical literacy through access more than through power. So access, design, and redesign are the focus now…. And I think people are moving more towards a stylization of identity, to questions of rhetoric and ethics. But that annoyed me so profoundly that the last chapter of my book, *Literacy and Power*, deals with the question of why we still need critical literacy. And I put together every argument that I could think of. And it has to do with change, changes in context, changes in theory, changes in pedagogies, and the way in which critical literacy has to move with those changes. But that we still live in a very unjust, very unequal, very differentiated world, where there are still haves and have-nots, where there are still people who have power over other people, where, in my own country, the language is once again interesting, there are huge levels of corruption….

So the health service is in a mess, the schools are in a mess, the infrastructure is starting to crumble. And that's what happens, that's the price you pay for systematically refusing to educate the population, which is what the apartheid state did…. So, in some ways, I live in an anarchic society.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 6.5

The point of the critical literacies project shares the same concern of all the approaches to studying the social and socio-political, ideological nature of literacy and education, which is that we're always concerned to get people to understand how, when we are, at any time that we're engaging educationally or intellectually, we're also engaged in writing ourselves into the social in certain kinds of ways. And the critical project is always about how understanding how the social is always simultaneously writing us…. It's not simply about reading and writing, it's about being certain kinds of readers and writers which are identified as literate by particular social processes….

We face a situation where large numbers of people don't get quality schooling. The mass schooling system exits probably 70% – 80% of the population without the resources to enter the modern industrial sector with a good chance of moving into jobs which have chances of career promotion and so on. We have large numbers of people living outside of the formal sector. So, in our schools, we are facing the possibilities of the fact that we are training large numbers of children for unemployment, for prospects of unemployment. But at the same time, we have a curriculum, a national curriculum, which pretends that schooling is the same thing across the middle-class and working-class settings. So, we have a national curriculum and we have prescribed methods of teaching, which are based on the best forms of progressive, critical education that are available in the best schools in Canada and the USA. So, we've gone through a stage of a curriculum, which requires progressive, interactive, learner-centred education, as a requirement. But teachers have no idea what that is and there's no basis, and there's no nice teacher-training program, which will give them facilities to do that. We've now suddenly moved to a new curriculum, which says, "Actually, the last one didn't work because it didn't give teachers enough. So we have to give them a far more prescribed curriculum." It still doesn't teach them how to do that. The possibilities of developing a mass critical educational program are not available in South Africa, at this point – en masse – because teachers don't have access to the resources, the background, or the personal experiences which make them see it as being worthwhile….

We have to be engaging fundamentally with the social nature of literacy and language because of the understanding and our analysis that that's what they are. And to identify the way that language and written language are fundamentally forms of social engagement requires us to understand the political nature of these things, and also to understand that reading, writing, and speaking in situations of multilingualism and social diversity are always happening in terms of people relating differently, in different ways of speaking, reading and writing. And in the nature of our social institutions and the wider society, the reality of global economic production, the way that inequality is dispersed, both nationally and internationally, when people are

speaking, reading, writing differently, these differences get translated instantly into inequalities, so that we are working with forms of reading, writing, and speaking which are instantly being processed, socially and individually, in terms of what resources these things carry. They seem to be either carrying social capital or not forms of social capital.

So we can't be teaching reading, writing, language on the assumption that we are simply giving valued resources to people. We have to understand the political nature of any kind of teaching. But, if we say that what we are giving people are high status resources, we have to recognize the price that people are going to have to pay to take on the resources that we give them. They will have to identify the resources they have as being low status; they will have to take on certain kinds of identities to engage with the resources that we give them, which say that the resources I have are things that I have to leave behind in certain kinds of ways, and I will have to go through certain kinds of investments and identity practices to take on these things which are seen to be high status, whether we identify them as critical literacy or certain kinds of forms of valued intellectual or cultural capital.

We need to both engage with the resources we can give to people, which are powerful, but also engage with the kinds of prices that we're demanding that people pay when they come into our institutions and want to get these resources. So I think, critically, we have to engage not simply as a people who can give stuff to people who don't have anything, but we have to engage very critically with the kinds of prices, investments, and inequalities that we demand from people when we say we have something powerful and critical to give you.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 6.6

One of the impacts of globalization and the post-modern kinds of texts is this sort of hyper-consumerism. And I think that that's quite important in relation to how we think about doing critical literacy, because I see more and more younger and younger children interpolated as consumers. You know? These brochures on toys, clothes, that are designed to grab the child's attention, they are very much addressed as consumers from as young as they can actually look at text.…

In a context like South Africa, where we have such huge inequalities, you know, we've got wealth of a tiny number and then massive poverty and inequality in that sense, it's very hard to get kids who don't have to critique a position of consumption, saying you know, "Why can't I aspire to live the good life, to be able get what I want, to buy what I want?" you know, and that sort of thing. So it's a tricky kind of thing. It's almost as if you're saying "Well, you know, now apartheid's over," and you're saying "Well you've had the goodies for a long time and now you're saying well, actually it's not good for us to have those goodies. Well, I want the goodies, too."

…So White privilege, for example, it's so hard to get people to interrogate that, and even more difficult in a context where people feel that that is threatened anyway. You know? Also to get people to interrogate new privilege, new, you know, you've just moved into the middle class, the upper class, and getting to now look at your own patterns of consumption, or of how you feel about the people that you live with. So, for example, I think we have, unfortunately, quite a pathologization of the poor, actually, in this country. You know? Poor people often are less than full citizens, as somehow it's their fault that they're standing on the side of the road and begging or that they don't have a home, and so on. You know? People are not working hard enough, rather than understanding the notion of unemployment at more than 40% and how it's impossible for everybody in this country to have a job and there isn't a social back-up system. So, I think all of these issues are extremely complex, and they're made more so by the global patterns, because they're not just happening at a local level….

And how do we, as consumers of text, as producers of text, how do we engage with this plethora, you know, this huge amount of text that's available to us? That's, for me, why critical literacy is so important because it's what will enable our learners, our students, to be able to discern that these are texts that are worth listening to and these are not….

I was reading a piece, you might know of it, where the author was talking about getting the students to Google on and to do research, it was upper primary students, on the Holocaust. And what came up, the first three sites were the Holocaust denialists' accounts rather than accounts of the Holocaust. And you know what it's like, if you have the first one, the second one, the third one, people will go for, but they won't search down to the eighth or the ninth hit. So how do we get kids to be able to know that, what they're looking at, is an account from what kind of perspective? They can only do that by reading critically. And likewise, what resources they should be drawing on when they construct their own texts and produce their own texts. So for me, from the technology perspective, I think that's the biggest challenge and change that I can see impacting critical literacy.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 6.7

And there are a lot of folks who actually think of themselves as new literacies scholars, and a lot of folks who think about themselves as new literacy scholars focus heavily on digital and multimodal. And I think that's really important work. And I think that's the part of critical literacies that have not yet been attentive to, until we actually talk about new literacies. I don't see these as too distinct and separate, because they're sociocultural orientations and ways of thinking about literacy. But the critical literacy—And I talk a lot about Freire. And there are a lot of other people

we can talk about even before Freire. But Freire, for example, was heavily based and focused in thinking about the world, thinking about the word, thinking about oppression, thinking about how do we reach a level of consciousness and how do we do that work through literacy. And you have new literacies taking up similar questions, but the ways in which they address those questions have a lot to do with thinking about multi-modal forms of communication, thinking about these different linguistic channels of communication, thinking about the digital. And I think that is really a contribution that people have already made and will continue to make in terms of really expanding our definition of literacy….

And if we're talking about all of these movements toward justice, for example, or movements toward equity, then we have to talk about what critical literacy is historically within the context of the United States and other places, I would argue, and what it needs to become. And, I think what it is, is a framing that gets us to think about issues related to reading, writing, doing, thinking. What it needs to become is a robust theoretical framing and approach that really get us out in schools and communities, locally and globally, to actually engage and work with other people, where we are not just reading about experiences but we are creating those experiences. And those experiences are grounded in a history of Rights movement, a sort of push for equity in educational spaces….

And hence, how do we contribute to this history of critical literacy in ways where we're actually in communities and in schools, taking action alongside other people, as opposed to bringing our particular perspective and sort of putting it on top of what everyone else is thinking and doing and how they see the world, because then that reiterates power dynamics and structures that we already have in place that we need to dismantle….

And really thinking right now about do we still have those same demands and questions? Do we still have conversations and realities within these different educational spaces where students, who are historically marginalized or are from historically marginalized backgrounds, walk into our classrooms and we have no idea what to do with diverse and different students because, somehow, we've not equipped ourselves with understanding difference and diversity. And I think that is a continuous problem that we need to address. And so, we don't need to address that problem moving forward into the future, we need to address that problem right now. How is it that these different historical moments lend themselves to how we think about racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students inside of schools and communities today?

I can not talk about equity in my classroom with my preservice and in-service teacher educators and candidates, and then go home and engage in inequitable behaviour. If I am talking about equity here, I have to talk about equity over here. There is no question. If I am talking about human rights and I say that we are all

entitled to human rights, then I go home and I engage in inhumane behaviour, that's contradictory. And so this is life work, and projects in humanization, in my opinion, is a life work. And we have to figure out how to engage in this work with other people, because if we're not doing it with other people, then we are creating our own little island.

CHAPTER 7

The Philosophical

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 7.1

Texts are always situated in particular social fields. They can be institutional fields; they can be particular media environments, they can be institutions like schooling, institutions like churches and mosques, and so forth. People are positioned within these institutions to use texts in particular normative and regulative ways. So, what happens is that there's no natural way to read and write, per se. So, one of the big arguments that I think that we've had over the years, has been over literacy as a set of strategies and artifacts that are not natural in any way. In fact, literacies are technologies. Human beings did quite well with spoken language, which is a species behaviour. Literacy is not a species behaviour; otherwise peoples and cultures that are not literate wouldn't be human beings. So in fact, what we get is we get a historical technology of texts, which emerges in various cultures…. We take them for granted as the way that people read….

So, I think part of the agenda of critical literacy is not just a criticism of text and ideologies. Certainly, that's part of the Freirean agenda and a lot of the approaches to critical literacy. But it's a denaturalization or a criticism of the taken-for-granted ways with words or ways with literacy.… Literate practices are culture-specific ways of handling texts, and ways of interacting around texts, and ways of taking and constructing meaning with text. The problem is that schools, churches, families, mass media, corporations, etc., institutionalize particular regulative and normative ways of reading as "the ways to read." So, for me, critical literacy is not just about criticizing texts, criticizing dominant ideologies, being skeptical about Rupert Murdoch, being skeptical about things the Murdoch Press would like you to believe and know. It isn't just about that element of it. It's about understanding that the ways of text handling that are bequeathed to you by your institutions are selected traditions from innumerable other ways of reading and writing.…

The worst thing that could happen to critical literacy would be if there's a check sheet and a list of six things that you do with critical literacy and, "Oh, you've got the wrong way." It should, by its very definition, be an evolving process of critique, of abrasion, of dissonance, against dominant ways with words and dominant ways of reading and writing.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 7.2

So, there's a deep sense, I think, a central sense in which critical literacy is simply a way of drawing attention to the nature of interpretation; it's an inquiry into

interpretation…. It's a lightening rod for many, many other kinds of understandings. It's a trigger for issues to do with the disciplining of young people, it's a trigger to do with the standardization of standard English as the only language that is acceptable in Australia, it speaks to issues to do with socioeconomic and cultural access to certain sorts of ways of using language.…

Part of understanding what literacy is must include an understanding of its role in governmentality, and in politics, and in the ideology of cultural diversity and migration and economic performance…. There's been systematic attempts to de-professionalize teachers and part of that is handing over responsibility for assessment in these core things like literacy and numeracy to governmental bodies. And once you hand over responsibility for assessment, assessment is where we show our hand on what really matters…. So the way that a historian might do something that we would recognize as critical literacy, may look different from the way in which a biologist or an economist or an art historian or an English literature specialist might do those sorts of things….

It's really intriguing to see, as Rosalind Thomas concludes in her terrific book on ancient literacies, that however far back we go, we find that this technology has been used to oppress and to marginalize people and it's been used to enrich and emancipate them. And it just depends on what the society does with it and how they set up the apprenticeships for their youngsters to understand this set of technologies and means of participating in the world. So, those two contradictory potentials are always available in any literate society…. And when you go back into ancient Greece and the ancient Romans, and the ways in which they used literacy and so on, the perennials are, as Thomas points out, the tremendous capability that a mastery of literacy and a mastery of scribal literacy and a control of the media of dissemination have for oppressing marginal groups, for continuing to vilify other groups, for continuing to allocate the blame for social and economic failures into convenient corners of the society, and an equal capacity for us to understand that process and to emancipate ourselves and act upon it, individually and collectively.

Barbara Comber

Video-Clip 7.3

Teachers are, I think, feeling less able to explore, to be creative, to make the time for critical, and I think there is more and more pressure on them to focus on the decoding elements of reading and writing. Having said that, our national Melbourne Declaration about educating young people, you know, would still rhetorically support a critical approach to literacy. And our National Curriculum, the new Australian curriculum, in many subject areas throughout the grades, would speak in terms of children learning to be critical and creative. So it's not an absent discourse, it's just the fact that these different approaches to education are now much more overtly in competition. And the federal government has huge sway over what actually happens

in schools because the test results and the capacity of states to improve their test results are actually tied to reward funding. So the whole political economy around education and what counts as a proper education for our kids is really up for grabs in a different way than I've experienced throughout my life as an educator….

But I think it's interesting to think about how, and this is not unique to Australia, that in times of increasing diversity, that what you find governments doing is talking more and more about standardization, more and more about security, more and more about competition. So the challenge for educators is to think about what this diversity means in terms of a proper curriculum….

Allan Luke

Video-Clip 7.4

…But you can script the pedagogy, you can empower the principals, you can change the budgets, you can even put more money in, you can write different curriculum documents, you can put in high-stakes testing. None of it matters. Okay? You can run anti-racism programs. None of it matters unless you actually fundamentally alter the patterns of face-to-face teacher-student interaction in ways that are intellectually generative…. The schools that we know that are getting better results with indigenous kids are ones that, yes, the ethos is better, yes, they're safer places, yes, they're coordinating with community, yes, there are whole of school and whole of community third-way governance systems in place, etc. But also the everyday, face-to-face practices of teachers is a site of construction that's being altered and being rebuilt on a day-to-day basis….

Those are the lessons that I'm getting from the school-based and the macro-quantitative studies that we're doing now, which is pedagogy counts, more than anything else…. So I think that that's retrospectively what I can see through all this work, is I'm not jaded and angry, I'm really proud of what we've done in Australian education. And I'm shocked that it's actually gotten out to other places because we never intended it to do that. Okay? We just never, you know, this was not about that. And it was not about a magic bullet or a gospel. It was about working with these schools and kids. So, I think that's probably what your people have to think about. If they can see reform in this kind of nested, kind of Chinese boxes models, from systems reform, to school reform, to classroom reform, to teacher and student interaction. So yeah, we can see it that way. But ultimately you see that each of those nested boxes as a site of political struggle. And I think that where our generation went wrong was the people at this site didn't have respect for the people at that site, who didn't have respect for the people at that site. So the people fighting at big policy level would say, "Well, you know, they're just working at teacher ed." The teacher ed people were saying, "Well, we do this every day. Nobody quite gets us and nobody loves us sufficiently. All they are is academics doing post-structuralist

theory there." They don't understand that actually you need all of these different elements as part of a broader reform agenda.

Peter Freebody

Video-Clip 7.5

…And of course, the danger is that, if you reduce it to a set of rubrics, you make exactly the mistake that you've spent your whole goddam life criticizing. But I do think that there is a call to do that now, that we owe the field that, I say we, the field is owed that by people who've advocated these things, to get serious about assessment, even if we're thinking about rich, less formal, portfolio type assessment, that show some growth. How do you know the kid's better at it than they were six months ago or last year or whatever? We should be able to articulate that better….

In fact, governments are now starting to develop an attitude that what we need is not evidence-based policy, we need policy-based evidence. We want the scientists to find what our policy's already decided on because we have to use this because we have to retain government or we have to win government, and this is what we've decided. We've done the focus groups, this is how we can do it. So you get policy-based evidence….

And I think what that says is, you know, you better have a competent literate electorate voter, you know, graduates from your schools…. So I think that's part of the issue is having bigger picture of the historical moment as it's shaped by the uses of, the media uses of politics and the need for an understanding of what the electorate is actually now in charge of, morally, ideologically, as well as just the basic finances of managing the budget, and so on.…

The multiliteracies in a sense push us to appreciate two aspects of complexity that have traditionally been poorly represented in theories of literacy and theories of literacy pedagogy and practice as well. And one of them is the growing complexity, fluidity, manipulability of textual materials themselves. The fact that we now can compose, create, have access to texts that we couldn't have imagined ourselves making. And kids live in that sort of thing. And educational institutions, in the way they understand the use of texts to build knowledge, and attitude, and skills, values is probably five or six generations behind. And the teacher education institutes, you can add a couple of generations to that. [laughing] So there is just sort of a lag.… You know, the kids in the mainstream classroom in Australia is now multilingual, it's multicultural, it's high percentages of kids who weren't born here, or whose parents weren't born here, or whose grandparents weren't born here. And even if they were born here, they still orient because of Skype and the web and everything else, to hybrid cultures from their home base. There's a strong sense of globalization starts to move across economically and, you know, the movement of ideas and people and media and entertainment events, is that you get the usual reaction of

tribalization…. And what most historians will say is it's because the society started to put pressure on the institutions and the institutions had to respond by producing not just, in a sense, people who could do these different things and who understood these different things, but underneath that was, they had to start producing people who could read and write in qualitatively different ways. They weren't just reading to find out how they could be more profoundly obedient. They were reading in a new zone where they had to prepare for lives. And this happened in the 8th century in Western Europe, it happened again in the middle 1100s where the monasteries actually started to become what we now think of as the universities. It was about people who wrote different programs and curriculums for reading and writing. Even the texts stayed the same. Up until 1400, it was fundamentally the Bible in Western Europe. But the ways of reading and talking about it had changed fundamentally on two big occasions.… A traditional culture will try to standardize. And the main point of a culture is that it interprets things the same way…. So the notion of enforcing a particular homogeneous interpretation onto things is just an instinctive part of how a culture survives. That's fundamentally what it is, that's just shared interpretation….

So, I think that critical literacy could be one of those issues whereby people with an interest in de-professionalizing teaching can hit on this as a spot whereby teachers need to be regulated in their practices…. So, it's a moment in history where I think that, as a profession, teaching is kind of teetering on, if not a drop point, at least a plateauing out, it's just not going to get any more professional, we're not to be able to exercise more autonomy in the ways in which we develop the intellectual capabilities, as well as the ideological orientations and the technical practical capabilities of teachers…. And I think we're at a point of real ambivalence about that, partly because if you want to do it properly, it's really expensive…. And I suspect that critical literacy is one of the two or three flash points around which it looks to be a debate about critical literacy, it's actually a debate about what a teacher is in your society.

Barbara Comber

Video-clip 7.6

So we're still not doing a good job on any front in terms of Aboriginal health, you know, Aboriginal education, those statistics, and around literacy but more broadly, in terms of outcomes, are still pretty shocking. And then, for the young people who come into Australia as refugees or immigrants, you know, there are going to be ongoing things that we need to be aware of in terms of their educational trajectories, you know, what real choices do they have, about where they live, about the kinds of work that their parents are able to do, about the quality of their life in terms of education and care and so on. And so for me, my perspective, as I said, you know, critical literacy comes from a very long tradition of thinking about the broader purposes of education, about education's relationship with social justice. So, while

there are such significant inequities, I just think that it's more urgent than ever that the teachers that we're educating, preservice education and also in in-service education, that we provide forums where they get to talk about these matters, that they're not so focused on the next test or a particular comprehension strategy, that they've not lost sight of the big picture about what's literacy for?

…So, critical literacy has got to be about something, right? Literacy per se has to be about something. So I've been thinking increasingly about the relationship between the content, if you like, what it is that teacher are helping children to learn about, the knowledge, whatever the object of study is, because language and textuality is never about nothing. So it's about, you know, really seriously looking at those relationships between the object of study in terms of the content, the textual practices associated with that. And some of the work that I've done is to deliberately situate my work in sites of urban renewal.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 7.7

But on the philosophical side is that we're really struggling with our apartheid past and with how apartheid constructed and imposed life and necessity on people. And I think, in the present, critical literacy has got really useful resources for us to try and move beyond these apartheid categories, rigid categories, essentialist categories of race. And I think that this is not just a South African problem, it is a global problem in terms of race and difference. And other categories of difference, too, but here it really does play itself out, you know, around race. And how do we actually use critical literacy tools to deconstruct binaries, to deconstruct essentialist categories, I think the tools are very good for doing that kind of work….

And I think that all of us, being global citizens, we have to take difference seriously; we have to learn how to deal with difference and how it intersects with inequality…. So, if one looks at the collection of people that were involved in the New London Group and so on, I mean, Allan Luke and Norman Fairclough, for me, were very much positioned from a critical discourse perspective, which informs critical literacy work. But I think that that has not been emphasized in later multiliteracies work. I think the multiliteracies work tends to focus more on the range of resources that people can draw on in meaning-making, and on moving into design in new media environment, design as in the process of people producing their own meanings, whether it's an essay or a story or whatever it is, text construction. So I think that it's there and, depending on your approach to multiliteracies, you may foreground it. But I think that a lot of work in multiliteracies doesn't necessarily foreground the critical dimension in the sense of issues of power.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 7.8

I started with my own racialized identity and its position of privilege in relation to other people who were not White. But then move out, you move out from there into multiple identity locations, because none of us is just White or just a woman. So the identity piece is…, for me, identity and difference go together. And it's like, which identities give you access to what? And so you can see the interrelationship between identity, access, power, and, if there's any way of interrupting this and redesigning it. So slowly, this model that I've been working on kind of came together in my head and formed the basis for my work for the next ten years.…

I like the word design because where reading is, you know, you can read somebody's dress, you can read a room, you can read a book, you can read people's dinner tables, you can read people's homes, you can read furniture, you can read geography. You can't actually write all of those things. The word "write" doesn't work as well across different modes. And so for me, the word "design" did that.…

I'm afraid that the last régime and White privilege did not provide a very good example for people who followed. And so people are more venal. Also, I mean, I have to say, that if you deny people status for forty years, as a people, status becomes really important. And so the outward trappings of status matter. And it's producing terrible things in the country, terrible. You know? People want to be principals of schools because it gives you status. They don't want to be principals of schools because they want to do something for education. So any kind of appointment in the schools, whether it's a principal or a head of department, they're highly political. They're accompanied by death threats. You know? It's ugly, there's a lot that's ugly. We've still got a two-tier educational system. Poor people are still at the receiving end of poor education.…

…What's been a real disappointment for me is that critical literacy hasn't really penetrated into classrooms. It's penetrated very widely into teacher education. It's there, now, in the curriculum. Okay? But you know that word "critical" is so slippery and it can mean so many things. And I don't think people are doing serious critical literacy work in the classrooms.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 7.9

The philosophical foundations of critical literacy would have to include Marx, would have to include Foucault, and perhaps Derrida as well. But, let me go back to the sense of this notion I introduced earlier, political economy. An understanding of what we elevate to the world of ideas and culture, is still very deeply rooted philosophically and as a system and as an organization of knowledge, in the economy, the political economy. So the philosophical foundations, for me, would be very much historical

materialism, would be an element within Marx. I think the work that Foucault has done on the genealogy of knowledge would be a very strong element, this idea that the way we think about ideas and the way we value knowledge comes out of a series of social practices that we can excavate, that we can think about how they've been constructed, that we can be critical of.…

Let's leave aside the left wing for a moment, and think about Socrates and a much older tradition of asking difficult questions, of not siding with the authorities, as Socrates is so famous for not doing and suffering the consequences. So, I would say that critical literacy is, at root, philosophical in a much broader sense; that is, it asks fundamental questions, it asks what is at stake and what matters in a way that we think of as philosophically. It can be anti-metaphysical and it can be anti-foundational in that way but that's one of the ironies of post-modernism, I suppose, is it's asking questions that are just as big….

So it is philosophical, let me just reiterate that, in its intent and it introduces the students and the teachers involved into these larger questions. But it leans towards a materialist, towards what we think of as historical materialism in terms of economics, and a very strong influence from critical theory, which I should have perhaps mentioned after Marx, thinking of Horkheimer, Adorno, thinking of Habermas, more recently. And that is the sense in which larger than, away from, let me put it that way, which is sometimes thought of as a vulgar Marxism in terms of the tyranny of economic determinism, towards a much more subtle approach to culture, to the construction of identity, to the relation of ideas to a world of production and economics. So critical theory would be the other philosophical touchstone for me….

I would not take the position that it's important in and of itself. I would say that it's a perspective I would want to introduce to students. And I would want to respect their rejection, just as I would want to embrace, perhaps too enthusiastically, any support for it. But I would want them to see that that's part of the critical literacy aspect, is to think about perspectives, to think about standpoints, and not to imagine that any one position has a privileged hold on the truth.… That you can get caught up in an argument, which seems to be that critical literacy is the metaphysical overarching, that it does have a privileged perspective on the world. And I would want to back away from that and I would want to say that it is a tentative position that I welcome being talked out of in any given particular point of view I take. And, that part of what's educational about it is that openness….

I think the struggle around globalism and globalization, a struggle that I think of as a matter of empire and communication, for sure, and that I think of as a struggle between some spirit of liberalism and neo-liberalism, is the critical playing field today, in terms of literacy. And I think it would be irresponsible with students today to not address any one of a great number of issues around globalization. I think of language – that the way in which English is served as a dominant world language and the way it positions people as language learners or second language acquisition, students involved in second language acquisition, or any of those different ways of relegating, need to part of that perspective. And I would say that for critical literacy

to think about its embrace of multilingualism, its embrace of multiple ways of representing the world, is part of that….

That we are part of a, as educators, we are literally part of a global mechanism or global system for education, whether it's the TIMSS, whether it's the global testing movement, whether it's agreement about standards, whether it's the textbook companies, the global textbook companies. And so, to talk about national education or even state or province educational perspectives, is already to fall within a kind of false sense of divisions and boundaries….

Most countries, maintain themselves in a kind of nineteenth century nationalism, about who counts as a citizen, who can participate, who the state should be protecting. And to start thinking about, to use a philosophical concept of Emanuel Kant's, a cosmopolitan, that is a politics of the cosmos, if you like, one that exceeds those boundaries, and to see ways in which exceeding the boundaries is a basic element of critical literacy. What are the boundaries of this text? How is this bound? And how can it possibly be challenged, and not necessarily unbound in every sense but—and I don't want to make a joke about rebounding—but a way in which the texts can participate in something larger, without losing their integrity. So, I would say, out of that list of issues around post-modernism, I think the post-colonial and post-national perspective in education is a very strong and immediate challenge. And if I was to identify one thing that critical literacy could take on as a particular project and that every critical literacy teacher—[laughing] I'm getting a little carried away here—but that critical literacy teachers should be able to point to in the course of a given year, is where they've called those boundaries into question.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 7.10

So how is it that we make these connections across what it is that groups of people who are deeply invested in literacy think about when we engage in this kind of critical literacy project? And so, that for me, connects directly to teacher development because I centre our students in everything I do. And the teachers that I work with, particularly in Columbus, they centre students in everything that they do. And when we think about teacher development, we have to think about what is it that our teachers need, what is it that our teachers already have and are really, really great at doing, and then how is it that what they need and what they already know factors into what it is that we need to provide our students when we talk about enhancing our students' academic levels of thinking and writing and reading. And so, the teacher development has a lot to do with how do we think about our students in relation to reading and writing and performing and really thinking largely about the world in which we all live, thinking about forms of communication, thinking about how we participate in these different spaces, and what that means in terms of our social

practices and these discourses that we take part of. So all of those things, in many ways, have a lot to do, for me at least, with my thinking about critical literacy….

Philosophically, for me at least, critical literacy has to continue to expand and develop because we have to account for, as I said earlier, differences in diversity. We have to account for the changing nature of our physical spaces. And, we have to also account for our shifting demographics, particularly in relation to our teaching population, in relation to our public schools, and particularly in relation to our urban and suburban and even rural communities. What's happening within these different communities that are not happening within the context of our schools and hence, our university programs? I think that's an important question that we need to ask. But we need to do more than just ask that question. We need to figure out ways of making connections with people's realities within local and global communities…. And so, when I think about the more philosophical nature of critical literacy, I'd be remiss if I don't think about identity, the sense of belonging, as I talked about earlier, if I don't think about the ways that dominant discourses or narratives of success and achievement have greatly impacted and influenced the ways in which marginalized, historically marginalized peoples have not been centred in academic spaces. And we talk about affirming, for example, and when we say, "I affirm someone's identity" or "I affirm your story," you know, for me that does mean I affirm because I hear what you're saying. This is what we're doing. And this is a dominant narrative that actually governs what it is that we're doing. And I think that's very problematic. I think it's problematic if we are thinking about issues of equity. I think it's problematic if we are thinking critically and seriously about literacy practices and events and activities…. We have to do a better job of having conversations about reform, for example, educational reform movements. We have to do a better job of thinking about these legislative mandates that are handed down, or these programs that are handed down to many of us, all of us, educators, teachers. We have to really think about what does it really mean for some national organization, or our government, I should be more specific, when our government says, "No child will be left behind?" What does that mean in terms of what has already happened to some of the children who might have been left behind? So now today, we're going to say "no child will be left behind" but, yesterday, we left like 25,000 children behind. And well, we're just going to have to pick up from where we are right now, today. That's very problematic…. I think it's so problematic that we have this national discourse around preparing students, and hence, preparing teachers, for the work of critical literacy or the work of democratic participation in society. But yet, we acknowledge that we've left some kids behind and we're not really attentive to what it means to not leave kids behind. And so we put this name to a policy or a document or a reform movement, and we're not really thinking about the historical implications or the contemporary implications that that particular document or policy or resolution might have for the folks we've already left behind and the folks who will ultimately be left behind even as we're saying no one will be left behind. I think that's problematic. I think language given to other

things, like “Race to the Top,” is problematic because we’re racing to the top, which ultimately means that someone’s going to be left behind and we’re going to race on top of other people to get to the top.

I think we have to think about not only how we name things but how those things get enacted in our daily practices, how those things really, really dramatically, in my opinion, impact how students are not engaging in classroom discourse practices and not because they don’t want to, and not because they’re not brilliant, and not because they can’t. But because we have these mandates and these mandates indicate what teachers are supposed to do, what educators are supposed to be doing with students. And if we’re not doing this work, then somehow we’re going to get punished for it. So what does that say in terms of how we respect or not respect teachers and teacher educators and researchers and scholars who are committed to this work of equity and preparing student to be critical literacy experts?

CHAPTER 8

Democracy Revisited

Efstratia Karagrigoriou

Video-Clip 8.8

Hellas has a huge history, going from the prehistoric years until the current years…. Hellas has a long history, almost over three thousand years. So, the events of democracy are countless, I would say. But not being a historian, but an educator, I would say that some of the most important events in democracy in Hellas would be, first, of course, the Golden Age of Pericles, that means the fifth century B.C., where democracy was at its peak. Pericles, back then, did a wonderful job in literature, in arts, in politics, in philosophy. It was the best time of democracy in the history of Hellas….

Then, in 1843, third of July,[1] a portion of people that they fought for the independence of Greece back then, demanded from the king of Greece, Otto, a constitution. And the king, under the pressure of the protest of the citizens, provided a constitution to the Greek people. And it was the first, let's say, official constitution of the independent Greek state, Hellenic state. And, a third event in the history of Hellas, about democracy would be the end of the dictatorship in 1974. And most of the historians agree that started from the protest of the students at the National Polytechnic School of Athens.[2] And that was the start of the end of the dictatorship in Greece. That was, according to my opinion at least, the third major event of the democracy in the history of Hellas….

I will refer to Aristotle's *Πολιτική*, *Politics*, in English, and, according to his work, two major values for democracy is freedom, first, and then is justice…. Aristotle in his work *Politics*, he presents, he actually indicates that democracy is based on two virtues. First, is freedom, not by merit, and then is justice, again, not by merit. So I think [on] those two words are hanging the notion of democracy….

For example, back then, there weren't as many people as there are now. And every state—I mean about the ancient times, about the fifth century B.C., when democracy was at its peak as a political system. Back then, the people weren't as many as nowadays. And every city was a state, state-city. Now, things are different. However, we still have democracy – parliamentary, constitutional democracy. And, back then, it was a direct [participatory] democracy. One more thing that we have to take under consideration is that Hellas is a member state of the European Union. So, I would say that we still have democracy but under different circumstances.

Hilary Janks

Video-Clip 8.2

I have spelled out all the arguments there in a way that I'm quite pleased with because I was trying to counter the view that we don't still need critical literacy. And it's not just the continuation of privilege and power and disempowerment. It's also that the planet is under threat. You know? And I mean, I know that Peter Freebody has been saying for a long time that, if we don't have a critically literate citizenship, how can they make sense of the scientific arguments about whether there is or there isn't global warming? We need people who have this kind of critical literacy, because, at the end of the day, they're the people who vote for people who make decisions, and who believe these different arguments from different sides. So he sees it as a fundamental aspect of democratic citizenship….

We have completely failed to produce literate citizens in 2012. The last round of the PIRLS test, which is what South Africa has chosen to do, South Africa came at the very bottom of all the countries who took that test. Okay? And even in the Sadak region, only Malawi was below us. Everybody else was above us. So, we are really not doing well. This is going to be a long answer to this question. And I think the reason is that we keep trying to plug middle class, western literacies in communities that don't read stories to their children, that don't think of text as fiction, who value literacy for information and for work and for access to information. And we keep trying to go back to story as the only way into literacy. Also, we kind of do reading first and, certainly in South Africa, kids have to be able to read and have to be able to spell, have to know some grammar, before we actually let them make a text….

So I have money to go into classrooms using the iPod Touch which, as you know, has got all multi-modal affordances, to try and turn kids on to literacy using new technology, and to extend their sense of what it is that literacy is for. Because, I think in communities where literacy is not a deeply embedded social practice for a wide range of purposes, I think that, once teachers have taught kids to decode, they're not really sure what to do next. So if we can hook kids by letting them use literacy for their own purposes, then I think they'll want literacy. And once they want it, I think it will improve…. And when I think about what literacy practices exist in the communities with 95% cell phone penetration, everybody is texting. People are actually writing more than they ever did before. So, if I can build on that existing text production practice, as opposed to imposing kind of western stories on these kids, I think we stand a chance.

Carolyn McKinney

Video-Clip 8.3

My feeling at the moment is that, because we're in such crisis in terms of success and academic achievement in schooling, you know, we are not getting kids able to

perform at the grade level, even at the Grade 3 level. So, in the systemic assessments like the TIMSS and the PIRLS, the progress in early reading, you know, we are falling way, way behind countries that spend a lot less money than us, for example. And we haven't seen the transformation of the education system post-apartheid that we had hoped for. You know? So, we are still seeing huge divides where the small middle class, which has now expanded racially in composition but it's still relatively small compared to the rest of the population, is getting good, high quality education and most South Africans are not accessing quality education. Now, my view is that part of the ways of addressing that do relate to critical literacy. I don't think that you get the basics right, first kids learn to read and write and then, when they've got that, they do critical literacy. You know? My view of reading, writing, literacy, is a social practice as embedded. And it can be and it should be critical right from the beginning.…

One of the concerns I often have with students in teacher education who come from villages backgrounds themselves, saying, "Well, do you really want to expose young children to these issues of social inequality and poverty?" and I say "Well, for the majority of children in our country, they have no choice. This is what they wake up to." It's only the privileged kids that actually have people making choices about what they're exposed to. For the majority of the kids in our country it's the reality, you know….

So because of these huge problems and the crisis, something like critical literacy, I think, is seen as a luxury. It's seen as, you know, "We need to get the basic right, we need to get kids reading and writing and doing Math. And critical literacy, that's something they could do later, they could do it in university or, that's an added extra, that's a bonus. If we only could just get them to read." Or the other side is "How do we get kids to engage critically with text when they can even read and they can't write?" …Anybody who wants to do this kind of work in their classroom has to do their own materials development. And that's what I try to equip teachers to do when I have the opportunity.

Mastin Prinsloo

Video-Clip 8.4

So, in terms of teacher training, I think it's very important to get teachers to engage more closely with what it is students are developing outside of school, what potential forms of meaning making, ways of knowing that they have, and use those as bridges to learning to read and write in ways that are accepted by the institution…. Primary school level children, engaging with cell phones in informal settlements in Cape Town, living in shacks, playing with cell phones, engage with cell phones and digital resources with interest and attach value to them. But their concern is very much shaped by the fact that they live with parents who don't work. And one of the primary concerns in that community is how resources can be translated into food

and money. So their discussions around playing games is, "If we had, if we got hold of a play station, we would be able to get other children to come and pay us some money to play these games and then we would have some money to go and do stuff with it." So, one sees all this overwriting and forms of engagement that are changed by the people's realities…. It's important to teach teachers that they must also be learning about their children while they're teaching. If their forms of teaching see them simply as bringing valued cultural resources to the classroom and trying to give them to those students, then there's not effective engagement in the class and learning doesn't happen….

So it's very difficult, in South Africa, to do quality work and make it available to the extent that it's socially significant. And that's what we struggle to do. So, I work outside of my institution with literacy teacher organizations, trying to do work with them, and work with small groups of students trying to make them into quality researchers, and trying to work with a limited number of teachers who will do good work in a small number of schools. But, the challenges are so much bigger and they're not being addressed effectively at policy level, at the moment. And, it's very difficult to maintain a dynamic conversation between policy makers and critical educators, for all kinds of complicated reasons.

Efstratia Karagrigoriou

Video-Clip 8.5

I found out that policies and educational guides published by not only the government but also from the European Union and super-national organizations, such as OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and UNESCO, have influenced the curricula documents in my homeland, in Hellas, not only in Primary and Secondary education, but also in Kindergarten….

As an educator that has a doctorate degree and trying to educate future citizens within a classroom setting, I would say, to promote, to help students speak up for their rights, not to be afraid to say their opinion, and again, it's time to revisit the essential notions of democracy and try to, you know, practice that in our daily life. That would be my best advice and best thing I could do as a teacher…. The best thing I could do in a classroom setting with my students, young students, it would be to revisit with them the major notions of democracy, as Aristotle in *Politics* referred to. And those two virtues are freedom and justice. I try to encourage children to speak up, to say freely what they wanted to and to not be afraid to say their opinion. In practice, in my school setting all the teachers, my colleagues and I, we were on a project almost year-wide, all the school year, about children's rights. And the students were so much engaged onto it that it was really a surprise for us to see how much they really liked to know what their rights were and speak up about them, not only to their—how are the other students, their peers?—not only to their peers but also to adults. So we went out on the street and they had made posters and pamphlets

writing down and, of course, drawing their rights and they tried to inform people about them. So it was a really good experience not only for the children themselves, but also for us as teachers, adults, and some of us, mothers….

Actually, it is quite an irony that the school is located under the Acropolis itself, where the cradle of democracy started back in the fifth century B.C. So it was an amazing experience for me as well as for my other colleagues to hold such a project in this school…. And children's rights was an excellent project not only for, of course, parents and children, but also for the whole neighbourhood here under the Acropolis. There was also a big celebration at the end of the school year, where children actually performed a theatrical performance showing their rights to a family, to school, to clothes, security, doctor, and it was an amazing experience…. In my opinion, I would say, have teachers preparing for critical, you know, cultivating critical thinking inside the classroom setting as human beings, as teachers. And then, you know, design a curriculum that would promote critical thinking and questioning. And that's very, very important for today, for these days in every country around the planet.

Valerie Kinloch

Video-Clip 8.6

I think critical literacy has really meant how do we move from our current situation into various other situations and phases by trying to work with people to think about what type of action we need to take, what types of engagements do we need to have in order to effect change, socially or politically or educationally. And, in thinking about effecting change, we always turn to different types of texts. We turn to print texts, we turn to oral histories, we turn to collective interviews and narratives from local community members and teachers and administrators and even students and university professionals. And we think about all of these different texts as informing who it is that we are, as we engage in different practices, including critical listening.

John Willinsky

Video-Clip 8.7

So, I think that it's not difficult for a teacher who has an interest in these areas to see that what might seem to be just the other side of conventionalism, of liberalism, literally, has within it opportunities to think about critical literacy, and to encourage it, and in ways that, as an educator, you want to take advantage of…. But it is a matter of having to be on the lookout for it. The best educators are opportunists when it comes to the political scene because not everything is teachable, or it's not that everything isn't teachable, but that you want to look for what is engaging and exciting in working with students. And you want to give them the opportunity to see

your own position as explicit and as a standpoint, which I hope you can be accepting of critique of, or resistance, or even, heaven forbid, indifference.

Efstratia Karagrigoriou

Video-Clip 8.8

For the purposes of my thesis, I concentrated only on the curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education of Ontario and I could only speak about the public school system in Ontario, in this province, not for the other ones…. I chose critical discourse analysis because this methodology can help you to uncover the layers of words and expressions that reveal new knowledge, that becomes neutral with the already known one. So, it was the ideal methodology to reveal how documents coming from governments, super-national organizations, other policies, invade school curricula in countries, in this case, Hellas, and Canada – Ontario – and neutralize the notion of democratic citizenship education….

As far as democratic citizenship education regards, I would say that they are both influenced, both curricula are influenced, both Hellenic and Ontario curricula are influenced by policies and documents published by the super-national organizations that both Canada and Hellas are members. And I showed that there is an effort to equate economic profit to social prosperity, in both curricula. However, the approach is different in the public system through curricula. That means, in Ontario, it is done through, there is an effort to approach democratic citizenship education through character education. Although, in the Hellenic curriculum, for Kindergarten, of course, there is an effort to provide that social sector of the curriculum, the social part. So there is a difference in the approach but the outcome is the same. And I showed that through critical discourse analysis. And it was quite evident by the words that are used in the curricula documents…. In the curriculum it is written that citizens work hard to maintain economic prosperity in our society. And, it is written clear enough for everyone to read it – educators, professionals, everyone in the educational sector.

NOTES

[1] The actual date, as corrected by Dr. Karagrigoriou, is September 3, 1843.
[2] The correct name, according to Dr. Karagrigoriou is National Polytechnic University of Athens.

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