

## 5. The Long [R]evolution

After analyzing both the most important influences on the work and thought of Michael Apple and the general tensions within the curriculum field in order to situate the author's position in the field, we turn now to the last chapter of this research. As we already pointed out in chapter one, it is our intention in this last part of the research to analyze the work and thought of Michael Apple according to three themes, namely, the question of knowledge, the educational and curriculum concept and, finally, his position towards New Right social policies. This analysis is based on three of his most important works for educational apparatuses and for the curriculum field in particular, namely, *Ideology and Curriculum*, *Official Knowledge*, and *Democratic Schools* although, as we mentioned before, *Democratic Schools* will be submitted to a slightly different analysis, for we will try to confront it using Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow* and very punctually *Experience and Education*. Since Michael Apple's political and pedagogical work is almost countless, one cannot expect that we embrace here in a complete and detailed intertextual analyses involving all of his material. Arguably, that task would not fit in a research as such. With this in mind, we will stick with the pieces given above, and when we criticize particular crucial arguments (or absence of crucial arguments) within Michael Apple's approach, we will point the reader over other Michael Apple's pieces that might help the reader in the process of understand Michael Apple's perspective.

In order to undertake this analysis, it is necessary to establish briefly the roots to Michael Apple's intellectual endeavors, or what one should call a long (re)volution. In fact, part of this background was acknowledged in previous chapters where we tried to contextualize both his position within the curriculum field and his closest and more direct influences, what we called Michael Apple's position within a very specific but complex progressive curricular river. The first significant influence was Michael Apple's research in preparation for his dissertation at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he was awarded a Doctorate in Education in 1970. It is helpful, therefore, to highlight several paragraphs from this dissertation, which introduce some of the major issues taken up by Michael Apple in his later work.

## 5. 1 The Question of Relevance or one of the Catalysts for a Long (R)evolution

In *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*, - according to Huebner<sup>1</sup>, a genial sociological and philosophical treatises - Michael Apple 'opens the hostilities', in a viperine and ballistic way [after all, to use Barthes analysis Michael Apple's pen, sometimes "heats, sometimes excites agreeably and sometimes murders"<sup>2</sup>] summing up some of the major arguments towards the lack of curriculum relevance. According to his reading of these major arguments Michael Apple argues that "the schools are brutalizing people [since] they have not met the needs of the people they supposedly serve; [that is to say] schools are not relevant, [t]hey are not personally meaningful."<sup>3</sup> Based on Spencer's<sup>4</sup> analysis, for whom "[schools are] killing children [and] robbing their minds", Michael Apple carried on his reading of schooling, stating that the "cancer" that affects the system is not confined to a specific realm of schools. On the contrary, and drawing from other intellectuals, Michael Apple noted that it is a widespread disease that atrophies the school system in such a way that schools have been characterized "for their limited perspectives and emphasis upon achievement ethic, for their sterility and emphasis upon trivia<sup>5</sup>, (...) for fostering bad strategies, raising children's fears, producing learning which is usually fragmentary, distorted and short lived, and generally for failing to meet the real needs of children"<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, drawing from Goodman, and thus taking a more radical stance, he adds that it is the entire educational system that is at stake since everything "from

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<sup>1</sup> Huebner, D. *Tape 1*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> Barthes, R. (1987) *Criticism and Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p., 50.

<sup>3</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Spencer, D. (1969) *The Struggle for Power in Public Schools*. Teachers College Press, LXX, p., 390, *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. Teachers College Columbia University, p.1. According to Michael Apple, David Spencer was an educator in an "Intermediate School 201, which would be the equivalent for a Junior High School or Middle School". This school was built "based on the demands of people for a new school in their neighbourhood [and] it's built with no windows to the outside, it's sort of an inner courtyard, and (...) the black community has said, you have now built a school that says you don't want my kids connected to their local community because there's no windows for them to look out. It's a windowless school and signifies oppression." Apple, Michael *Tape 35*, recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>5</sup> Fantini, M. and Weinstein, G. (1968) *The Disadvantage: Challenge to education*. New York, Harper & Row, *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> Holt, J. (1964) *How Children Fail*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.2.

teaching methods to organization, to curriculum in both content and design, all are irrelevant”<sup>7</sup>. As indicated earlier, this points to the understanding that schooling is a space with no personal meaning.

Michael Apple further highlights that “the notion of relevance has had a wide currency”<sup>8</sup>, and even “if it is not widespread, there is at least a highly vocalized belief by many members of the minority groups that schools have failed”<sup>9</sup>. In other words, schooling has become a merciless task, and one can start to identify in these words the embryonic form of Michael Apple’s argument against the knowledge that has been produced in schools.

In fact, according to Michael Apple, the question of relevance became a national educational issue. However, this national feeling was a complex, multifaceted movement with distinct and varying perspectives on the concept. For major black<sup>10</sup> critics, relevance was a communal relevance “based upon collective identity and aimed social action, often coupled with political argumentation and aided by utopian goals”<sup>11</sup>. It was connected “to the individual student in terms of building a symbolic community, in terms of social change, as a foundation in the control of their own destinies”<sup>12</sup>, and for some representatives of the radical sphere, the relevance was “revolutionary in intent and content”<sup>13</sup>. For the so-called romantic critics, the “the language of relevance is that of an individualistic-oriented child psychology rather than the socio/economic/political and humanistic/philosophical languages of the black critics and [radicals]”<sup>14</sup>. As usual, and in a very *Deweyan* style, Michael Apple refused to take sides. After all, his aim was to build a new critical and radical approach, an approach that, to use Barthes’ words, has “the appearance of a job belonging to public health, which was bravely undertaken”<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Goodman. *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.2.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Apple, in a way, ‘abandons’ this terminology in his later work and use the term ‘African Americans’. We will deal with this particular issue later on.

<sup>11</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 9

<sup>12</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Op.Cit.*,p., 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 11

<sup>15</sup> Barthes, R. (1987) *Criticism and Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p., 31.

After his interpretation of schooling Michael Apple denounced the “highly sloganized”<sup>16</sup> (and quite dangerous, given its simplistic renderings) educational discourse:

The literature in filled with articles with suggestions for and discussions about getting students involved and committed by supposedly making school experience more personally meaningful to the students. Professional educators, vitally interested community members, and many others have guaranteed “relevance” a place along with “felt needs”, “life adjustment”, “disciplinary value”, and the list could be extended considerably, as slogans or catch words of eras [are of] special educational concerns<sup>17</sup>.

According to him, although one should not minimize “the concern” that is the basis of the said discourse, the fact is “it mirrors what may be a profound questioning and the beginnings of a more conscious attempt at re-interpreting and re-structuring portions of institutional modes of interaction, with the schools as a primary area of attention”<sup>18</sup>.

Michael Apple’s pen continues to criticize the lack of historical awareness among curriculumists and educators in their treatment of the issue of relevance. For him “our methods for dealing with the problem, our modes of interpretation, and especially our language are, to a large extent, historically determined”<sup>19</sup>. Thus, and in order to have a full and deep understanding of the idea of relevance one should be aware, not only of the “intellectual history of the curriculum field, and intellectual history that would pay close attention to the influences of societal pressures extant at each period in the course of the discipline’s history of dealing with the concern of personal meaning”<sup>20</sup>, but also (and this is quite important) the need to understand that “the present curricular situation can only be fully understood when the forces, both intellectual and existential, that have influenced and left deposits upon its form and content are uncovered”<sup>21</sup>. Based on

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<sup>16</sup> Op. Cit., p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Op. Cit., p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Op. Cit., p.4.

<sup>19</sup> Op. Cit., p.5.

<sup>20</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> Op. Cit., p.6.

Manheim's analysis<sup>22</sup>, Michael Apple finds that the validity of what is in vogue [or not] in the curriculum mosaic depends on specific social and ideational structures.

It is with this in mind, that Michael Apple foregrounds the urgent need (and one can see explicit Huebner influences here) "to develop and articulate such a coherent and descriptive mode of talking about a major current concern of curriculumists and other educators, that of relevance of education"<sup>23</sup>. In order to do that [and again one can see the way Huebner though had a profound impact on his disciple], we cannot limit our (re)search to the [language of] the education field since "much of the call for relevance must be seen as an integral part in the striving for economic and political integrity and control"<sup>24</sup>, that is to say, "to view [relevance] as totally or perhaps as primarily an education problem would be naïve"<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, notwithstanding the fact that we are facing "one of the most widely used words in curricular discourse [in fact, and because of that]; not only it is used, it is over used, so much so that there is a danger that the word may become useful merely ritualistically, as a ceremonial slogan [although slogans can be quite functional], used primarily for its emotive power or for its public relation values"<sup>26</sup>.

Obviously, this is Huebner at his best, and what Michael Apple is saying implicitly is that the language of education is fully polluted, distorted, saturated, and imposes serious limitations and constraints if one wants to deal with the issue of relevance (of knowledge) seriously. Along with Huebner, Michael Apple highlights that "the limitations of the educational imagination could very well be a consequence of the limitations of the language used to describe present events or phenomena"<sup>27</sup>. In other words, dealing with such an issue implies, without a doubt, a sort of u-turn approach, [an]other platform of rationality, one that would break with the limited and often inconsequential traditional one that has dominated the field for so long.

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<sup>22</sup> Manheim, K. (1936) *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.6.

<sup>23</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.4.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p.6.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p.7.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p.13.

<sup>27</sup> Huebner, D. (1968) *The Task of the Curricular Theorist*. *Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, p.5, mimeographed. *Apud* Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 17.

One should have a clear understanding that for Michael Apple, relevance is, in fact, a social construction, that is to say, it “is a question of how objective reality (the common social world of accepted and usually unquestioned structures of relevance, the stock of knowledge, including ways of responding and acting, etc) becomes subjective reality, my reality”. Drawing from Shutz’s analysis of common sense and the scientific interpretation of human action, Michael Apple argues that “relevance is not a property inherent in the world as such; [on the contrary] it is the result of the selective and interpretative activity of the individual acting within and observing the reality which surrounds him”<sup>28</sup>.

In this context, and “since the problem of relevance of education to students is so complex, it must be examined from more than one standpoint so that its manifold dimensions can be seen”<sup>29</sup>. Michael Apple, in order to achieve a fuller and deeper understanding of the intricate issues that surround the question of relevance, imports to the curriculum field a (new) intellectual perspective, namely, “phenomenology and the branch of sociology of knowledge that has been strongly influenced by it”<sup>30</sup>. He notes that for the latter “each single perspective a group or individual has is partially determined by certain ‘natural or realistic’ assumptions based on a certain institutionalised position in society, and therefore is limited [and for the former] each perspective one has upon a phenomenon is but one part of the total range of possible perspectives which ‘define’ what anything can be or is, and, hence, is limited”<sup>31</sup>. As Michael Apple states,

[o]ne of the reasons I turned to phenomenology from analytic philosophy is because phenomenology says we must look at the world through the eyes of the knower and that’s one of the things I’ve been worried about. [On the other hand] sociology of knowledge enabled me, especially the phenomenological sociology of knowledge, enabled me ideally to bring together the issue of personal meaning at a theoretical level, but also at a very practical level because I was interested in making connections between curriculum and kids’ experiences. [By putting

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<sup>28</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.62.

<sup>29</sup> Op. Cit., p.18.

<sup>30</sup> Op. Cit., p.19.

<sup>31</sup> Op. Cit., p.204.

everything together, this eclectic totality] enabled me to bring together the question of knowledge as a practical concern, as a theoretical concern, and as a profoundly social concern<sup>32</sup>.

By the way he places relevance on the forefront of his both political and pedagogical concerns, we can see the profound influence that analytic philosophy [as we had the opportunity to mention on chapter two] has on his thought in his attempt to unpack what relevance really means. Quite clearly Michael Apple is trying to unpack the complex and intricate social assumptions within such a dense concept and its effects within the curriculum field.

From the very beginning of his intellectual ministry within academia, Michael Apple emerged with a powerful approach that had a profound effect on the field. However, such an approach, and this is quite important if we bear in mind some of the positions that we have maintained in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, in fact, shows how Michael Apple's intellectual endeavours relied on other people's contributions. By denouncing educational language as an flabby system and suggesting the need to (re)search for new platforms to deal with the issue of [knowledge] relevance, Michael Apple, in fact, shows his intellectual coherence by positioning himself in a particular intellectual river within the field, a [specific progressive] movement "that has historical precedent in the curriculum field"<sup>33</sup> and that can be traced to the work of Miel and Huebner and Dewey, among many others.

In fact, both Huebner and Miel already had a clear understanding of the way curriculum thought became obsolete. For Huebner, the alternation among meaning systems by curriculumists is a more feasible and, for now, less 'mysterious' mode of operation for overcoming the limitations of the 'crystallized' ways curriculumists have proceeded to approach educational phenomena<sup>34</sup> and for Miel, the crystallization of the

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<sup>32</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 35* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>33</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p.205.

<sup>34</sup> Huebner, D. (1969) Curricular Language and Classroom Meanings. In J. McDonald and R. Leeper (eds.) *Language and Meaning*. Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp., 8-26.

curriculum thought [was evidence that] the curriculum field (...) had reached a point where many of its major ideas were accepted uncritically<sup>35</sup>.

Michael Apple ends his analysis warning us against some of the dangers of his (new) approach. For example, he posits, “knowledge can be pulled out of its self-correcting context in its own community of scholars”<sup>36</sup>, with the “overemphasis by curriculumists upon the structures of relevance and knowledge of the discipline of psychology”<sup>37</sup>, a significant mistake that Huebner had already highlighted:

when psychological knowledge is taken out of that society of explorers and used by other men in other occupations, it is yanked out of its self-correcting context and has the possibility of becoming dated and misused. The user risks reifying it, when all he meant to do was to make an instrument<sup>38</sup>.

Thus, the task was to search and build an approach that would minimize this risk. In this context, according to Michael Apple, “curriculumists and especially curriculum theorists need to participate in an ongoing and substantive conversation with intellectual communities so that the reification and crystallization are kept to a minimum”<sup>39</sup>.

Thus, from *Relevance and Curriculum: a Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*, one can start drawing some of the arguments that Michael Apple would pursue in his later intellectual endeavours. In addition to the clear evidence of Huebner’s and others’ influence on Michael Apple’s work and thought – one of our very basic arguments in this research, we can have a clear understanding of the way curriculum theory (and consequently the language and debates) were quite flaccid, given the fact that “the critiques of the present educational system are couched in

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<sup>35</sup> Miel, A. (1946) *Changing the Curriculum: a Societal Process*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

<sup>36</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p. 208.

<sup>37</sup> Op. Cit., p 208.

<sup>38</sup> Huebner, D. (1968) Implications of Psychological Thought for the Curriculum. G. Unruh and R. Leeper (eds.) *Influences in Curriculum Change*. Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp., 28-37, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 208.



similar, often subtle, prescriptive language”<sup>40</sup>. In essence, “the limitations of the educational imagination could very well be a consequence of the limitations of the language used to describe the present events or phenomena”<sup>41</sup>, but also we are presented with a new tool that could deal seriously with (and reverse) the amorphous state of educational thought and research and break with the ineptitude of curriculum theory and that could open the curriculum field to closer intimacy with other spheres of knowledge, namely phenomenology and the sociology of knowledge.

Notwithstanding the fact that we can notice, in some way, a kind of fatalism in the reading that Michael Apple has of schooling in general and curriculum in particular – a position that, as we will see, he abandons in *Ideology and Curriculum*, *Official Knowledge*, and *Democratic Schools* – the fact, is that his vision of the educational phenomena should be framed within the social and political context of that time, a context that we already analysed in depth in the previous chapters. However Michael Apple disagrees with what we have considered a fatalistic attitude towards schools and counters that,

it didn't seem like I was exaggerating then. Let me remind you again, the schools I'm working with are in Harlem, in an inner city of New York, and I'm supervising student teachers and I'm on a research project, but I'm also going into schools, and they feel like jails. They act like jails. There are guns in the streets, the Black Panther Party is fighting back. (...) It was oppressive. (...) But at the same time as I was saying it was brutalizing, obviously I'm not giving up on [schools] (...) So remember we're in the streets, in antiracist demonstrations. We're in the streets against the Vietnam War, you know (...). The police are on campus. It felt like this, and schools felt that way too, and I would come out of teaching in pretty dense, impoverished schools and I was not a romantic. (...) I loved teaching, but I felt that no matter how hard I tried, the kids were not you know it was almost preordained they were going to lose at the end of this, no matter how hard I worked, and that hits you real hard. [I was driven] for personal reasons as well as these structural things<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>41</sup> Huebner, D. (1968) The Tasks of the Curricular Theorist. *Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, Apud Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 17.

<sup>42</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 35* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

However, and notwithstanding his disagreement on what we call a fatalistic position, Michael Apple recognizes that he has become subtler in his analysis of schooling in his later work, a position that clearly shows a quite understandable growth in the way he deals with schooling in general, and curriculum, in particular. As he points out:

Now later on, as I began to understand for instance how important the schools were as sites of struggle, as I began to work through that you couldn't reduce cultural struggles down to economic ones, it became clear to me that schools sometimes could be still more progressive than the rest of society and they had to be defended. So I became much more subtle about that, and as I began to understand the place that schools had in forming African American social movements, the school is the site of utterly important mobilization. I understood that schools had to be looked at in a much more complicated way. So remember even when I talked about them as brutalizing, (...) I didn't even then divorce my academic work from my social position. My academic work was still quite academic, but it was organized around particular political and cultural issues. But even then, as I said before, the idea of that it could be different was still on my mind, I was still a committed curriculum worker. I still believed that it was possible to make a difference in those institutions. So if I thought that they were so totally brutalizing that you couldn't do anything different, why would I bother to write a dissertation in education? So education still had positive moments, but only later did I become more subtle in that<sup>43</sup>.

In this context, and despite the fatalistic posture that we can trace at the very beginning of *Relevance and Curriculum: a Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*, Michael Apple embraces a rather accurate critical analysis that is quite *Barthean*, since for Barthes "the true criticism of institutions and languages does not consist in judging them, but in perceiving, in separating, in dividing. To be subversive, the critic does not have to judge, it is enough that he talks of language instead of using it",<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>44</sup> Barthes, R. (1987) *Criticism and Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p., 33.

Before ending this section, we should emphasise that *Relevance and Curriculum: a Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge* is much more than a nicely written academic document document that was certified by Soltis, Greene, Sloan and Huebner<sup>45</sup>, like so many we witness in the history of graduate courses within academia. It is, in fact, a challenge not only to the educational *status quo*, but also to the knowledge that has been taught in schools, and the knowledge that has been produced by scholars in their research. Michael Apple is looking on the structures of disciplines and the black studies and how they deal with the issue of relevance.

By challenging the relevance of schools for the “have nots” (the vast majority), Michael Apple warns us of its dangerous implications for a truly democratic society, and implicitly challenges the social certification achieved by the privileged class. Above all, a segregated society - with the school’s ‘blessing’ - is severely injured on the very basic principles of human justice.

In summing up, by questioning both the relevance of school knowledge and the dominant path of curriculum theory, Michael Apple deconstructs the whole idea of schooling. In fact, as he mentions, it is an approach that is anchored in and in fact overlaps with Dewey’s rationale:

[M]y task in many ways was to look at the multiplicity and to show how certain ways of constructing relevance take X and make it legitimate and take, in other ways take X and make it into something that’s illegitimate. That’s always been my project, [thus it is important to understand] who defines what relevance is, what knowledge is relevant in the first place, [and that it’s an] ideological form [and] sets the stage for questions of knowledge in a more political sense. [So] So if knowledge then is connected to certain people’s struggles to define what is relevant to someone else or for other people to define what is relevant for themselves, it means that curriculum has to be about the intersection between personal struggles. (...) [S]o curriculum is seen as an arena in which there’s partial conflict, there may not be an agreement between knowledge that is declared official and personal structures of knowledge. So curriculum is partly then an arena of conflict. Well it’s also an uneven playing field. It’s not just the person, and the curriculum, this is Dewey, right? That’s straight Dewey. Where I go beyond Dewey, it’s not just the, you know the experience and curriculum of that tension but it’s not a level

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<sup>45</sup> Douglas Sloan, Maxine Greene, Jonas Soltis and Dwayne Huebner were Michael Apple’s Phd Committee.

playing field and the groups who have the power to define what that relationship should be between objective knowledge and personal experience and who have the power to define what counts as real knowledge are what this critical study of curriculum should be about and over a 30-year period certain groups take center stage".<sup>46</sup>

In essence, in *Relevance and Curriculum: a Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge* Michael Apple applies the phenomenologic sociology of knowledge tools to particular curricular issues, namely the structure of the disciplines and the Black Studies. According to him "a primary goal of Black Studies in the internalisation of new structures of relevance by the black student, not simply the connection of new material to his old modes of response so that he is more «interested in school work»".<sup>47</sup> As he argues this perspective is "to be accomplished by the student re-defining himself and his identification with a symbolic community, by his being given appropriate models to pattern his behaviour upon and significant new knowledge about his past, present, and future condition to cause him to question some of his previously accepted definitions of his social relations".<sup>48</sup> For this reason, one can see that Michael Apple is defending a movement that should not be seen as something hermetic. As he stresses quite explicitly,

the instituting of Black Studies in schools should be seen in relation to a larger movement [and, in fact] ultimately its goals are not «merely» the development of a positive self-image, a different patterning of roles, interests, knowledge, and relevances, an identification with a more unified black community, or a change in the traditional patterns of curricular encounters. Black Studies relates to a much more basic intention of changing the castle-like structure of American society, of changing a larger pattern of social relationships which, though, are connected to the values and procedures of education. It is one of the first steps in what is essentially a political movement. The creation, re-orientation, and re-definition of roles and interests with new structures of relevance and a re-organization of personal and historical knowledge, the development of community and a «new consciousness», are as part of an attempt by black

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<sup>46</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 33* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>47</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 143.

<sup>48</sup> Op. Cit., p., 143.

Americans to be more effective on the political and economic scenes as these things are a part of the educational scene<sup>49</sup>

In other words, by emphasizing Black Studies as a curriculum need, Michael Apple is calling for the construction of “a new social order”<sup>50</sup> defending Black Studies as a political and pedagogical tool for “social reconstruction”<sup>51</sup>.

However, not only the Black Studies movement challenged the issue of curriculum relevance. In fact, and aiming the transformation of specific structures of meaning, the so called Curriculum Reform Movement [the Discipline-Centered approach] also target the lack of relevance over the school curriculum. Like the Black Studies movement, the Discipline-Centered Movement “has a major manifest or avowed purpose that of overcoming the present perceived «meaninglessness» of education and life as a whole”<sup>52</sup>. Phenix – as we mention before, arguably one of the key figure of the movement – argues for a “deeper and more secured meanings”<sup>53</sup> that promotes a positive interplay between individuals and the environment”<sup>54</sup>, challenging the very notion of community, the roles and provinces of meaning understanding the very concept of disciplines as “communities of discourse or language communities”<sup>55</sup>. Drawing from Phenix’s posture, [that criticizes the “despersonalization and fragmentation, cultural hyperabundance and congestion, and the drastic changefulness of the contemporary world”<sup>56</sup>] Michael Apple highlights that the Curriculum Reform Movement was responding to a “sceptical and critical spirit prevailing in Western societies”<sup>57</sup>.

A close examination of *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge* one can see much more that an accurate eclectic approach that could give us new lenses to construct a new curriculum theory and practice. In fact, one

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<sup>49</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 159-160.

<sup>50</sup> Op. Cit., p., 161.

<sup>51</sup> Op. Cit., p., 161.

<sup>52</sup> Op. Cit., p., 165.

<sup>53</sup> Phenix, Ph. (1964) *Realms of Meaning*. New York: McGraw-Hill Company, p., 47.

<sup>54</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 163.

<sup>55</sup> Op. Cit., p., 163.

<sup>56</sup> Phenix, Ph. (1964) *Realms of Meaning*. New York: McGraw-Hill Company, p., 47.

<sup>57</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 165.

can find the way Michael Apple thinks about the knowledge that flows within the curriculum (pre)text and trace his position towards a curriculum conception. Both of these issues are quite crucial in his later works, especially when he explicitly (re)acts towards the New Right social policies.

It is in this context that one can say that the relevance issue and the way Michael Apple proposes to deal with such an issue should be seen as one of the key catalysts for the author's intellectual journey, an intellectual path we turn our attention to in the next section. However, before we begin analysing Michael Apple's intellectual endeavours, it is imperative to turn our attention to some of the foremost arguments that he made both in *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Official Knowledge* and *Democratic Schools*. Also in order to do that, it will be wise if we coupled our analysis with a little historical background.

## **5.2 Ideology and Curriculum, Official Knowledge and *Public* Democratic Schools: Towards a Political and Pedagogical Trilogy**

Each book has its particular context, a political and social context that is its (social) maternity. They each belong to a specific epoch. In this regard *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Official Knowledge* and *Democratic Schools* constitute no exception. As a matter of respect for the author's integrity, and his political commitment, these three books should be seen from a cinemascope perspective within the larger picture of some the historical events in the United States. This research does not aim to cover this larger picture. However in order to have a clear understanding of the purposes that have driven Michael Apple—as an author—and the (critical) way he has laid out his arguments, one should have at least a few paragraphs which analyse in brief some of the socio historical contours of the time.

One cannot remove Michael Apple's work from a rich historical tradition of complex struggles waged by specific movements and parties situated within the political left - the Communist Party, founded in 1919<sup>58</sup>; the Socialist Party, founded in 1901<sup>59</sup>;

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<sup>58</sup> For a more detailed analysis *vide* Bart, P., Bassett, Th. & Weinstone, W. (1979) *Highlights of a Fighting History: Sixty Years of a Communist Party, USA*. New York: International Publishers.

and the Maoist Party, founded in 1968<sup>60</sup>, among others. The fact is his work should be contextualized both within the New Left and the New Left literature as radical and critical research, acting against the social and economic policies implemented by the dominant nomenclature.

After his graduation from Columbia University, Michael Apple was surrounded by a turmoil of complex and multifaceted sociopolitical events. In the United States, the decade of the 1960's began with a lot of open injuries from the *McCarthyism* saga. Throughout the 40's and during the 50's, thousands and thousands of U.S. citizens who were deeply and actively involved in the political left suffered political repression, both at the state and national levels. Although this cruelty was not as repressive as many other fascist movements in world history, the fact is that McCarthyism was one of the main forces that contributed, not only to the weakening of many leftist movements and organizations—e.g. The Communist Party—but it also instigated and promoted a climate of social turmoil concerning the constant violations of very basic human rights, resulting in imprisonments, executions, and unemployment.

The *McCarthyist* storm started in Washington when the Truman administration, deeply influenced by a radical wing of the Republican Party, built a campaign against the communists. Although the 1947 Executive Order 9835 barred the possibility of sociopolitical action against communists, fascists and any other movement or organization with totalitarian agendas, the fact is, in essence, only left movements and intellectuals were target and persecuted. The Executive Order became a national priority and universities and colleges (quite naturally, one should say) were among the most marked institutions<sup>61</sup>.

Still recovering from the *McCarthyism* squall, U.S. society witnessed the rise of social conflicts. The stigma of apartheid of racial segregation not only consolidated its roots, it also (and above all) set off and precipitated, quite naturally, the emergence of a national consciousness. It is in this context that the Civil Rights Movement emerged,

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<sup>59</sup> A more comprehensive analysis *vide* Kipnis, I. (1952) *The American Socialist Movement, 1879-1912*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>60</sup> In this regard *vide* Proletarian Union League (1977) *Two, Three Many Parties of a New Type? Against the Ultra-Left Line*. New York: P.U.L.

<sup>61</sup> A more thorough study over these issues could be found in Caute, D. (1978) *The Great Fear*. New York: Simon & Schuster; e Schrecker, E. (1986) *No ivory tower: McCarthyism and the Universities*. New York: Oxford University Press.

whose roots were in the Civil Rights Congress, (according to Horne<sup>62</sup>, the more successful communist front, in which Robeson was one of the key figures) which was very active indeed between 1949 and 1956.

The Civil Rights Movement emerged, declaiming the dehumanizing acts of segregation of the black<sup>63</sup> community in the southern United States, and in 1954 it achieved a remarkable victory when the Supreme Court ruled educational segregation to be unconstitutional. Accused from the beginning of being a communist movement (a rather simplistic definition for an extremely complex movement, as one can see from its three distinct factions or internal wings, personified in Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin and Malcom X), the Civil Rights Movement was crucial in helping to establish the rhythms of resistance against the politics of social genocide and in crying for a more just society. Among its many noteworthy achievements such as the Montgomery riot, and its active implication in the project of the Highlander Folk School, the Civil Rights Movement assumed a crucial role in advocating against the military involvement of the United States in Vietnam. This political (and many other) position(s) was not alien to the New Left, a movement, which in fact, was motivated by the Civil Right Movement, that caught the attention of thousands of students and educators across the nation.

Thus, the New Left within the United States (with deep connections to the New Left in England) was, in fact, quite conscious of the excesses of the Stalinist dictatorship. As a result, it distanced itself from the reductionism and hermetic postures conveyed by the communist and socialist orthodoxies, choosing instead to fight for human rights, instigate a deep cultural and ideological transformation within the Left, and aim for a politically progressive society based on equal rights (and demands). It did not accept (and this is very important) the notion of agency promulgated and disseminated by the Russian Revolution. Rather, the United States New Left promoted a new platform for agency, and recognized for the individual the unquestionable right not only to react, but also above all, to participate actively in the construction of a more just and equal society.

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<sup>62</sup> Horne, G. (1987) *Communist Front? The Civil 'Right's Congress, 1946-56*. Rutherford: Dickson University Press.

<sup>63</sup> Intentionally we will maintain this terminology. We will deal with this issue later on in this chapter.



While at its earlier stage its impact was scarcely visible at the national and state and local levels, gradually, the New Left proved itself to be a valid alternative political project, by marking and developing relevant positions in U.S. society. Among countless examples, one can highlight the formation between 1955-1956 of the Left Centre Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the very first journal that identified the burning need for a new left approach. In fact, the New Left developed itself as a multifaceted movement and emerged from the local level to the state and national levels (in some ways parallel to the development of the Workers Party in Brazil), a complex struggle in which the contributions of what we might call the New Left Literature - including the works of Marcuse, Chomsky, Goodman and in a later stage, Michael Apple<sup>64</sup> - had a profound effect.

In the front line of the strikes (some of them quite violent) against the Vietnam war, for students' rights, and for a more liberal society<sup>65</sup>, one cannot disregard the role of the Students for a Democratic Society movement, whose roots were anchored among the students' movements of the 30's. The spectrum of the depression and the economic crisis of this time period challenged the logic of the capitalist system, and the movement reacted in a rather violent way against the unemployment rate, among many other things. Moreover, the Students for a Democratic Society struggled for the implementation of a participatory democracy - a social platform much desired for the New Left - a democratic form based upon the right that the individual share in those decisions determining the quality and direction of his or her life. Among its noteworthy mobilizing and quite fierce activities (more than 2000 between 1965 and 1970), one should highlight the occupation of campuses in Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Harvard and Wisconsin that was smashed by the federal army<sup>66</sup>. U.S. society was on the verge of total disruption, and schooling as a political and social institution [with its lack of relevance] was one of the targets for the radical strikers.

It was in this historical context, which was as volatile as a cask of gunpowder that Michael Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum* appeared in 1979. While the complexity of

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<sup>64</sup> With regard to the gradual emergence of the New Left in the United States vide Gitlin, T. (1987) *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantman.

<sup>65</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>66</sup> Ever since, both the new public and university buildings were built and remodeled in order to avoid occupations instigated by rallies. One can see a clear example of this strategy on the University of Wisconsin - Madison campus, especially in the Social Sciences Building.

the socio historical context of that time was influential in motivating the emergence of the book, the fact is that conceptually the book also had one of its roots in another work: *Ideology and Opinion Making - General Problems of Analysis*, a collection of research studies<sup>67</sup> done by a group of graduate students from the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University under the supervision of McLure and Fisher<sup>68</sup> in 1969.

In closely perusing this work, one can identify that the scope of this research was to “suggest new ways of describing how ideology and opinion making play the key role they do in the process of defining reality”<sup>69</sup>. In sociological literature, “the concept of ideology has become so confused and muddled that many scholars in the field now doubt whether it can be systematically analyzed [and since] much of the muddle has to do with sharp divergences on the nature of ideology and on criteria for setting it apart from other things [it is rather important to understand] what is the nature of this muddle”<sup>70</sup>. Moreover, the sociological *métier* by and large “treats the concept most unsystematically, [rather] it makes sense to shift our attention from the usual question – What is ideology – to a very different one: how sociologists come to call thought systems ideological?”<sup>71</sup> In order to achieve that, and since “ideology is concerned with legitimation and issues over power conflict, the research intends to “shed light on ideology as well as opinion making by analyzing the relation between them”<sup>72</sup>. In this research, one can identify, among other things, a theoretical thread based on Manheim’s paradox that was crucial to Michael Apple’s political and intellectual foundations, an intricate stew that constitutes one of the leitmotifs of his intellectual development towards more just schooling. In fact, according to the said research, the problem of ideology was anchored in what is called Manheim’s paradox; for Manheim the “total conception of ideology contains the notion that all thought is bounded up with the life situation of the thinker”<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> As mentioned by McLure and Fisher “this work took shape over the past three years, much of it in the course of an annual graduate sociology seminar at Columbia. Each year, the members of the seminar helped us greatly- not least through the kind of ideological and opinion making argumentation with which we deal here”. McLure, H. & Fisher, G. (1969) *Ideology and Opinion Making, General Problems of Analysis*. Bureau of Applied Social Research: Columbia University, p., ii.

<sup>68</sup> McLure, H. & Fisher, G. (1969) *Ideology and Opinion Making, General Problems of Analysis*. Bureau of Applied Social Research: Columbia University.

<sup>69</sup> Op. Cit., p., 1.

<sup>70</sup> Op. Cit., p., 3

<sup>71</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>72</sup> Op. Cit., p., 1.

<sup>73</sup> Op. Cit., p., 12.

That is to say, “all categories of thought, modes of arriving at knowledge, and notions of what constitutes truth are (...) determined by the social structures in which they are produced [hence] all knowledge is ideological in the sense that it is partial or limited by the historical context from which it is developed”<sup>74</sup>. Furthermore, “what passes for objective knowledge depends on whether or not members [of a specific society] can assume that someone’s substantive assertion of fact is a product of what the collective treats as legitimate or warranted procedures for making such assertions, [in other words] what people call knowledge or what they might call ideology or opinion is much less a matter of the content of an assertion as such than of how members treat it”<sup>75</sup>. Quite naturally, and based on this analysis, the compound concern of “interpretation emerges in an ad hoc manner”<sup>76</sup>.

Thus, from McLure’s and Fishers’ research we can have a clear understanding that this work was quite influential on Michael Apple’s later work, whether that approach was quite specific with regards to concerns of the very nature of ideology, as one can see in *Ideology and Curriculum*, or whether it was related to perennial issues such as the problematic of [official] knowledge, an issue that is woven into much of his critical and radical writing.

From here one can start to see one of the intellectual sources upon which Michael Apple relied in creating *Ideology and Curriculum*, a book that, according to Michael Apple, “represents a collective accomplishment [meant] to bring together the national and international literature on the relationship between curriculum, teaching, and evaluation on the one hand and differential cultural, political, and economic power on the other”<sup>77</sup>.

This was accomplished by trying to understand the connection between the curriculum and cultural and economic reproduction, the social complicities within both the informal and formal curricula in which one can recognize the ideological and hegemonic forms that were apprehended by students on a daily basis, and the line of specific social and economic forces and commitments which are quite determinant

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<sup>74</sup> Op. Cit., p., 12.

<sup>75</sup> Op. Cit., p., 39.

<sup>76</sup> Op. Cit., p., 36.

<sup>77</sup> Apple, Michael (2001) *Ideology and Curriculum*. *Books of the Century Catalog*. South Carolina: University of South Carolina, Museum of Education, pp., 116-117, p., 116.

ideologically for the selection of the dominant educational and curriculum patterns. Furthermore, understanding of these complex relationships was accomplished by analyzing the way in which a specific culture becomes the dominant vision and practice, by exploring the lethal absence of ethical, social and economic neutrality and the way this operates to build specific consensus and social control, and by scrutinizing how specific ideological assumptions instigate school labels and how these labels are used across curriculum practices.

One can say that *Ideology and Curriculum* not only consolidated Michael Apple's position within the education field, in general and in the curriculum field, in particular, and would pave his future intellectual path, but it also represents the landmark of what we can call the first stage of Michael Apple's intellectual political commitment. This is a phase in which Michael Apple both sets and describes his agenda, where he lays out his arguments trying to deconstruct some of the dominant and counter dominant paradigms, offering new lenses for another reading over the process of schooling. It is a phase that also includes his second major work *Education and Power*, in which Michael Apple, without ignoring a specific [progressive] curriculum tradition [what we keep calling since the beginning, a specific progressive curriculum river] advances a new curriculum map, one that crosses both economic, political and cultural dynamics, and the intricate issues of race, gender, class and sexual orientation. In fact one cannot understand Michael Apple's intellectual journey without a deep comprehension of this first phase, since it is at this phase that he clearly establishes what we might call the *Appleian* [political and pedagogical] platform.

If the 1960's and 70's were marked by numerous belligerent political and social conflicts, the 80's were marked by the [natural] emergence of the so-called New Right policies led by Reagan(ism) and his/its close complicities with Thatcher[ism]. As Aronowitz, reiterates, "[t]he Reagan Thatcher revolution succeeded in halting the slow incremental gains of Labor by largely deregulating state controls over business practices and labor relations as well as by making direct assaults on all sorts of transfer payments to the working class and the poor"<sup>78</sup>. In fact, with the Reagan revolution "federal and state educational funds have been reduced, causing, in effect, many schools

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<sup>78</sup> Aronowitz, S. (1996) *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism*. New York: Routledge, p., 114.

to partially privatise or curtail the school day or school year”<sup>79</sup>. Reagan “invoked images of the market as a domain of freedom and its privatisation and deregulation policies were coded as an invitation to eros”<sup>80</sup>.

It was precisely within the revamping of the radical right, both in the United States and England that *Official Knowledge* emerged, a book that attempts to contribute a more comprehensive and accurate analysis of educational and curriculum policies. In this work, Michael Apple’s focus is an analysis of the issues that are involved in the common sense and official knowledge policies and how the knowledge that has been politically and socially certified is controlled and taken up again in the intricate connection between cultural politics and the text(book). In so doing, he takes this opportunity not only to question whose knowledge (both educational and curricular) is of greatest worth and to advance his perspective of the way new forms of knowledge could be built through the school curriculum, but also to lay down a careful analysis of the four groups (neoliberals, neoconservatives, the new professional middle class, and authoritarian populists) that helped determine the conceptualization and implementation of the new right social policies, one of his central conceptual frames (if not the most central), especially in the latter part of his work. This particular book ends with an extensive interview in which Michael Apple shows his intricate intellectual pondering of the explicit and implicit ties among education, power and the self-cartography.

If *Ideology and Curriculum* [and *Education and Power* and *Teachers and Texts* as well] constitutes the landmark of what we have called Michael Apple’s first stage, *Official Knowledge* [together with *Cultural Politics and Education*, *Educating the Right Way*] expresses a signpost for what we can name as his second phase or stage. On this phase Michael Apple uses an approach [based on the platform that he put together both on *Ideology and Curriculum*, *Education and Power* and *Teachers and Texts*, a platform that allowed him to understand in deep “the relationship between the curriculum, pedagogy, and forms of evaluation in schools and the structures of inequality in the larger society”] that let us understand, in a quite accurate perspective, not only the ways of thinking about the control of teaching and curriculum, but also the beginning of his challenge towards the new right policies and its lethal effects over the schools, curriculum, teachers, students, and the community.

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<sup>79</sup> Op. Cit., p., 60.

<sup>80</sup> Op. Cit., p., 114

Three years after the democrats gained White House power, both the educational and curricular fields were hit with a strange and wonderful work, *Democratic Schools*, revealing the evolutionary path of Michael Apple's thought. Arguably, for many scholars both nationally and internationally, Michel Apple was taking a drastic turn, a turn that one could say would have been impossible for Michael Apple two decades earlier, since, as was already mentioned, Dewey was not on his radar screen at that time<sup>81</sup>.

Was that an evolution? In fact, it was a clear (r)evolution given that the book was co-authored with James Beane and included an urgent call for a more practical approach in his analyses, an approach that only a person with James Beane's extensive experience and deep involvement in schools could supply. There was a need to bring to light some of the significant achievements of public schools despite the tough neo-liberal hegemony. Thus, one can identify this book as Michael Apple's third phase, an epoch that was supported by James Beane's insights and accuracy and allowed Michael Apple to move forward towards a *Deweyan* position, showing how public schooling should function both politically and socially and assuming democracy as a way of life. Thus, if on what we call the first phase, we can identify that Michael Apple is responding to some liberal insights, and on the second phase to some conservative tendencies, the fact is that in this third phase he is trying to highlight some of the gains made by a specific realm of progressive educators in schools, despite the neo-liberal dominance.

*Democratic Schools* emerged from the experiences of real teachers and students and their close involvement with the community, experiences that illustrate not only how a specific community can build a democratic process of curriculum development, but also how teachers, students and the community in general can participate in schooling in a dynamic way, transforming the dominant curriculum practice and making the curriculum knowledge more relevant to students, teachers and the community. As Michael Apple pointed out, his idea (and obviously James Beane's too) was "not to create a model since *Democratic Schools* cannot be seen as another Tyler rationale"<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 7* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>82</sup> Apple, Michael (2001) *Elementary School Curriculum*. Graduate Course. Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policies Studies. Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison, 14/12/2001.

The (hi)stories narrated by teachers of their students, their school and their community provide a credibility check for the book, an element often absent in so many works within academia. In essence, the book demonstrates how teachers, students and the community in general act as co-constructors of the curriculum knowledge. In so doing, knowledge is lived as something dynamic, it is viewed as a process, and the curriculum is a result of a deliberative, collegial, and participative process; in other words it is the consequence of a democratic practice.

In this context, and notwithstanding the fact that *Democratic Schools* was a co-authored with James Beane, one should understand this volume as Michael Apple's third political and intellectual moment. Along with some of the arguments that we raised just before, a bit of historical biography might be crucial here. According to Michael Apple, *Democratic Schools* is not dissociated at all from the time where he was a Visiting Professor in Norway, an experience that [might] allow him to have a close experience with a social democratic democracy, a social stage that Michael Apple would like to see crystallized in the United States, and also it was a way to challenge a perennial concern among educators over 'what *they should* do on Monday'. Despite the length of the quote, it will be crucial to see Michael Apple's perspective.

It certainly had an influence. However let me explain again the genesis of [*Democratic Schools*]. In *Official Knowledge*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, for the first time I write about my experience in order to answer, «what *should* I do on Monday». I want to use myself as an example. On my mind already something was missing in critical pedagogy, since it became increasingly disconnected from reality. As you know for me curriculum is a site of struggle and compromises, with elements of good and bad sense. It means that within institutional forms now we have elements of victories and not only defeats. So if we have elements of good and bad sense, if there are elements of compromise in which dominant groups are forced to compromise with oppressed groups, that means that we have stuff in schools that we need to pay attention to. At the same time, ASCD approached me. They invited me to write a book about «what *should* I/we do on Monday». This invitation came on the right time, since I was already grappling with this question in relationship to my worries about critical pedagogy's tendency toward over-theorization and its neglect of real schools and real teachers. However, as I told ASCD, I cannot answer that question. I can talk about my experiences, my own practice, but I don't have the right to tell the teachers «what *they should* do on Monday». If I had done that I would have acting in a *Tyleran* way. So I opened an interesting argument with ASCD. Instead of saying, «what *I/we should* do on Monday», my answer came from the people in schools that were

teaching me what it is possible. In a time of contradictions, with elements of good as well as bad sense, these people, these practicing critical educators, were defending the elements of good sense. The real stories portrayed by Meier and Schwarz, Rosenstock and Steinberg, Peterson, and Brodhagen were crystal clear examples of this. Increasingly ASCD became a bit uncomfortable with my strategy. So I approached Beane. He and I had been talking over these kinds of issues already. Beane had just edited the ASCD Yearbook, and had a style that was exactly right for ASCD audience. So we wrote our part in a ASCD style, a social democratic style, a moderate leftist style. What I just said is a story that doesn't have Norway in it. But, you should remember that at the same time that I am thinking about this, I am spending a lot of time in Norway. There I recognized that, even though in my mind they still weren't radical enough, liberal traditions and social democratic traditions need to be defended against the right, and there are elements in these traditions that need to be kept and expanded. I thought that we could use some element within those traditions in what I called in *Education and Power* «non reformist reforms». So I'm coming back to the States from Norway with a full appreciation of the fact those even simple reforms were victories and they have to be defended. Thus, for me the first thing to do was to defend the gains that had been made and this included what Norwegian [educators] were doing against the onslaught of neoliberalism. In Norway I saw a battle between reformist capitalism and disruptive neoliberalism. Thus, the Norway experience was in the background of *Democratic Schools*, no doubt about it. In Norway, among many things that I saw were that schools were not falling apart, that the teacher travels with the kids from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, building and maintaining a real community, that teachers were protected against unemployment. So *Democratic Schools*, although it was more "reformist" than I actually wanted in some ways, in a sense was an epistemological and political/educational break that obviously carried on a [specific curricular progressive] tradition<sup>83</sup>.

It is within this intricate legacy of struggles and purges, here described rather succinctly, that one should situate (and this word is very important for his thought) Michael Apple's work. He belongs to a very specific historical epoch. As Ortega y Gasset reiterates "a man belongs to a generation [and] he is of one substance with it (...) and each generation takes its place not in some chance location, but directly and squarely upon the preceding one"<sup>84</sup>. Actually *Democratic Schools* emerges in a moment where the rightist tendencies become so powerful that one should not minimize the pertinence of the book, as a accurate political and pedagogical project, especially in

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<sup>83</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 38* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>84</sup> Ortega y Gasset, J. (1944) *Mission of the University*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, INC, p. 38.



nowadays. In fact, an accurate analysis of the “thought systems”<sup>85</sup> or systems of thought<sup>86</sup> - to use McLure and Fisher and Foucault terms, respectively - document the difficulties of the Left political and social agenda, especially now, since the events of the September 11, 2001, in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, have been utilized and manipulated by the right wing radicals as an excuse to reinforce their rather unjust social policies. Among many examples, one cannot ignore that September 11, instead of providing a motive for the U.S. administration to reconsider its foreign policies (not only in the Middle East, but especially in Africa), became (the desired) political tool to revamp, in a more explicit way, unjust (right) policies. These include the emergence of military tribunals, control over foreign citizens by restructuring the emigration laws, a climate of persecution of stereotype of students and professors (based on a bizarre segregation), and a strong control over correspondence (both normal and electronic). In fact, along with Sousa Santos<sup>87</sup>, one should mention that U.S. Left movements and intellectuals, spread within a variety of social spheres, are facing today, more than ever before, the return of McCarthyism in a quite sophisticated way. The current leaders now have a clear understanding that they should act rather subtly, a lethal paradox for a society that proclaims itself to be an example of democracy, to say the least.

As Aronowitz so clearly reminds us “[t]he times in which we live might better be described as ‘gray times’, since the tacit agreement by which the world turned after World War Two has been canceled”<sup>88</sup>. Based on Beck’s analysis, Aronowitz carried on by saying that “from the welfare state with all its certainties, we have entered the era, perhaps the epoch, of a ‘risk’ society”<sup>89</sup>.

Having laid out very briefly the intricate historical events that undergird *Ideology and Curriculum*, *Official Knowledge* and *Democratic Schools*, and the three most important intellectual moments in Michael Apple’s intellectual life, and after summarizing some of the more critical (political) arguments within those books, it is our purpose now to turn to *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Official Knowledge* and

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<sup>85</sup> McLure, H. & Fisher, G. (1969) *Ideology and Opinion Making, General Problems of Analysis*. Bureau of Applied Social Research: Columbia University, p., 6.

<sup>86</sup> Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: A.M. Sheridan Smith.

<sup>87</sup> Sousa Santos, B. (2001) *The Role of the Left in Post-Authoritarian Politics: Southeast Asian and Latin American Experiences*. *Forum*. University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>88</sup> Aronowitz, S. (1996) *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism*. New York: Routledge, p., 91.

<sup>89</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 91.

scrutinize how the three themes—curriculum concepts, the issue of (school) knowledge, and the new right social policies—were developed in those volumes, knowing that *Democratic Schools* will be dissected by confronting it with Dewey's *Schools of Tomorrow* and very punctually with *Experience and Education*.

Before leaving this section, one must understand that the *Apple* trilogy that we suggest [(1) *Ideology and Curriculum, Education and Power; Teachers and Texts*, (2) *Official Knowledge, Cultural Politics and Education, Educating the «Right» Way*, and; (3) *Democratic Schools*] which represents three different phases or stages in his political and pedagogical voyage should not be seen as watertight compartments. Quite conversely, and as we desiccate on the arguments that we raised, we can trace a rather close connection between each of the phases, an interdependence that can allow the reader, above all, to understand the way Michael Apple conceptualised, developed and implemented his political and pedagogical struggle towards the curriculum field.

### **5.3 Hegemony: A Towering Concept**

One shouldn't be naïve in thinking that *Ideology and Curriculum* starts with a chapter "On analyzing hegemony", with no particular reason. A social sciences book doesn't open with such a chapter inadvertently. Knowing Michael Apple for quite a few years, both personally and professionally, we were immediately aware of its significance. In fact after reading that chapter, one not only reaches the firm conclusion that are this chapter takes a huge step beyond some of the issues raised in McLure and Fisher's<sup>90</sup> research, but also one gains a clear understanding that Michael Apple presents a new key for a new door, allowing researchers and scholars access to new windows of opportunity. It provides new radical lenses with which to view the secular curriculum issues (and one can only imagine its effect in the late 70's). In (and with) this chapter, Michael Apple built strong pillars for his future intellectual journey and positioning, challenging both the dominant tradition and some of the counter dominant perspectives through advancing such a critical radical standpoint (and device) that led to a dramatic

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<sup>90</sup> McLure, H. & Fisher, G. (1969) *Ideology and Opinion Making, General Problems of Analysis*. Bureau of Applied Social Research: Columbia University.

turn for the field. Along with Wright<sup>91</sup>, one should say that Michael Apple's arguments were based on the urgent need to completely change the 'game board', the curriculum platform, and to transform dramatically the very idea of schooling and curriculum, and to instigate a new platform for the curriculum theoretical field, one that has the potential for making schools more relevant for a society that proclaims itself as democratic. But why, one should ask, is the issue of hegemony a crucial base for Michael Apple's political and pedagogical commitment? In fact, one can use Michael Apple's own model of argumentation to unveil this complex question.

One of Michael Apple's greatest and deepest intellectual worries - one that emerges frequently in his books, lectures, and conferences and within the Friday Seminar—is "the act of situating"<sup>92</sup>, a political and pedagogical positioning nearly absent in the educational field. Actually, one should not forget that everyone is positioned in a specific historical and political moment and that our (co)existence does not occur in a social vacuum. Individuals are not aliens to the historical reason of their existence, an outcome of frequent tensions and conflicts of power relations due to gender, race, class and sexual orientation issues which inflame society in general. This commitment is not a straightforward political (and one could add pedagogical) exercise though. As Michael Apple so clearly reminds us, a question such as "[w]here do I stand", frequently, involves both difficult and painful commitments since as educators we could not (and, by all means, we should not) "strip" our political vein. To be precise it is a matter that "requires an analysis of how social and economic groups and classes seem to be helped by the way the institutions in our society are organized and controlled and which groups are not"<sup>93</sup>. It was, in fact, political fearfulness (particularly interesting given that this was within the United States context) that led Michael Apple to the work of Gramsci and Williams. Both of them, as was mentioned before in chapter two, were highly influential on Michael Apple's political and pedagogical development. In fact, they both gave to Michael Apple what he needed: a validity check for the arguments that he was about to raise.

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<sup>91</sup> Wright, E. (1994) *Interrogating Inequality. Essays on Class Analysis, Socialism, and Marxism*. London: Verso. We will take up Wright's perspective at a later stage.

<sup>92</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 13.

<sup>93</sup> Op. Cit., p., 11.

As one can see from the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci's seminal analyses of organic vs. traditional intellectuals, hegemony, ideology, culture, and commonsense understanding were extremely important for Michael Apple's political and pedagogical journey.

Gramsci, for whom "[e]very social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which gave homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields"<sup>94</sup>, highlights that "the worker or proletarian, for example, is not specifically characterized by his manual or instrumental work, but by performing this work in specific conditions and in specific social relations; [moreover], in any physical work, even the most degraded and mechanical, there exists a minimum of technical qualification, that is a minimum of creative intellectual activity"<sup>95</sup>. Gramsci reiterates that "all men are intellectuals (..) but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals"<sup>96</sup>. In essence, for Gramsci "[t]here is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded [so the] *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*; [to be more precise], each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a philosopher, an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought"<sup>97</sup>. Thus, the very bizarre idea that "intellectuals think of themselves as 'independent', endowed with a character of their own" is complete nonsense, a flaccid position that one can identify, for instance, within some of the Pinar curricular arguments, as was referred to earlier in chapter two.

Thus, as Gramsci states "the individual relations with other men are not merely based on juxtaposition, just being next to one another. These relations are organic, they take place only to the extent that the individual is part of social organisms, from the simplest

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<sup>94</sup> Gramsci, A. (1971) *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Q. Hoare and G. Smith. New York: International publishers, p., 5.

<sup>95</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>96</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

<sup>97</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

to the most complex; [that is to say], these relationships are not mechanical”<sup>98</sup>. It is in this insistent call for acting within social organizations in order to conquer and transform the very idea of power, that Gramsci stresses the need to understand concepts such as hegemony and common sense and how they operate in society. As for the former, it “is used in the sense of influence, leadership, consent rather than the alternative and opposite meaning of domination [and] it has to do with the way one social group influences other groups, making certain compromises with them in order to gain their consent for its leadership in society as a whole”<sup>99</sup>; and, for the latter, one should apprehend “the incoherent and at times contradictory set of assumptions and beliefs held by the mass of the population at any one time”<sup>100</sup>. Thus, one can apprehend from here that, for Gramsci, one of the core concepts of hegemony is the issue of consensus that also plays a key position within the state framework. That is to say, social hegemony and state domination are interwoven in the way consensus is fabricated and articulated. As Gramsci so explicitly shows us, hegemony implies an intricate and quite complex set of compromises:

The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production; the apparatus of state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on those groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. This apparatus is however, constituted for the whole society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed<sup>101</sup>.

In fact, for Gramsci, hegemony was a balance between coercion and consent. Thus, Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as a political practical toolkit is quite connected to the issue of agency; that is, “critical understanding of one’s self takes place through a struggle of political ‘hegemonies’, first in the field of ethics, then in politics, to reach

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<sup>98</sup> Gramsci, A. (1957) *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*. Translated and Annotated by Manzani, C. New York: Cameron Associates, INC., p., 47.

<sup>99</sup> Sassoon, A. (1982) *Approaches to Gramsci*. London: Writers and Redaers, p., 13.

<sup>100</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>101</sup> Gramsci, A. (1971) *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Q. Hoare and G. Smith. New York: International publishers, p., 12.

the higher understanding of reality”<sup>102</sup>. By amplifying and simultaneously complexifying the way hegemony operates, Gramsci promotes the vision that the cultural, political, religious, economic beliefs of each individual were both a point of departure and of arrival for a specific hegemonic articulation. Furthermore, these beliefs clash and collide irremediably into the reductive and atrophied Marxist secular dogma of base-superstructure. As he so clearly stresses, “we must fight theoretically as primitive infantilism the attempt to explain every fluctuation of politics and ideology as an immediate reflection of some change in the economic base of the structure”<sup>103</sup>.

In fact, for Gramsci the issue of culture “consists in the foundation of new modes of labour, new modes of production, and distribution that are peculiar to the working class in its historical determination in the course of the capitalist process [and] the revolution also presupposes the formation of a new set of standards, a new psychology, new ways of feeling, thinking and living that must be specific to the working class, that must be created by it, that will become dominant when the working class become the dominant class”<sup>104</sup>. That is to say, working class agency should act both in the economic and political fields, and within specific cultural elements that will lead to the construction of a working class cultural civilization. In other words the problem is not only to achieve political and economic power, but also – and this is quite important – to gain intellectual power, since the ways we think are based and organized through a complex mosaic composed of economic, political and cultural issues. According to Gramsci, the very fact that the working class raised issues of what he called “prolekult power” (proletariat cultural power) is unquestionable evidence that “there are already proletarian forces of production of cultural values”<sup>105</sup>, albeit an admittedly difficult task.

In fact, along with Eagleton, one should ask “how is the working class to take power in a social formation where the dominant power is subtly, pervasively diffused throughout habitual daily practices, intimately interwoven with culture itself, inscribed in the very texture of our experience from nursery school to funeral parlour. How do we combat a power which has become the commonsense of a whole social order, rather

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<sup>102</sup> Gramsci, A. (1957) *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*. Translated and Annotated by Manzani, C. New York: Cameron Associates, INC., pp., 29-30.

<sup>103</sup> Op. Cit., p., 43.

<sup>104</sup> Gramsci, A. (1985) Selections from cultural writings. In D. Forgacs & G. Nowell-Smith (eds.). *António Gramsci - Selections from Cultural Writings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 41.

<sup>105</sup> Op. Cit., p. 42.

than one which is widely perceived as alien and oppressive?” That is to say, how could one expect working class power “if the ruling bloc has had centuries in which to perfect its hegemony”<sup>106</sup>? According to Eagleton’s reading of Gramsci’s material (and one with which we agree), “we need to construct a new commonsense – not as a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions – and with it a new culture and a new philosophy which will be rooted in popular consciousness; [thus], the function of organic intellectuals (...) is to forge the links between theory and ideology, creating a two-way passage between political analysis and popular experience. [In fact] such a world view cements together a social and political bloc, as a unifying organization, an inspirational principal rather than a system of abstract ideas”<sup>107</sup>. One can say that for Gramsci education was a quite crucial path, not only to help the oppressed classes in gaining more cultural tools, but only, and this is rather important, to build a more powerful political and social consciousness.

However this socio political posture presented by Gramsci and subsequently filtered and assimilated by Michael Apple was not absent from Williams’ work. In fact one can see that Gramsci’s influences on Williams were quite profound. If there is a work that can testify to the ‘intellectual intimacy’ between Michael Apple and Williams, it is, undoubtedly, *Resources of Hope*. Notwithstanding the critical influence that William’s *Long Revolution* plays over Michael Apple’s *On Analyzing Hegemony*, in fact, reading William’s *Resources of Hope* first chapter *Culture is Ordinary* makes one want to return to Michael Apple’s past, to those unpleasant and obnoxious times in Paterson, New Jersey. The way Williams describe his youth in a little farming village somewhere in the Welsh countryside reminds us of Michael Apple’s adolescence and youth in a working class family. They both experienced, not only the difficulties of growing up in poor areas, but also the transformations that occurred in their home environments due to cultural and economic developments. Like Williams in his early days at Cambridge, Michael Apple did not find himself oppressed by the Teachers College myth and its heavyweight intellectual artillery practices – quite natural in a place such as Teachers College. In fact, growing up within a working class family, which was deeply engaged in political activities, and simultaneously working at a very tender age as a printer

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<sup>106</sup> Eagleton, T. (1994) Ideology and its Vicissitudes in Western Marxism. In S. Zizek (ed.) *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso, pp., 179-226, p, 199.

<sup>107</sup> Op. Cit., p., 200.

helping his father, served as a powerful ordinary cultural learning environment. In this regard and as Williams reminds us,

culture is ordinary; [that is], to grow up in that country was to see the shape of a culture, and its modes of change. (...) Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land (...) These are ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of a culture, that it is always both traditional and creative, that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind<sup>108</sup>.

Thus, and given the close relation between culture and human agency, learning is also ordinary since we can learn wherever we are as was the case with Michael Apple. Like Williams at Cambridge, when Michael Apple arrived at Teachers College, he was not intellectually tepid and could see how his Marxist background was crucial to his future academic steps.

In *Culture is Ordinary*, after dwelling on his past in a Wales working class family (and implicitly touching on the issue of knowledge) in order to question the very dominant idea of culture, Williams jumped to an even more radical stance by challenging specific positions within the Marxist tradition, a platform, that as we will have the opportunity to see later on, is quite familiar in Michael Apple's approach. As Williams noted, one should define culture "in relation to its underlying system of production [knowing that] culture is a whole way of life, and the arts are part of a social organization which economic change clearly affects"<sup>109</sup>. However, and along with Williams standpoint, it is dangerous and simplistic to assume that society by and large is determined by a specific class-dominated culture, and by this means label the rest (i.e. the leftovers, the masses) as ignorant, as if the so called bourgeoisie culture exists in a

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<sup>108</sup> Williams, R. (1989) *Resources of Hope*. London: Verso, p., 4.

<sup>109</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.



kind of a social vacuum insulated from any social interface with non-bourgeoisie cultures, which, in fact, comprise the vast majority. As he states,

I got angry at my friends's talk about the ignorant masses. (...) There is an English bourgeois culture, with its powerful educational, literary and social institutions, in close contact with the actual centers of power. To say that most working class people are excluded from these is self-evident [but] to go on to say that working people are excluded from English culture is nonsense [since] they have their own growing institutions, and much of the strictly bourgeois culture they would in case not want.<sup>110</sup>

With this in mind, one cannot say that, “contemporary culture is [a] bourgeois culture [a] mistake that everyone, from Conservatives to Marxists seems to make”<sup>111</sup>. Besides the fact that, in essence, there are “no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses”<sup>112</sup>, (a *Sartrean* position) assumes that there is no human agency beyond the realm of the bourgeoisie stigma, or (and this is even worse) that working class agency is something amorphous, a kind of paraplegic culture that exists only within a ghetto and occurs only in a non-centrifugal dynamic, a sort of shilly-shallying way of living that is incapable of acting within the core society. Does anyone need empirical evidence to understand that the society that we know today is also a result of the sociocultural and economical working class power? While it might be painful for some to admit, it is undeniable.

Moreover, although we can trace a close “relationship between culture and production, and the observation that education was [a] restricted [space]”<sup>113</sup> the clear evidence relies on the fact that “culture is common meanings, the product of a whole people, and offered individual meanings, the product of man's whole committed personal and social experience [so] it is stupid and arrogant to suppose that any of these meanings can in any way be prescribed; they are made by living, made and remade, in ways we cannot

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<sup>110</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>111</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>112</sup> Op. Cit., p., 11

<sup>113</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

know in advance”<sup>114</sup>. Hence, and as Williams highlighted, just by the very fact that “we live in an expanding culture, and all the elements in this culture are themselves expanding [any] account for our culture which explicitly or implicitly denies the value of an industrial society is really irrelevant [and] not in a million years would make us give up this power”<sup>115</sup>.

Actually, it is this kind of argument that we can identify in William’s *The Long Revolution*<sup>116</sup> in which one can trace an attempt to deconstruct concepts such as the creative mind, culture, the individual and society. According to Williams there is no such thing as a creative mind, since creativity is a kind of seeing, and we learn to interpret by learning to describe. Thus, the act of interpreting is in fact an embodied process, and that which we interpret has to be seen as the extension of our capacity for organization. In this context, culture is not a result of the creative mind, because what we really know about culture is a selective tradition that has been shaped and selected in quite intricate and dynamic ways within specific institutions and under very particular circumstances. That is why (human) agency cannot be interpreted as based on a creative mind; quite conversely, it is a complicated and multifaceted ensemble of relationships. Thus, one cannot defend culture as an intricate sign of individual capacity since culture transforms itself with the very revolution and-or reshaping of the structures of relationships among individuals. Thus, and this is quite clear in *The Long Revolution*<sup>117</sup>, for Williams there is no such thing as a best culture (or best agency). Moreover, given the fact that human agency is exerted in the path of specific structures of feeling, one can picture agency as something that is based in complex individual experiences rather than abstract, institutional systems. It is important to notice that Williams chooses the concept structures of feelings instead that of ideology since for him the former is not so reductive as the latter. In fact for Williams whereas the structures of feeling embodied a complex of individual experiences and not abstract institutional systems.

What we have here, both in Williams’ and Gramsci’s arguments, is a quite different position from hardline Marxists on agency, since they understood working class agency

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<sup>114</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>115</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 10-11.

<sup>116</sup> Williams, R. (1961) *The Long Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>117</sup> Op. Cit..

as something solid and only possible within the limits prescribed by a specific party, and determined by a very selective strata of that party, an unquestionable reality among the vast majority of the so-called Marxist regimes. That is to say agency could only be expressed according to a prescribed set of actions, as stipulated by the leaders. In understanding agency this way, it is rendered as a simplistic and mechanical relation, between intellectuals and workers, with the former fabricating theory and ideology and culture for the latter. By contrast, one can see that like Williams and Gramsci, Michael Apple interprets agency as something that has a dynamic dimension, both individually and collectively, a fact that one can glimpse from his own personal and professional life. By denying working class agency, one is, in fact, varnishing the real history of human kind by washing away the bloody histories of millions and millions of peoples and erasing the many victories achieved by the working class.

Also, like Gramsci, Williams<sup>118</sup> directs his criticism quite explicitly towards a sort of passive economicism defended by the so-called hardline Marxist theory, challenging its abstract and dogmatic formulas. In essence, Williams deconstructs the fundamental Marxist framework of base and superstructure, stating that the base has to be recognized as a sum of rather complex productive processes within specific structural relations and arguing that one has to pay close attention not exactly to the relation itself, but (and this is quite critical) to the determinations that underpin those relations<sup>119</sup>. Thus, although the economy does have a key role within societal development, the economic apparatuses alone provide a weak argument for explaining how society operates, and one has to include the elaborate process of cultural production. In fact, for Williams and also for Gramsci, it is reductive to assume that economic structures are the sole engines that pump up societal events. Quite the opposite, the development of a particular society is a result of very concrete mediation among the economic, cultural, and ideological spheres.

Based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Williams, in his initial works, deconstructs the Marxist reductive base superstructure model, arguing that hegemony "supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or

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<sup>118</sup> Williams, R. (1985) *Writing in Society*. London: Verso.

<sup>119</sup> Williams, R. (1961) *The Long Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.

superstructural”<sup>120</sup>. Moreover, for Williams, hegemony had the distinct meaning of ideology, in a superficial sense, since if the effective dominant culture were only an ideological contour, and if society by and large was held together by a sort of ideological glue, it would be quite easy to contest, challenge and transform. Later in his intellectual voyage, Williams<sup>121</sup> reworks this analysis and instead of using the word hegemony, he claims a concept such as the structures of feeling capture the total or common experience of a specific period, with a sense of general or shared culture.

Thus, for Williams hegemony is a concept that goes beyond both the concepts of culture [“as a whole social process, in which men define and shape their whole lives”<sup>122</sup>] and ideology [“in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest”<sup>123</sup>].

According to Williams, the working class achieved many victories in the social sphere, particularly in the educational sphere – challenging the dominant tradition. He noted that they “will at least keep certain things alive, and which will also, at least in a minority, develop ways of thinking and feeling which are competent to understand what is happening and to maintain the finest individual values”<sup>124</sup>. It is through education that the alleged masses can act as both subjects and objects of social action, despite the fact that the educational institutions should be seen as “the main agencies of an effective dominant culture”<sup>125</sup> based on what Williams called a “selective tradition”. Above all for Williams schools should be seen as dialectical spheres in which dominant, residual [those tools that we inherited from the past] and emergent cultures [those new (plat)orms], to use Michael Apple terms, rub against each other.

Clearly, one can identify a parallel between Gramsci’s and Williams’ and Michael Apple’s thought. In fact, among many other social and political spheres it was also through education that, like Gramsci and Williams, Michael Apple’s agency was

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<sup>120</sup> Williams, R. (1976) Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory. In R. Dale, G. Esland and Madeleine MacDonald (eds.) *Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp., 202-210, p., 204.

<sup>121</sup> Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>122</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108

<sup>123</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108

<sup>124</sup> Williams, R. (1989) *Resources of Hope*. London: Verso, p., 9.

<sup>125</sup> Williams, R. (1976) Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory. In R. Dale, G. Esland and Madeleine MacDonald (eds.) *Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp., 202-210, p., 205.

recharged, and moreover, it was through education that he could challenge both some dominant and counter dominant traditions. Although one cannot understand Michael Apple's existence by confining him to the education mosaic, the fact is that along with Williams, Michael Apple understands education as something ordinary, as the sphere that could allow full meaning to citizens and provide them the tools to shape and develop those meanings without silencing their experiences, a position taken by Gramsci that also understood "school[s as] the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels [were] elaborated"<sup>126</sup>. According to Gramsci "tomorrow like today, the school will undoubtedly be a crucible where the new spirits will be forged"<sup>127</sup>.

As one can see, both Gramsci and Williams lend to Michael Apple intellectual sophistication, the finest sociological approach for dealing with the intricate issue of culture that pointed to the problematic of knowledge relevance in schools, and in so doing, challenging the theoretical swampland in which the education and curriculum field was submerged. This intellectual sophistication, although refined, becomes rather explosive when Michael Apple articulates his own perspectives (many of them emerging from his Marxist background) with Williams' and Gramsci's arguments. Given the fact that education was the field for Michael Apple, and in order to understand why a specific montage of knowledge has been perpetuated in the school curriculum, Michael Apple partakes eagerly of Gramsci's and Williams' concepts of hegemony, ideology [although Williams, in his later work, chooses systems of feelings instead of ideology], and common sense, among many others, and in so doing pushed irremediably and rather violently the educational and the curriculum debate toward a new theoretical platform.

Da Silva's<sup>128</sup> insights are important for understanding how Michael Apple is able to challenge not only the (liberal) dominant educational tradition, but also the mechanical and determinist conceptions portrayed by specific counter dominant traditions by relying on Gramsci's and Williams' neo-Marxist arguments. What is really happening in schooling and in curriculum is not a sole consequence of the way the economy

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<sup>126</sup> Gramsci, A. (1971) *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Q. Hoare and G. Smith. New York: International publishers, p., 10.

<sup>127</sup> Gramsci, A. (1985) Selections from cultural writings. In D. Forgacs & G. Nowell-Smith (eds.). *Antônio Gramsci - Selections from Cultural Writings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p., 42.

<sup>128</sup> Da Silva, T. (1999) *Documentos de Identidade: Uma Introdução às Teorias do Currículo*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica.

operates. For Michael Apple defending the intricate economic apparatuses as the catalyst that drives both education and curriculum development is a complete nonsense. Although the economy does play a crucial role in people's lives and institutions, it is a false dichotomy, since one must understand that the link between the economic sphere and the educational environment is also mediated by a quite complex process within schools in general, and in the curriculum in particular.

Thus the educational environment is a dynamic space in which specific mediations and articulations occur, and the relationship between the economic sphere and educational path is, in essence, mediated by human agency. That is why concepts such as hegemony coined by Gramsci and complexified by Willimas became very significant in Michael Apple's approach. In fact, these Gramscian concepts, not only allow the justification of the curriculum field as a locus of mediation, but also let us see the curriculum field as a disputed space in which the dominant strata has to exert persuasive efforts to maintain its dominance. In fact, it is precisely through this complex effort of persuasion that economic domination became cultural domination. In essence, the cultural field is not a simple mirror of the economy, since it has its own specific dynamics, and by this one can say that the economy alone cannot explain education and the curriculum accurately. In fact, the general tensions in the curriculum field that we had the opportunity to analyze in length in chapters three and four, constitute rather clear evidence of the curriculum field as a space for mediation and articulation of specific sociopolitical groups to construct, crystallize and maintain a specific commonsense in order to perpetuate their dominance.

Reading *On Analyzing Hegemony* one should not forget that Michael Apple is replying to both some (liberal) dominant and counter dominant traditions. In fact some writers in the Marxist tradition, Althusser for instance, had already laid out an interesting critique of liberal education although curriculum and knowledge were not the chief concerns. One of the main concerns of the Marxist school was the issue of class domination, and the way the organization of the economy affects other societal spheres, such as education. That is to say, one has to understand the structural connection between economy and education, in general, and curriculum, in particular, since the economic cartography interferes in the curriculum structures.

Building on the works of Gramsci and Williams, as was mentioned before, Michael Apple assumes that the problem is indeed structural, but much more complex since the economy alone cannot explain and determine the rhythms of the education field. For him “education was not a neutral enterprise, that by the very nature of the institution, the educator was involved, whether he or she was conscious of it or not, in a political act”<sup>129</sup>. In order to deal with the complex density of such a problem, Michael Apple grounded his analyses “in a set of critical questions that are generated out of a tradition of neo-Marxist argumentation”<sup>130</sup> a tradition that, according to him, could give a more accurate understanding of the way one should and must think and act about education. It is a rather complex approach, as he states,

the approach I find most fruitful seeks to explicate the manifest and latent or coded reflections of modes of material production, ideological values, class relations, and structures of social power – racial and sexual as well as politico-economic – on the state of consciousness of people in a precise historical or socio-economic situation<sup>131</sup>.

It is with this in mind, that Michael Apple discloses his criticism of the reductive position of some of counter dominant traditions such as the one that was portrayed by Bowles and Gintis<sup>132</sup>. Their *Schooling in Capitalist America* gave voice and space to specific anti-capitalist radical positions within academia, which were becoming increasingly frustrated with the liberal dominant tradition. It was an influential analysis (and in fact still is) defending the correspondence between schools and the economy, arguing that the way schools operate to reproduce a stratified society is based on the stigma of class. It was against this kind of powerful but reductive analysis that Michael Apple reacted. While the economic element is quite crucial in order to understand the way schooling is perpetuating social segregation, Bowles and Gintis’s socio-political perspective “only gives one side of the picture [since] it cannot illuminate fully what the mechanisms of domination are and how they work in the day-to-day activity of

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<sup>129</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p.,1

<sup>130</sup> Op. Cit., p.,1

<sup>131</sup> Op. Cit., p.,1

<sup>132</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America. Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books Apud Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 2.

school”<sup>133</sup>. One can draw from Michael Apple’s insight that for him Bowles and Gintis’s rationale was based on a reductionist determinism which assumed that schools were little more than passive black boxes without the capacity to act and interfere in other social spheres, in essence, neglecting schools as dynamics sites of struggles. In fact it seems that for Bowles and Gintis there is no space and opportunity for change, conflict and contradiction in schools. According to them, there is no space for active and dynamic agency since schooling (and one can add curriculum) is a simple equation between cultural and social reproduction as determined by the economy<sup>134</sup>.

As already mentioned, according to Michael Apple, the problem was more complex and dense since the relation between schooling and other societal spheres, including the economy, was in fact mediated by the intricate and multifarious dynamics of human agency. It is in order to understand this that Michael Apple relies on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony which was subsequently upgraded by Williams. According to Michael Apple, the concept of hegemony allows one to understand that education not only plays a key role in the way the economy reproduces critical aspects of inequality, but it also operates in preserving and distributing cultural capital. So, the concept of hegemony was used to explain that schooling is, in fact, an equation however determined and determinant by the relation between two spheres, namely the economy and culture.

In order to understand this complex relation one has to assume, according to Michael Apple, a relational analysis. Based on Williams’s insight, Michael Apple argues about the critical need to think of schooling not as an intangible endeavor. Actually, one has to situate “the life of the individual (...) as an economic and social being, back into the unequal structural relations that produced the comfort of individual enjoys”<sup>135</sup>. That is to say there is, in fact, a relation between the light that comes on when one switches it, and the deplorable lives of millions and millions of men and women that make that possible, many of them working in inhumane conditions. By assuming the individual is a neutral and abstract identity, one not only blocks the chances for an accurate analysis of the widespread socio-economic injustice, but one also promotes an amorphous curriculum development process, which is incapable of dealing with the specific social

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<sup>133</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 2.

<sup>134</sup> Sharp’s analysis of the impact of Bowles’ and Gintis’ perspective might be crucial here. *Vide* Sharp, R. (ed.) (1986) *Capitalist Crises and Schooling. Comparative Studies in the Politics of Education*. Melbourne: MacMillan:

<sup>135</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p.,10.



context in which it belongs. So, as Michael Apple argues, we need to embrace a relational analysis, which “involves seeing social activity – with education as a particular form of activity – as tied to the larger arrangement of institutions which apportion resources so that particular groups and classes have historically been helped while others have been less adequately treated”<sup>136</sup>. That is to say one cannot define “social action, cultural and education events (...) by their obvious qualities [but] by their complex ties and connections to how society is organized and controlled”<sup>137</sup>.

Thus, as he stresses, understanding both the individual and science in terms of schooling implies a critical recognition that, in fact, they are acting within ideological and economic categories, which produce suitable agents for a specific economic cartography, and also agents that play an important function in the reproduction of meanings, that are accepted without much resistance.

By claiming this relational approach, Michael Apple naturally “stumbles” on the notion of hegemony, thus connecting to both Gramsci’s and Williams’ analyses. He reiterates that what gives legitimacy to specific categories and meanings in our society and thereby making ideological forms seem neutral, is indeed not only the economic apparatus by itself, but also the very particular role that specific intellectuals play in the construction and crystallization of those categories and meanings. Thus, it is precisely by defending the dynamic and non-neutral condition of the subject that Michael Apple positions himself. As he argues “critical study of the relationship between ideologies and educational thought and practice, the study of the range of seemingly commonsense assumptions that guided our overtly technically minded field”<sup>138</sup> has been neglected. Actually, we are not able to interpret the educational field ethically, politically, economically, and critically, despite this being a very important task.

Notwithstanding that within the educational field, knowledge has been seen as something neutral and erased of conflicts by a specific dominant (intellectual) tradition, a growing group of curriculumists and sociologists have been working seriously with the issue of school and curriculum knowledge since the 1970s (a group that, in fact, also based their approach on Williams’ thought, not only refuting the reductionism of

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<sup>136</sup> Op. Cit., p.,10.

<sup>137</sup> Op. Cit., p.,10.

<sup>138</sup> Op. Cit., p.,14.

analyses such as that advanced by Bowles and Gintis<sup>139</sup>, since they cannot agree with an approach that tries to analyze liberal education using the political economy as the base by itself, but also challenging the very idea and purpose of liberal education). Similarly, Michael Apple takes a critical view of the status of the field as determined by liberal insights. Defending, a *Huebnerian* approach, Michael Apple stresses the need for the researcher to 'live' in the classrooms, trying to recognize and understand who and why specific students acquire particular kinds of knowledge while others do not. He also is aware that it is crucial to link the process of cultural reproduction to the complex and intricate dynamics of both power and control that reside outside of school(ing).

As Michael Apple mentions (in a Gramscian and Williams way), the dominant liberal educational tradition has elements of good sense. For instance, it is an unquestionable fact that schooling is intimately tied to technical and economic growth, despite marginalizing the vast majority of individuals. The fact is that the liberal lenses persist in maintaining a fallacy in their reading of schooling since they are unable to submit the educational field to a relational analysis, cornering and herding educational issues into an administrative problem while silencing and ignoring economic, ethical, and political dilemmas.

According to Michael Apple, one can understand this liberal approach as a dominant educational tradition by analyzing the very nature of ideology, an intellectual tool that one could also apply to the reductive counter-dominant tradition portrayed by Bowles and Gintis<sup>140</sup>. Heavily influenced by McClure and Fisher's<sup>141</sup> research, Michael Apple defines ideology both by what it is and by what it does: "as a form of false consciousness which distorts one's picture of social reality and serves the interests of a the dominant classes in society; quite scientific rationalizations or justifications of the activities of particular and identifiable groups; broader political programs and social movements; and comprehensive world views, outlooks, or what Berger and Luckmann have called symbolic universes"<sup>142</sup>. He stresses the fact that we should indeed embrace an analysis that deals with the problem of ideology according to three specific

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<sup>139</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America. Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books, *Apud* Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>140</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>141</sup> McLure, H. & Fisher, G. (1969) *Ideology and Opinion Making, General Problems of Analysis*. Bureau of Applied Social Research: Columbia University.

<sup>142</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 20.

characteristics, namely “legitimation (the justification of group action and its social acceptance), power conflict (ideology is linked to conflicts between people seeking or holding power) and style of argumentation (a special rhetoric, and a heightened affect, mark the argumentation that takes place in the realm of ideology)”<sup>143</sup>.

As Michael Apple mentions categories such as legitimation, power conflict, and style of argumentation can teach us great deal, not only over dominant liberal educational traditions, but also over education itself as a hegemonic form, since there is a close connection between how language and science are presented and the “abstract” individual action. In fact, ideology, according to Michael Apple, does not exist in a social vacuum, something that can be displayed like produce on the shelves of a supermarket, which people can select according to convenience. Quite conversely, Michael Apple highlights the need to apprehend its scope and its function, that is to say, one has to be aware that ideology territorializes a set of meanings, deeply supported by its rhetorical artillery aiming at resources and issues of power.

Quite naturally, for Michael Apple, the most accurate way to think of ideology is to pay a close attention to the very concept of hegemony. Conceptualizing this approach to the curriculum field, one can see that, Michael Apple, based on Wexler<sup>144</sup>, argues that a truthful analysis of the notion of hegemony not only allows us to “weave curricular, socio-political, economic, and ethical analyses together in such a way as to show the subtle connections which exist between educational activity and [specific] interests”<sup>145</sup>, but also unfolds “how people can employ frameworks which both assist them in organizing their world and enable them to believe they are neutral participants in the neutral instrumentation of schooling”<sup>146</sup>.

Thus, one can say that for Michael Apple, education, in general, and curriculum, in particular, is a question of power.

By interrogating, not exactly the concept, but the very nature of the concept of ideology, Michael Apple ties ideology with hegemony far better than did Gramsci. From our reading of Gramsci, and despite the fact that he wrote in inhumane and

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<sup>143</sup> Op. Cit., p., 21.

<sup>144</sup> Wexler, *Apud* Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 22.

<sup>145</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 22.

<sup>146</sup> Op. Cit., p., 22.

deplorable conditions while he was in prison, we end up with the idea that he was not concerned with explaining the interface of concepts such as hegemony and ideology<sup>147</sup>. According to Michael Apple, for whom Gramsci's question of hegemony was, in fact, a response to ideology as false consciousness in which people were seen as puppets and dupes, one should understand that Gramsci was not only to contextualize both Gramsci's and his (Michael Apple's) work, but one also should not ignore that Gramsci was challenging a specific Marxist position. As Michael Apple's stresses,

It seems to me that we have two explanations here, and I don't want to choose which one is the more accurate since both of them are quite possible; one of the reasons is the fact that I wrote 30, 40 years after Gramsci and I had the benefit of all the material of the sociology of knowledge, which deals with the relation between ideology and commonsense, ideology and knowledge. Gramsci laid out the terrain over hegemony. However, you have to understand that I had a huge amount of resources that he didn't have; another reason is that the question of ideology was on his mind and he took it for granted, because the party discussed ideology constantly, but it was seen as false consciousness. Gramsci was responding to the economism of the second international. His task was to challenge vulgar economicism and he tried to understand the intricate complexity of commonsense and the very way that it is built and perpetuated, and that means to him the complex structure of ideological forms. He just opened the door and I walked through it with more tools so I was able to go much more farther, and it was easier for me because I am talking about something identifiable, I am talking about school knowledge, ideology about education and not in general. So, it was easier to apply it and make it clear<sup>148</sup>.

Quite coincidentally one can also trace another parallel between Gramsci and Michael Apple. Like Gramsci, Michael Apple was also responding, as was mentioned before, to the reductive Marxist analysis portrayed by Bowles and Gintis, an approach that in fact interprets culture as a sphere with no specificity.

Before closing this section, one should mention that *On Aalyzing Hegemony*, after traveling through the convoluted history of the curriculum field in chapters two and three, pushes us immediately and forcefully to a Gramsci piece that was studied by

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<sup>147</sup> I am in debt to my colleagues and friends and colleagues Tom Pedroni, Luís Gandin and Álvaro Hypolito for the ongoing discussions that we had over this particular issue.

<sup>148</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 36* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

some of Michael Apple's doctoral students in an Independent Reading Group: *Non-National-Popular Characteristics of Italian Literature: ['Contentism' and 'Calligraphism']*. By the 1970s, curriculum theory was in such a cloistered existence, in such apathy and stagnation, bereft of hope and so close and coagulate both in time and space, that Michael Apple's *On Analyzing Hegemony* was more than a pronouncement of new ways for the field, but was, in fact, a gust of fresh wind. Thus if one can say that Michael Apple was and is a *contentist* (to use Gramsci's dichotomy) since he was "the bearer of a new culture, a new content" on the other hand, one can stress, given the arguments that we were able to build concerning the general tensions in the curriculum field and his curricular influences, that, in fact, Michael Apple is also a *calligraphist* since he sees himself standing on the shoulders of a myriad of people. In this role, he calls educators, curriculumists, and scholars to return to a very specific progressive river.

#### 5.4 Towards a Curriculum Concept (or not)

If someone is looking for a definition of curriculum in Michael Apple's *Ideology & Curriculum*<sup>149</sup>, *Official Knowledge*<sup>150</sup> and *Democratic Schools*<sup>151</sup> (let alone in the rest of his extensive work) definitely s/he is reading the wrong author. In fact, this point is fairly crucial and it is important for the reader to understand before we embark on our analysis in this particular section. After examining carefully and extensively more than 30 years worth of Michael Apple's books, articles, reviews, interviews, lectures, and seminars, we might be able to identify a vague definition of curriculum, but even this is left quite open. In a 1973 piece titled *Curriculum Design and Cultural Order*, and despite the criticism towards some "of the limited and often naïve conceptions of curriculum held by most curriculum workers and educators, [a naïveté that] has contributed significantly to the intellectual stagnation of the field itself"<sup>152</sup>, Michael Apple, who was quite worried about "the lack of synoptic vision"<sup>153</sup> in the field, put

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<sup>149</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>150</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>151</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>152</sup> Apple, Michael (1973) *Curriculum Design and Cultural Order*. In N. Shimahara (ed.) *Educational reconstruction*. Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, p., 157- 183, p., 157.

<sup>153</sup> Op. Cit., p., 158.

forward a definition of curriculum as the “social or environmental design...[a] design for a new cultural order”<sup>154</sup>.

Twenty years later, Michael Apple in his *Official Knowledge*<sup>155</sup> uses the same definition and perspective, demonstrating a coherent intellectual position. He notes that he does not “approach the issue of curriculum design as a technical problem to be solved by the application of rationalized models [rather] following a long line of educators from Dewey to Huebner, [he] conceive[s] of curriculum as a complicated and continual process of environmental design”<sup>156</sup>. However as we will see later on, this vague definition had precedence. Michael Apple was basing his “definition”, among many things, on the praxis that came out of one of his graduate courses that we attended, titled *Elementary School Curriculum*.

In setting forth this definition, Michael Apple achieved a sort of ‘triangulation’ unmatched by Rugg, Counts, Bode, Dewey, Huebner, Macdonald, and Gramsci and Williams, among many others. By assuming curriculum to be an environmental construction, (or, in essence, deconstruction) he urgently cited the need to understand curriculum, not as a mere transformative practice – already stressed by Rugg and Counts –, but also as a practice that is implicated in the myriad intricate individual experiences. Furthermore, it is a practice that ties curriculum issues with social concerns –much like Dewey –, and it is a critical path and fruitful arena for the construction of a new social order – what education is, in fact, all about, for Gramsci and Williams. Moreover, this kind of ‘triangulation’, while challenging the (liberal) dominant curriculum tradition, gave clear evidence of Michael Apple’s position in the critical progressive intellectual stream, a position that we have been arguing for, since the beginning of this work. Actually, one can argue that Michael Apple’s curriculum idea takes a *Deweyan* perspective with a bit of a *Huebnerian* seasoning.

Having said this, let us see how Michael Apple plays with the curriculum notion in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>157</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>158</sup>, knowing that we will not find a

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<sup>154</sup> Op. Cit., p., 158.

<sup>155</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>156</sup> Op. Cit., p., 138.

<sup>157</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>158</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

straightforward definition of curriculum. Let me remind the reader here again that since Michael Apple's corpus is so large, the reader cannot expect our analyzes to be fully intertextual. Hence one would stick to the particular pieces that we chose, and on crucial issues, we will point the reader in particular directions within Michael Apple's work.

Before we analyze why Michael Apple's pen and voice is mostly silent with regards to a curriculum definition, we should consider some of his major arguments in the curriculum field. One should note that Michael Apple's curriculum arguments are twofold; that is to say, one can trace in his analyses arguments that tie in with issues of power, and, consequently, arguments that identify the "connivance" between curriculum and a stratified, segregated and unjust society.

Understanding the connection between structures of feeling, to use Williams's<sup>159</sup> terms, and curriculum could help us great deal here. An interesting starting point for this issue could be Paul's story in *Official Knowledge*<sup>160</sup> (a sort of philosophy of praxis, to use Gramsci's lenses, in Michael Apple's political and pedagogical position in his books or articles, like the cheap French fries in *Cultural Politics and Education*<sup>161</sup> and the Joseph story in *Educating the «Right» Way*<sup>162</sup>, and some of the stories shared with the reader in *The Personal and the Political in Critical Educational Studies*<sup>163</sup> and also in classes, conferences and within the Friday Seminar) since it is a real story that challenges the reader to understand the relation between school(ing and) curriculum and power, among other issues. In fact, these kinds of (real) stories, among many other things, uncover the undifferentiated power relation that goes on within educational institutions on a daily basis. Paul's story mirrors the daily life of millions and millions of children throughout the world who are facing the effects of a segregated society. Those savage inequalities, to borrow Kozol's<sup>164</sup> lenses (as Michael Apple did), portrayed by so many "invisible" men and women, to use Ellison's<sup>165</sup> metaphor, are deeply rooted in the very curriculum platform. Paul's story gives clear evidence of how

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<sup>159</sup> Williams, R. (1961) *The Long Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>160</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>161</sup> Apple, Michael (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>162</sup> Apple, Michael (2001) *Educating the 'Right' Way: Markets, Standards, Good and Inequality*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>163</sup> Apple, Michael (1999) The Personal and the Political in Critical Educational Studies. In Michael Apple. *Power Meaning and Identity. Essays in Critical Educational Studies*. New York: Peter Lang, pp., 3-27.

<sup>164</sup> Kozol, J. (1991) *Savage inequalities*. New York: Crown.

<sup>165</sup> Ellison, R. (1952) *The Invisible Man*. New York: Modern Library.

race, class, gender and sexual orientation dynamics constitute the very marrow of curriculum. Notwithstanding its length, it will be wise to give Michael Apple's own words some space with regards Paul's story.

No one saw exactly how it started, but two kids began glaring at each other. Words were exchanged, insults were thrown back and forward. A circle formed. Other kids tried to separate the original two, but soon the fight was on (really only a wrestling match; no punch having been thrown). The Principal had been outside talking to a few teachers who had playground duty that day. He (it could have been a she, but not in this case) separated the now nearly exhausted and crying kids. (He was more than a little angry himself. It had been a tough day so far). He grabbed them by their collars and took them into his office. But not just the original two. He pointed to another child who, like all the others kids in that circle, had excitedly and a little worriedly watched the fight, and yelled at all three to get his office, NOW! This is the second time the parents of one of the children have been called. He was usually one of the watchers, but had tried to intervene to stop this fight. The first time his parents had been called two weeks before, he himself had been involved in a serious scuffle. His parents and teacher did what they thought was the right thing. Fighting doesn't solve anything, they say. He learned the lesson well and tried to stop the others from fighting. Now for the second time, he was in trouble. The first time he had 'lost it' because a larger boy had been taunting him for weeks and it had finally gotten behind what he could take. The larger boy was white the child under discussion here is black. The taunt was usually one word, said over and over again. The word was nigger. Just ignore it; just ignore it. Finally an explosion. He is the one berated, too angry to speak in defense of himself; the other boy having, again, lied convincingly about who 'started it'. Then on the playground the other scuffle ensued (later on we find out its over whose turn it is to bat in a softball game) and the boy you learned his lesson about not fighting is pulled in again. He was seen in the midst of it; he's fought recently; he's black; he's got something to do with it. This is not an apocryphal story. The boy's name is Paul. He is African-American. And he is my son<sup>166</sup>.

One way (quite accurate we trust) to understand how Michael Apple describes (both in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>167</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>168</sup>) the intricate connections between curriculum and power and how this puzzling relation stimulates a lethal

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<sup>166</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York: Routledge, pp., 1-2.

<sup>167</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>168</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.



perpetuation of a segregated and unjust social fabric, is to analyze curriculum (as he did) as a mechanism of power and (subsequently) of social control. This approach opens the door allowing one to understand, in a deep sense, that (a) the history of the curriculum field, as we announced in chapters three and four, has been polluted by both the rhetoric and practice dynamics of social control since its inception despite interesting waves of “resistance” (we prefer to say counter dominant traditions), (b) teaching is a labour process and a gender issue and teachers play a particular role within the curriculum “stew”, (c) (curriculum) knowledge is a selective tradition that perpetuates specific kinds of knowledge while silencing many others, and (consequently) (d) an accurate picture indicates the rightist turn dominates contemporary educational and curriculum policies. In considering this complex issue, we generally agree with Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical position and his vision of schools in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>169</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>170</sup>. We will now take into account how Michael Apple raises and constructs his arguments on curriculum as a sophisticated device promoting unequal power relations and social control.

The *Applean* apology of the (curriculum) field as a mechanism of power and social control is one of the issues, if not the main issue, that emerges in both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>171</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>172</sup>. Before we uncover this explicit line of thought, we feel that it is quite wise to understand the fundamentals of Michael Apple’s interpretation of the field as a social device of power and control. Michael Apple highlights the following fundamentals:

On one hand, I was growing up working class and politically active, going to school where I was being taught extremely boring material that was unrelated to the intense cultural conflicts and rich culture of working class and immigrant life, and the rich context of having a grandfather who was a printer and a father who was a printer. So books were crucial. All of that assemblage of biographical experiences makes me look at things politically and to look at literacy and the struggle politically. I told you this before; a dinner table with my grandmother and grandfather and/or my mother and father was not a good dinner unless we argued and the major source of

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<sup>169</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>170</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>171</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>172</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

argument was politics. So literally, almost from my grandmother and grandfather's knees to my mother's breast, and I mean that almost literally, the world was politicized. You know I come from a civic dissident background: two families, and both dissidents, both leaving a political and cultural exile. The United States was both a source of great experiment, a nation that was in formation, but also a nation that was founded around race, and had real class relations that they struggled against. So you can't understand some of this, I think, unless you understand not just the intellectual path, but also a family that is fully involved politically. My mother was a political activist. Unschooling, self-taught, and you know, very literate but never finishing secondary school. My grandfather was communist, my mother's father. My mother was a communist. I guess I could have learned that from her. Teaching at Paterson was a remarkable experience. It was an extremely poor school system with a curriculum that was so out of touch that it was impossible to teach half the time, and I was treated in a manner that was totally unprofessional. I was in battles with an old bureaucracy constantly, and was the vice president of the teachers union. Ok, so all of that coheres. On the other hand, the tradition in curriculum was technical; it bore no relationship to what I experienced. So reading Tyler, reading Tabba, reading Bobbitt, Charters, Snedden, and then reading Bode was very different; Smith's and Shores "Curriculum development", where they talk about unit planning and social problems, was especially different. So I began to see that there's a political debate in curriculum about knowledge, but that all of the political issues had been washed away. So internal to the curriculum tradition I was reading, I was sensing a debate that spoke more to my experiences that had been marginalized. Think about when I used the metaphor of the river. It's an invisible river; by the time I was in graduate school, it was literally invisible. I came to graduate school in the middle of the discipline-centered revolution, right after Sputnik, and the major curriculum books had behavioural objectives, you know there's Tyler, and the technical tradition. Or King and Brownell and their book on the "Disciplines of Knowledge", and people such Phenix and his "Realms of Meaning". But this literally was not about anything I recognized about the reality of schools and I was going to school in Harlem and working in schools where issues of culture and power were visible everyday. You couldn't get away from it. Black students were saying, "Where's my knowledge?" So in my mind what was missing in curriculum was a focus on the absent presences in our discussion, the silences. Sound familiar? The silences in the curriculum field are what the real curriculum was in the field. The absent presences were power, power and knowledge and the shifting power relations and struggles in knowledge. Thus, I knew that I had to both recapture the tradition of political understanding, which was then hard even though I was at Teachers College, and find a way of talking about it that did it well. There were all kinds of slogans and my task was to undercut the slogans and be serious about the way politics works. So what was the dominant slogan? We had three dominant slogans at the time: Teach the disciplines; efficiency; and relevance, make knowledge relevant to kids. I was opposed to the strict disciplines of knowledge approach. I wanted to undercut the whole curricular tradition. I

was certainly opposed to the efficiency tradition, and the use of relevance as a slogan. Hence my dissertation topic. What do the disciplines look like? How does power relate to science?<sup>173</sup>.

What can one gain from this unambiguous position? Among the many issues Michael Apple addresses, and given his multifaceted intellectual and biographical history, one can perceive Michael Apple's awareness not only over a divide between schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, and the larger community (as we had the opportunity to document previously one of the foremost concerns of Michael Apple's educational doctoral dissertation), but also the role that teachers are called to perform what we might call curriculum social dysfunction, and the way all of this occurs promoting and crystallizing unequal power relations through teachers work and the knowledge that set the [curriculum] warp.

A close reading of this line of thought in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>174</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>175</sup>, besides letting one perceive the complicity of a specific dominant curriculum tradition in perpetuating the field as an engine of power and social control (as we saw in chapters 3, 4 and part of chapter 2), allows one to map out the way Michael Apple put together his curriculum arguments on such issues. Let us consider carefully his criticisms of the curriculum field as a mechanism of power and social control.

Taking *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>176</sup> as a starting point for this fully political line of thought, Michael Apple's "voice" attacks the so-called dominant contemporary curriculum tradition. It explains the reasons why and how that tradition maintains its power even now despite the creation of counter dominant traditions. One should note that in Michael Apple's second edition of the volume, published in 1990, he held to the same arguments against the dominant tradition that were found in the 1979 first edition. Michael Apple uses Gramsci's and Williams's notions of hegemony (in a way, he actually introduces the term to the field) as a way to understand the reasons why a

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<sup>173</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 39*. Recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>174</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>175</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>176</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

specific curriculum tradition can impose its views over many others. Notwithstanding the fact that we are faced with a powerful hegemonic curricular tradition, i.e. the liberal tradition, Michael Apple's analysis of hegemony helps the reader perceive more easily, given the clearness of his arguments and clever writing style, how a specific hegemonic tradition or dominant paradigm, to apply Sousa Santos<sup>177</sup> terminology, is built up and preserves itself, be it liberal, be it conservative, be it progressive, be it rightist, leftist, center right, center left, radical right or radical left.

Recapturing some of the arguments we raised in the previous sections of this chapter, Michael Apple's analyses should be understood also as an integral part of those of a group of educators and scholars who positioned themselves against the liberal educational hegemony, namely Katz<sup>178</sup>, Karier, Violas and Spring<sup>179</sup>, Feinberg<sup>180</sup>, Greer<sup>181</sup>, Karier<sup>182</sup>, not to mention Bowles and Gintis<sup>183</sup>. In his analyses, he challenges the liberal dominant tradition that built up an educational and curriculum framework polluted by the language of "efficiency, technical skills, [and] accountability"<sup>184</sup> and in which issues of justice are increasingly depoliticized. As one can gather from Michael Apple's criticism of the liberal dominant tradition, underneath this paradigm's struggle for a more just and democratic society, it diverts attention from very real social problems, silencing so many crucial issues and marginalizing the fact that we are living in a class-based, racialized and gendered society which safeguards particular minority interests. The liberal dominant tradition is driven by a kind of pragmatic trends that pursue both progress and social melioration, using technology as its (segregated) political enzyme.

However, as we already stressed, Michael Apple's "voice" goes beyond this harsh criticism of the dominant liberal tradition. That is to say that the author also criticizes

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<sup>177</sup> Sousa Santos, B. (2000) *A Critica da Razao Indolente. Contra o Desperdicio da Experiencia*. Porto Afrontamento.

<sup>178</sup> Katz, M (1968) *The Irony of Early School Reform; Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

<sup>179</sup> Karier, C; Violas, P. & Spring, J. (1973) *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: Rand McNally

<sup>180</sup> Feinberg, W. (1975) *Reason and Rhetoric: the Intellectual Foundations of 20th Century Liberal Educational Policy*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>181</sup> Greer, C. (1972) *The Great School Legend: A Revisionist Interpretation of American Public Education*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>182</sup> Karier, C. (1975) *Shaping the American Educational State, 1900 to the Present*. New York: Free Press.

<sup>183</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, S. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>184</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 8.

specific counter dominant traditions such as one that is portrayed by Bowles and Gintis<sup>185</sup>. Interestingly, almost 30 years after their work, and after reconsidering their initial position, Bowles and Gintis returned to their original arguments. As they stress, quite explicitly, “the system’s continuing failure has promoted [our] recent return to the subject”<sup>186</sup> and they challenged some of the major criticisms of their thesis.

Despite the fact that they acknowledged that they had avoided “the question of what school should be, focusing instead on what schools actually are and do”<sup>187</sup> they not only challenge the functionalistic argument against their work, they also maintain that “the main scientific finds of *Schooling in Capitalist America*<sup>188</sup> have remained plausible, and their validity has been strengthened over the past quarter century, namely the correspondence principle [that is to say] the contribution of schooling to later economic success is explained only in part by the cognitive skills learned in school; (...) parental economic status is passed on to children, by means of unequal educational opportunity [and] the evolution of the modern school system in not accounted for by the gradual perfection of a democratic or pedagogical ideal”<sup>189</sup>. Challenged on his position towards Bowles and Gintis’s economic analyses, Michael Apple stresses the following:

[Bowles and Gintis] say that culture doesn’t count. That’s wrong. It’s simply wrong. It’s empirically wrong, it’s historically wrong, it’s naïve, and only people who have never been inside schools could make that claim. Only people who treat students and teachers as puppets and only class reductionists could make that claim. Now I agree with them in that their analysis is closer to the truth now than it was in 1976 where economic pressures on schools are the most intense they’ve been since the Great Depression. We don’t have the disciplines of knowledge even talked about any more. It’s back to basics of the particular time. It’s let’s “reform” schools, let’s sort and select, let’s get the high stakes testing, when we know what will happen. So in

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<sup>185</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, S. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>186</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2002) Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75, pp., 1-18, p., 1.

<sup>187</sup> Op. Cit., p., 18.

<sup>188</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, S. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>189</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2002) Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75, pp., 1-18, p., 1.

some ways they're closer to the truth about the pressures that are on schools but they have a model that is thoroughly mechanistic<sup>190</sup>.

What one can deduce from Michael Apple's scrutiny over Bowles and Gintis's<sup>191</sup> approach is - as we mentioned before - that although schools do function to assure and multiply social asymmetries, training future adults to prepare them for their role within a non-democratic economic framework, and perpetuating economic dynamics that reinforce some of the major social inequalities, the fact is schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, cannot be perceived only as sites of reproduction. The very concept of reproduction is inaccurate and polemical.<sup>192</sup>

However, suddenly, from the narrative present time with regards to the curriculum field, Michael Apple moves backwards, taking the reader with him. That is to say, after setting up his analyses with a particular curricular synchrony, Michael Apple (and the reader) goes back in time to the embryonic stage of the field. He follows his analyses within a specific diachronic dynamic, subtly and astutely leading the reader on a critical journey through the intricate history of the field. From a specific curricular synchronic position the reader is taken comfortably to a diachronic dimension.

This wise incursion into the real historical meaning of the curriculum field that we recognize in *Ideology and Curriculum*, precisely in chapter 4<sup>193</sup> (co-authored with Barry Franklin), serves as an 'analepse' or flashback in which the reader starts his/her reading within a specific present and suddenly, is transported to the past. This historical incursion is more than an attempt to denounce the curriculum field as a device of power and social control. In fact, if Michael Apple's analysis was limited only to this topic, he would have nothing new to add to the field beyond that offered by Dewey, Brameld, Rugg, and Counts. His (political) strategy is to deal with reality, 'to grasp the oxen by

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<sup>190</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape*. 39 Recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>191</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>192</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA.

<sup>193</sup> Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) Curricular History and Social Control. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81. Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) Curricular History and Social Control. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81.

its horns' (as the popular Portugese saying goes), in order to understand the very nature of the social afflictions and wounds. One of the best ways to understand the complex trends of contemporary social events accurately is, without a doubt, not neglecting or marginalizing history.

History plays a vital role in Michael Apple's political strategy. It is a tool that not only creates a space for one to understand the intricate and very real colors, rhythms, and flows of the contemporary social fabric, but it also allows one both to construct and understand his or her political position, (in a word, agency) within that complex fabric of social events. That is to say, dealing with history is, in fact, showing intellectual honesty, strength of mind, and a (political) commitment to deconstruct the present, and in so doing, to help the ongoing multifaceted process of (de)constructing one's identity. As Kristeva highlights, "a fixed identity (...) it's perhaps a fiction, an illusion. (...) Who amongst us has a 'fixed' identity? It's a phantasm [although we] do nevertheless arrive at a certain type of stability"<sup>194</sup>.

Thus, not surprisingly, and quite intentionally (especially for those quite familiar with his material), Michael Apple invites us to pay a close attention to the history of the curriculum field in order to understand curriculum as a political arena and as a mechanism of power and social control. In so doing, he involves himself (and also us) in a trip up to the beginnings of nineteenth century in order to document that the curriculum field, since its embryonic period, is colored by the messy dynamics of social control, and to construct and maintain a specific mosaic of unequal social power relations. Moreover, this attempt to establish a relation between the present and the past is indeed a political commitment that all those pursuing social justice should engage in. As Michael Apple stresses "if we are indeed serious about making our institutions responsive to communities in ways they are not now, the first step is in recognizing the historical connections between groups that have had power and the culture that is preserved and distributed by our schools"<sup>195</sup>.

Therefore, by making this appeal to the utter importance of the historical events of the curriculum field, Michael Apple achieves two major purposes. First, the reader is

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<sup>194</sup> Kristeva, J. (1989) A Question of Subjectivity – An Interview. In P. Rice and P. Waugh (eds.) *Modern Literary Theory. A Reader*. London: Edwards Arnold, pp., 128-134, pp., 129-130.

<sup>195</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp.,81-82

provided with a deep understanding of the very real nature of the field, and why the present status of the field reveals the power of a specific hegemonic tradition along with the existence of particular counter hegemonic traditions. Second, by going back in time, Michael Apple shrewdly and calculatedly, grabs the reader eyes, commencing a critical interpretative voyage, revealing and making obvious that the curriculum field is not innocent in the construction and crystallization of unequal power forms and social control that have been promoting a social fabric, which is increasingly economically and culturally segregated. Thus, in this diachronic critical analysis, Michael Apple suggests to the reader the articulation and the ties of this line of thought (i.e. curriculum as mechanism of power and social control) to a particular set of multifarious dynamics that began to be woven (or machinated) already from the beginning of the field, with the magisterial blessing of particular curriculum pioneers.

Thus, in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>196</sup>, one can identify, quite clearly, specific key issues within the curriculum field, which promote and preserve unequal relations of power and social control, namely, the school-community relation, the *Americanization* dilemma, the goal of cultural homogeneity (leading to segregation), the impact of industrialization, the role of science and technology building new signifiers, the forced attempt to maintain a curricular consensus, the task of Social Studies and Science and their connections with the hidden curriculum, and the emergence of systems management and behavioural objectives. In *Official Knowledge*,<sup>197</sup> - that, in fact, recaptures some of the arguments over teaching already overtly visible in *Teachers and Texts*<sup>198</sup> - one is able to perceive not only the role that teachers are called to play unconsciously or not, which promoted a specific asymmetrical platform of power and social control, but also (and this is quite important) how teaching, a vital device in this whole intricate strategy, would turn out to be gradually more and more controlled and segregated in terms of race, gender and class.

Even though it is not our intention to repeat what the author already said, and embracing in a paraphrases we intend to scrutinize summarily some of his arguments.

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<sup>196</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>197</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>198</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge



As we had the opportunity to document in great length in chapters 3 and 4, and as Michael Apple (in a co-authored piece<sup>199</sup>) also stresses, by the end of nineteenth century, the United States was facing one of its major socio-political challenges. Among many social issues, the influx of immigrants imposed a new role for the schools, in general, and for the curriculum (and curriculumists) in particular. Society witnessed a new call, a new “moral mission”<sup>200</sup> (in essence, a new political, economic, and cultural purpose) for schooling. Ever since its earliest stage, curriculum, as a field of study, assumed a powerful role as a mechanism of social control, participating quite dynamically in what would be coined in the United States History Annals as the complex process of *Americanization*. However, as Michael Apple highlights<sup>201</sup>, underneath the layer of the intentionally truncated political, economic, and cultural process of *Americanization*, the fact is that the curriculum field adopted a social toolkit that would come to *Americanize* (just) the habits and not the status of the immigrants. Undoubtedly the overbearing need to control diversity was a ‘non-negotiable’ imperative.

Relying on the process of schooling to implement this grand social mission inevitably implied not only a (new) specific and close complicity between schools and the community and a quite particular kind of curriculum structure (regrettably, pretty much in fashion in nowadays, in many nations throughout the world, with devastating effects), but also, simultaneously, brought to the social limelight a group of curriculumists such as Elliot, Harris, Hall, Bobbitt, Kilpatrick, Charters, among others. This assembly of “educrats” incontestably contributed to the construction and crystallization of what one can call the dominant curriculum tradition, driven by a conservative ideology (and in many unambiguous ways racist and sexist ideology), even though significant differences separated them, as we had the opportunity to document in chapters 3 and 4.

Quite naturally, this particular group of curricular pioneers embraced a process of curriculum transformation that was adjusted to meet economic and efficiency needs. To be more exact, and borrowing Michael Apple’s terms, they “defined what the relationship should be between curriculum construction and community control and power that continues to influence the contemporary field”<sup>202</sup>. For them, the then new

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<sup>199</sup> Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) Curricular History and Social Control. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81.

<sup>200</sup> Op. Cit, p., 67.

<sup>201</sup> Op. Cit., p., 67.

<sup>202</sup> Op. Cit., p.,69.

curriculum platform needed to address new economic challenges through job analyses, but also needed to promote and develop a large group consciousness which could foster social integration. Without a doubt, one of the goals (if not the foremost goal) of these curricular pioneers was social integration. In fact, the complex issue of immigration (an issue that each Michael Apple reader dare not minimize given his difficult personal background) was seen as a “threat” to the so-called *American* ideal, something that needed to be controlled as soon as possible.

The immigrants were viewed as a “toxic” threat, genetically incapable of governing themselves, and the curriculum platform was seen as a way to restore what society had lost. One important aspect that we should emphasize here is the fact that Michael Apple makes an intentional distinction between immigrants and black people since the latter were brought against their will to the United States in chains and their bodies were sold for labor. The presence of large communities of black people in the U.S. was not a result of a kind of apparition made by some magic wand. Thus, and we agree with Michael Apple on this matter, one would be politically skewed and intellectually dishonest to include the history of black people in the United States under the same umbrella as the history of white people in the United States.

Franklin’s theoretical approach might help us great deal here. In a research aimed to “tracing the development of the idea of social control in the curriculum field”<sup>203</sup>, Franklin identified “the origins of the idea in the two fields that curriculum turned to in its formative days in building its initial stock of knowledge, sociology and psychology”<sup>204</sup>. According to Franklin a towering point for both perspectives was “the influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe in the post-Civil War period”<sup>205</sup>. In fact, and based on the works of Ross, Finney and Snedden, Franklin concludes that the idea of social control,

[r]epresented an instrument to deal with this threat of social heterogeneity to the spirit of community. That is, it represent an instrument to restore like-mindedness or social homogeneity to American society. The idea of social control can be defined in at least two ways. It can be

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<sup>203</sup> Franklin, B. (1974) *The Curriculum Field and the Problem of Social Control, 1918-1938*. Madison: University of Wisconsin - Madison. Doctoral Dissertation, p., 313.

<sup>204</sup> Op. Cit., p., 313.

<sup>205</sup> Op. Cit., p., 315.

defined in an exploitative sense as control to maintain the interests or privileges of one segment of society over and above those of the majority of the population. Or it can be defined constructively as an instrument to bring about social changes that will benefit all segments of society. As conceptualised by [Ross, Finney and Snedden] social control become an instrument for exploitation. That is, it become [...] a mechanism for preserving the privileged position of the native, Protestant, middle class whose origins could be traced to Northern and Western Europe in the face of a population which was becoming more and more diverse<sup>206</sup>.

Thus, if one believes that schooling was, for the curricular pioneers of the field, a “peaceful” solution for social control purposes, then one must consider Michael Apple’s and Barry Franklin’s argument that “when those social scientists and educators actually come to deal with the practicalities of the nature and design of the curriculum an important change in their argument occurred [and] instead of talking about the need for homogeneity in terms of ethnic, class and racial differences, they began to talk about the question in terms of intelligence”.<sup>207</sup> Curricular pioneers saw US society divided between superior and inferior brains and they helped carve this segregation path. Thus, the real issue was not achieving cultural homogeneity through the curriculum, but reaching a specific hegemony of “those [labelled] with high intelligence”<sup>208</sup> (a stigma that one can still find). Therefore, the fundamental nature of the (curriculum) field was (and still is) to prepare and promote those most capable (i.e. the superior brains) and, quite naturally, to endorse gradually an unequal distribution of power and give impetus to social control dynamics<sup>209</sup>. In so doing, the curriculum preserved a specific (putrid cultural) consensus and simultaneously distributed each individual to his or her rightful place in an increasingly shattered industrial society. Unsurprisingly, the industrialization artillery drove the curricular pioneers’ impulses and the field, and soon become a political weapon to enhance and expand a social framework that stigmatised between “the brains and the brainless”, and to be more precise, between leaders and followers<sup>210</sup>. Naturally the social integration goal was wisely cloaked in technical and scientific language which gave credibility to the political strategy of promoting a segregated

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<sup>206</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 316-317.

<sup>207</sup> Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) *Curricular History and Social Control*. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81, p.74.

<sup>208</sup> Op. Cit., p.,75.

<sup>209</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>210</sup> Op. Cit.

society, creating specific cultural trends of particular communities. Thus, what was in essence a cultural issue based on ethnical and class differentiation was wisely, although maliciously, redefined with the support of the neutral scientific language to an issue of intelligence, domesticating both the economic and social content. Strategically and unsurprisingly, as Michael Apple claims, “what was at first an ideology in the form of class intent has now become the definition of the situation in most school curricula”<sup>211</sup>.

This cleverly achieved segregation attempt, not only promoted asymmetrical power relations, it also instilled an apparatuses of new signifiers into the field that assured better performance with regards to social control. More than creating a new curricular linguistic system, the “neutrality” exhibited in the scientific and technical language flooded the field with efficiency and control nuances that gave legitimacy to the new curriculum social function and imposed itself as the curriculum moral guide. As Michael Apple so clearly highlights, be it in the descriptive, explanatory, prescriptive, legitimating or justificatory and hortatory, the rationality of science and technology was an ideal device to create a new set of meanings, a new vision of the “sacred”<sup>212</sup>, recreating a new community idea. In fact, he notes, “[s]cience, progress, efficiency, industrial growth and expansion all within the bounds of social stability become an integral part of the ideological world view of most of the more powerful sectors of the nation was well [and i]ts historical residue still provide the constitutive social rules for the day-to-day classroom life”<sup>213</sup>.

As one can recognize, curriculum has been deeply involved in a specific logic of segregated reproduction, multiplying economic and cultural discrepancies that cross racial, class, gender and sexual orientation dynamics from its earliest stages. That is to say, curriculum underlies hegemonic assumptions that promote discrepancies, legitimating a technical perspective that was natural in a society where technical cultural capital and individual accumulation of economic capital were seen as the only ways forward for society<sup>214</sup>. Along with Ellul, one should argue that the issue at stake is not minimizing of scientific activity, but “of recognizing that in fact scientific activity has

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<sup>211</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 82.

<sup>212</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 79-80.

<sup>213</sup> Op. Cit., p., 80.

<sup>214</sup> Op. Cit.

been superseded by technical activity to such a degree that we can no longer conceive science without its technical outcome”<sup>215</sup>.

One of the lethal damages perpetrated by these technical and scientific logics was the colonization of the curriculum field with a false consensus idea(l) and a disregard for the utter importance of the hidden curriculum or what McClaren felicitously termed as “the pedagogical unsaid”<sup>216</sup>. With regards to the hidden curriculum, Michael Apple highlights the same kinds of arguments we raised before in chapters 3 and 4, noting the works of Henry and Jackson as contributing to a profound understanding of how students really falsify specific behaviour standards in order to obtain specific gains from the dominant system of rewards. In discussing the contributions of both Henry and Jackson, Michael Apple cannot hide his empathy towards Henry’s analyses, given his explicit disagreement with Jackson, scrutinized in chapter 4. As he argues:

I am much more positive towards Jules Henry than I was towards Philip Jackson. Jackson and I, as you know, already had some conflict. I think that Jackson had a great deal of insight. I don’t want to dismiss his insight, but we had already been talking about getting at the classroom and thinking politically for a lot of years and then *Life in Classrooms* comes out and the one good chapter in it, which is the one where he talked about the smells and sights and sounds in the hidden curriculum, was useful for undergraduates but it seemed amateurish, that is he couldn’t connect it to anything. Henry, I think, is more biting and I think has a greater understanding of the schizophrenic culture that we live in. He understood that this society creates schizophrenia<sup>217</sup>.

Nevertheless, as Michael Apple stresses, both Henry’s and Jackson’s analyses, although incisive, “failed to focus on a prevailing characteristic of current schooling that significantly contributes to the maintenance of hegemony [and they almost neglect] how the treatment of conflict can lead to political quiescence and the acceptance by students of a perspective on social and intellectual conflict that acts to maintain the existing

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<sup>215</sup> Ellul, J. (1964) *The Technological Society*. New York: Vintage Books, pp., 9-10.

<sup>216</sup> McLaren, P. (1998) Che: The pedagogy of Che Guevara: Critical pedagogy and globalization thirty years after Che. *Cultural Circles*, 3, pp., 29-103, p.,45.

<sup>217</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 39* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

distribution of power and rationality in a society”<sup>218</sup>. Although we can perceive schools and classrooms as spaces for encouraging debates and contradictions, the truth is that those debates and contradictions occurred within prestablished limits without anyone questioning those very limits. In so doing, the “pedagogical unsaid”, which is quite powerful throughout every single school and classroom of every nation all over the world, promotes the enforcement of the basic rules that underpin the nature of conflict. Actually, Dewey had already voiced worries over what later scholars would call the hidden curriculum. In his *Freedom and Culture* Dewey challenged what he called the pillar of the republic apostles arguing that “the principles and standards which are stated in words and which circulate widely at a given time are usually only formulations of things which men do not so much believe in the intellectual sense of belief as live by unconsciously. Then when men who have lived under different conditions and have formed different life habits put forth different ‘principles’, the latter are rejected as sources of some contagion introduced by foreigners hostiles to our institutions”<sup>219</sup>.

Aiming to demystify, challenge and break up this perverted secular logic, Michael Apple put forward the need to analyse two specific areas, namely Social Studies and Science, portrayed within the curriculum as static trends, which “provide some of the most explicit instances of the hidden curriculum”<sup>220</sup>. By debunking these areas Michael Apple, not only destroyed the dichotomy ‘logic in use vs. reconstructed logic’ (that is to say “what scientists seem actually to do vs. what philosophers of science and other observers say scientists do”<sup>221</sup>), but also built his arguments against specific common sense views that the curriculum canvas sets up as unavoidable.

In support of Michael Apple’s line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), science has produced and supplied a particular rhetoric of justification that covers up the ideological assumptions and intentions that fortify the curriculum thought. In fact, as Michael Apple argues, specific sights of both social studies and sciences have become certified as more credible and more legitimate within the explicit curriculum weave, justifying a vast portion of a particular curriculum research. This intricate curriculum weave, based on a specific technical and scientific

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<sup>218</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 84.

<sup>219</sup> Dewey, J. (1939) *Freedom and Culture*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, p., 47.

<sup>220</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 87.

<sup>221</sup> Op. Cit., pp.,87-88.

bias, promoted a fallacious logic of neutrality, and consensus, and became disproportionately complexified with the advent of the systems management and behavioural objectives. They contribute to Michael Apple's analysis (drawing from Kaplan) of "reconstructed [curricular] logic [that is to say] what observers, philosophers of science and others say that the logic of scientific inquiry looks like"<sup>222</sup>. Dewey's reminder is apt: "it is no longer possible to hold the simple faith of the Enlightenment that assured advance of science will produce free institutions by dispelling ignorance and superstition – the sources of human servitude and the pillars of oppressive government"<sup>223</sup>.

If the latter "has sought to reduce student action to specifiable forms of overt behaviour so that the educator can have certitude of outcome"<sup>224</sup>, the former flowed in the field that assumed that it was interest free, that is as simply a tool that could be applied nearly to any social dilemma. Behavioural objectives chimerical impulse was reducing the students and their actions to particular forms of conduct "so that the educator can have certitude of outcome"<sup>225</sup>. As we had opportunity to see in chapter two, Huebner (and also Michael Apple) had already positioned himself straightforwardly against this kind of political and pedagogical approach, refuting the idea of reducing a human being to that of a learner. As Michael Apple bluntly argues, based on Arendt's thought, the behavioural objectives fever "precludes the creation of personal meaning and effectively weakens the base for political action"<sup>226</sup>. According to Michael Apple, the reconstructed (curricular) logic becomes more complex given "our belief in the inherent neutrality of systems management"<sup>227</sup>. In openly denouncing systems management, he shows that it is not interest free since it aims to maintain a particular logic of control with regards to the process and outcomes, and it is manipulative since its intent is to ignore the irregularities of human behaviour, and unconsciously promote a split between the cognitive and the affective<sup>228</sup>. As Postman quite felicitously stresses, "trying to prepare children for life in the electronic era by programming them for reading skills is like trying to get to Mars in a Chevy Impala.

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<sup>222</sup> Op. Cit., p.,108.

<sup>223</sup> Dewey, J. (1939) *Freedom and Culture*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, p., 131.

<sup>224</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p.,109.

<sup>225</sup> Op. Cit., p.,109.

<sup>226</sup> Arendt, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 109.

<sup>227</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p.,110.

<sup>228</sup> Op. Cit.

Adding behavioural objectives to the curriculum is like adding power steering to the Chevy; you may have a better car, but it just won't go far enough. In this case the Chevy doesn't have the structure to get you where you want to go".<sup>229</sup> As Tillich criticized quite explicitly "man in this society [is] pressed into a scheme of thought, action and daily behavior which reminds more of machine parts than of human beings"<sup>230</sup>. Notwithstanding the fact that Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control) is well documented and conceptually strong (almost untouchable) in the way he dismantles the curriculum field, we think that Henry's analyses will strengthen our analyses of Michael Apple's political and pedagogical posture:

School is an institution for drilling children in cultural orientations. Educationists have attempted to free school from drill, but have failed because they have gotten lost among a multitude of phantasms – always choosing the most obvious enemy to attack. Furthermore, with every enemy destroyed, new ones are installed among the old fortifications –the enduring contradictory maze of culture. Educators think that when they have made arithmetic or spelling into a game; made it unnecessary for children to "sit up straight"; defined the relation between teacher and children as democratic; and introduced plants, fish, and hamsters into schoolrooms, they have settled the problem of drill. They are mistaken<sup>231</sup>.

Given the need to create a curriculum addressing both the economic and labour market requirements, quite unsurprisingly, and as he had the opportunity to analyse elsewhere<sup>232</sup>, those curricular pioneers would come to transform the curriculum into a human artefact strongly implicated in the division of labour<sup>233</sup>. As we can see from Michael Apple's scrutiny, and according to the analyses that we put forward, in chapters 3 and 4, the curriculum field gradually assumed a conservative model, framed by a

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<sup>229</sup> Postman, *Apud*, Entwistle, H. (1977) *Class, Culture and Education*. Cambridge: Methuen, p., 106

<sup>230</sup> Tillich, P. (1969) The Person in a Technical Society. In W. F. O'Neill (ed.) *Selected Educational Heresies. Some Unorthodox Views Concerning the Nature and Purposes of Contemporary Education*. California: Scott, Foresman and Company, pp 136-148, p., 140.

<sup>231</sup> Henry, J. (1969) Golden Rule Days: American Schoolrooms. In . F. O'Neill (ed.) *Selected Educational Heresies. Some Unorthodox Views Concerning the Nature and Purposes of Contemporary Education*. California: Scott, Foresman and Company, pp., 148 - 167, p., 148.

<sup>232</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA..

<sup>233</sup> Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) Curricular History and Social Control. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81, p. 68.



specific middle class group of curricular pioneers deeply in love with industrial and market forms, a model still in fashion. As Bourdieu stresses, “it is probably cultural inertia which still makes us see education in terms of the ideology of the school as a liberating force (*l'école libératrice*) and as means of increasing social mobility, even when the indications tend to be that it is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a *social* gift treated as a *natural* one”<sup>234</sup>. According to Bourdieu, and pretty much in the line of Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical position, if “one takes socially conditioned inequalities with regard to schools and education seriously, one is obliged to conclude that the *formal equity*, which the whole education system is subject to, is in reality unjust and that in any society which claims to have democratic ideals it protects privileges themselves rather than their open transmission”<sup>235</sup>.

In time, the struggle against the immigrants (in essence, an attempt to legitimize a particular cultural domination) would come to uncover a racial and xenophobic line of attack, supported by the curriculum field, developing a segregated society and promoting a platform that disseminated unequal power relations and social control<sup>236</sup>. At all cost, via schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, it was believed society should achieve social conformity<sup>237</sup>. Quite naturally, as we would expect, the solution was to “instill the immigrants with specific values and standards of behavior”<sup>238</sup>. As we can distill from Michael Apple’s study - one that does not collide with the arguments that we raised in chapters 3 and 4 – social integration as a policy was a cover and a powerful political alibi in educational and curricular policies of something close to “cultural genocide”. However, the real issue was not to eradicate diversity but to control it. Drawing from the contributions of Friedenbergh, Goodman, Holt, Dennison, Herndon and Kohl, Green stresses that “the schools could not and did not intend to ‘free’ children from automatism or ignorance so that they could become participant citizens and, at once, pursue success. Rather, the schools were meant to impose certain value systems

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<sup>234</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1976) *The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities*. In R. Dale, G. Esland & M. MacDonald (eds.) *Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. pp., 110-117, p., 110.

<sup>235</sup> Op. Cit., p., 113.

<sup>236</sup> Apple, Michael and Franklin, Barry (1990) *Curricular History and Social Control*. In Michael Apple *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, pp., 61-81, p. 71.

<sup>237</sup> Op. Cit., p. 74.

<sup>238</sup> Op. Cit., p. 73.

and constraints so that the energies would be appropriately channeled to suit the requirements of the society [that is to say] there was something basically at odds (...) between the demands of society and the requirements of human growth”<sup>239</sup>.

As one can see both from Michael Apple’s scrutiny and our analyses in chapters 3 and 4, curriculum has, in fact, an ugly judicial record with regards to the loss of cultural memory it helped perpetrate throughout the history of U.S. society. At the forefront of this revolting record we should point out what we can call the curriculum ‘maharajas’.

In an attempt both to put forward and complexify Michael Apple’s line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), we suggest now that we leave for a moment *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>240</sup> and dive into *Official Knowledge*<sup>241</sup>, introducing a variable quite crucial for this “scientific” strategy of cultural domination: the teachers as a historical category crossed by racial, class, gender and sexual orientation dynamics. In fact, teachers should be seen as a significant political tool in the execution of this grand secular project of curriculum cultural homogeneity. Under this political machinery, as Michael Apple stresses, teachers’ professional life was increasingly controlled. To be more precise, in order to meet the industrial and labor market demands and needs, both curriculum and teachers’ work became more and more controlled. In so doing, a profound redefinition of the curriculum development process and also the very purpose of schooling permeated what counts as a “good” curriculum and teaching<sup>242</sup>.

As Michael Apple argues, one best way to understand the role that teachers play in this complex process is trying to tease apart the intricate connection between teaching and the multifaceted process that involves the control of teachers’ work. As he states, teaching must be seen “as a labor process (...) a complicated labor process quite different from the working in factories”<sup>243</sup>, but one confronted with the same kind of inhuman pressures. As one begins to talk about teaching as a labor process it is important to realize that Michael Apple introduces these kinds of things in transitional works, say *Education and Power* and *Teachers and Texts*. In so doing, he begins to

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<sup>239</sup> Greene, M. (1988) *The Dialectic of Freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press, p., 53.

<sup>240</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>241</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>242</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>243</sup> Op. Cit., p., 115.

make inroads into this particular issue and in fact in *Official Knowledge* he recaptures those arguments and went further on. With this in mind, one can identify quite explicitly with Michael Apple<sup>244</sup>, the degradation of teachers' work, a gradual and increasing standardization and rationalization of teaching labor, driven by the dominant economic tools propelled by the *Taylorism* rationale, which assures low wages and better control. In this way, a split between conception (colonized by the management fleet) vs. execution (left for the teachers), occurs, a political curriculum crack that, as Michael Apple suggests, not only pushed teachers into a weaker pedagogical position but also (and this is quite important) promoted deskilling (that is to say, by gradually losing control of their work, teachers also lost many of the skills that they had developed). We before what Baran and Sweezy called corporate paradigm, a paradigm which, among other issues portrayed that "the control rests in the hands of management [and] management [should be seeing] as a self perpetuated group"<sup>245</sup>.

Along with many other issues, the split between conception and execution explains not only a more centralized system (although rhetorically we witnessed an opposite direction), but also tighter control over curriculum content, teaching and evaluation. In fact, we can see that content, teaching and evaluation control are high jacked from the classroom, opening the space for specific realms of knowledge kingdoms, such as social studies and the sciences, which are much easier standardized in tests. In other words, by limiting teachers to a weak (and insulting) execution position, they are exposed to complex apparatuses of management and control which results in the loss of skills, loss of autonomy and pride and their own ethical sense of being and acting as teachers. As Bowles reminds us "the divorce of the worker from control over production - from control over his [her] own labor is particularly important in understanding the role of schooling in capitalist societies. The resulting social division of labor - between controllers and controlled - is a crucial aspect of the class structure of capitalist societies, and will be seen to be an important barrier to the achievement of social-class equality in schooling"<sup>246</sup>.

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<sup>244</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>245</sup> Baran, P. and Sweezy, P. (1970) *Monopoly Capital*. In R. Romano and M. Leiman (eds) *Views on Capitalism*. California: Glencoe Press, pp., 376-420, pp., 380.

<sup>246</sup> Bowles, S. (1976) *Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Division of labor*. In R. Dale, G. Esland and M. MacDonald (eds.) *Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan paul, pp., 32-41, p., 33.

Michael Apple's analyses of teaching labor control becomes much more complex (yet quite clear) when he invites us to pay close attention to the Elementary School System, in which the vast majority of teachers are women who have fought hard to achieve some power<sup>247</sup>. This particular reality implies that we have a clear understanding over who is teaching. Borrowing Michael Apple's insight, one would be quite wrong to ignore the fact that teaching labor control is deeply influenced by gender dynamics since women occupy two thirds of the class<sup>248</sup>.

In essence, Michael Apple<sup>249</sup> warns us about the lethal complicity between the labor market and industry and schools and about the dangerous strategy to convert schools into a market model. Following a position that we traced in his Educational Doctorate Dissertation - one that we analyzed previously - Michael Apple criticizes the importation of industrial and market models to (be applied compulsively by law to) the school system. Throughout Michael Apple's line of thought (it will wise to flag here, that while in the early parts of Michael Apple's work this line of thought was mainly about 'curriculum as a mechanism of social control, as we will show later on, that very line of thought will become much more complexified, in such a way, that curriculum becomes a set of complex and profoundly instable compromises) that we have scrutinized, one can clearly see the terminal effects of this carelessness. By weakening the kinds of knowledge students should learn, namely, knowledge "that" (factual information), knowledge "how" (skills such as knowing how to use the library) and knowledge "to" (depositional knowledge (...) those norms, values and propensities that guide your future conduct), Michael Apple argues that given the logic of control, and subsequently, the lack of power among teachers, unsurprisingly, knowledge "that" and a rather rudimentary stage of knowledge "how" becomes the "curriculum" (though in a less controversial and dangerous way), relegating the other forms to a majestic silence. Consequently, this well-delineated strategy becomes quite lethal, not only with regards to what Michael Apple felicitously named "the deskilling of teachers"<sup>250</sup>, but also, if we pay a close attention to the dynamics of race, gender and class, one can understand how dangerous a curriculum can become when dominated by factual information, especially if it is dealt in an uncritical way. It will be prudent to pay attention to what Michael

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<sup>247</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>248</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>249</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>250</sup> Op. Cit, p., 116.

Apple has to say with regards to technology as a suitable antidote to unequal gender relations. In fact, Michael Apple analyses highlights that we are before a gender state. Connell's theoretical framework can help us great deal here.

(a) The state is constructed within gender relations as the central institutionalization of gendered power. Conversely, gender dynamics are a major force constructing the state, both in the historical creation of state structures and in contemporary politics (b) As a result of this history the state is a bearer of gender [...] each empirical state has a definable 'gender regime' that is the precipitate of social struggles and is linked to – though not a simple reflection of – the wider gender order of the society. (c) The way the state embodies gender gives it cause and capacity to 'do' gender. As the central institutionalization of power the state has a considerable, though not unlimited, capacity to regulate gender relations in the society as a whole. (d) The state's power to regulate reacts on the categories, which make up the structure being regulated. Thus the state becomes involved in the historical process generating and transforming the basic components of the gender order. (e) Because of its power to regulate and its power to create, the state is a major stake in gender politics; and the exercise of that power is a constant incitement to claim the stake. Thus the state becomes the focus of interest group formation and mobilization in sexual politics. (f) The state is constantly changing; gender relations are historically dynamic; the state's position in gender politics is not fixed. Crises tendencies develop in the gender order which allow new political possibilities<sup>251</sup>.

In fact, and to borrow Connell's theoretical framework, Michael Apple analyzes shows how technology can help educators to participate dynamically in the struggle against gender (but also race and class) segregation, challenging the gendered state, and embrace a non stop process of state reconstruction based on social justice.

A gender analysis of teaching as a labor process becomes more powerful when Michael Apple astutely introduces a new category: technology. In fact, technology as one of the new state of the art curriculum devices gives clear evidence of how gender segregation among teachers crosses social class. One would be quite naïve in refusing to admit that we are the result of a society that was (and still is) build on unintelligent creeds and dogmas that reserve woman to specific roles in our society. According to

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<sup>251</sup> Connell, R. (1994) *The State, Gender and Sexual Politics. Theory and Appraisal*. In H. Lorraine Radtke and H. Stam (eds) *Power/Gender. Social Relations in Theory and Practice*. London: Sage, pp., 136-173, pp., 148-161.

these dogmas, women should behave and act according to a code of beliefs that was conceptualized and developed by a dominant masculine canon. Thus, as one would expect, it is not surprising to see a lack of technology skills within the female sphere, and this lack becomes even more apparent when one has the political and pedagogical courage to cross this particular analyses with race dynamics. That is to say, because the opportunity structure within schooling it is irrefutable that women have less opportunities to become highly skilled than man. This becomes even more graphic between, say, white and black women. So, technology is a devise that contributes to a more just society only rhetorically, and Michael Apple's research on this particular issue makes this point very clear. As Spring argues, "the power of the school cannot be explained simply in terms of human control. One of the dominant themes of schooling in the twentieth century is adjustment to the changing nature of technology"<sup>252</sup>. In fact, as Spring bluntly stresses, a "great deal of educational rhetoric during the early part of the twentieth century was directed toward alienation and the perceived destruction of community based on technology; (in other words) technology becomes a monster enslaving man or the creator of a utopian world village"<sup>253</sup>. As Stoeher, in a requiem for Goodman, highlights, "the argument that what is technically more complicated is really economically or politically simpler [is perhaps] profitable for private companies [and] the hidden social costs are not calculated"<sup>254</sup>.

Summing up, technology is just a new tool (though influential) in perpetuating the segregation between men and women and among women, when one considers race, despite the fact that there are ways to challenge this logic, as Michael Apple shows us. Arguing that technology serves as a means of strengthening unequal gender dynamics, Michael Apple comments:

First of all I am not a neo-ludite<sup>255</sup>. Definitely I am not a neo-ludite. That is I don't think the technology by its very nature needs to be smashed or that it's wrong. I do want to say both its design and its use are related to existing unequal power relations and the great hype that

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<sup>252</sup> Spring, J. (1972) *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*. Boston: Beacon Press, p., 154.

<sup>253</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 154-155.

<sup>254</sup> Stoeher, T. (1994) *Decentralizing Power*. New York: Black Rose Books, p., 90.

<sup>255</sup> When the first mills were built in England and weavers were taken off the land and put in mills, a group of people called the 'ludites' went to smash the machines because they felt that it was the machinery, the technology was destroying their lives.

technology will solve everything needs to be argued against as strongly as possible. Technology is not neutral, neither in its design nor in its use. I focus on the ways in which it works in gender relations. But I'm not saying it's intentional. It's over-determined, but it's over-determined by the fact that most men in a school don't have to go home and take care of kids at the end of the school day, don't have to cook and don't have to clean. Women do, by and large, therefore they're less apt to volunteer to get the additional training. Now as that works out, that means that it's by and large, in these schools, men who are creating material for women. So I'm not saying it's intentional at all, I'm saying that the way in which gender is constructed means that technology and its expertise is then seen in a particular way; it's related to the political economy of time. So it's not the men who are saying this is a plot, and it's not the designers of the technology who are saying this is a plot. It's by and large the way in which these things "naturally" (in quotes) work their way out. Now while my story is partly negative in that chapter, I also show how even in those reproductive places, women teachers or any teacher will decolonize that space and reoccupy it for use for their own purposes because of their own labor process. You know they've got all this immense amount of work to do and they're spending a huge amount of time doing that work, they don't have time to do other things like grading papers. So in many ways the technology solved the problem for them—they're prepackaged units—that was material in their environment<sup>256</sup>.

In fact, and following Fromm's radical approach, technology strikes us with a particular intricate dilemma. That is to say "must we produce sick people in order to have a healthy economy, or can we use our material resources, our inventions, our computers to serve the ends of man?"<sup>257</sup> Based on Brzezinsky's insight, Fromm, highlights that we are living in an dangerous new form of society, a technocratic society in which "the trend would seem to be towards the aggregation of individual support of millions of uncoordinated citizens easily within the reach of magnetic and attractive personalities effectively exploiting the latest communication techniques to manipulate emotions and control reason"<sup>258</sup>. It is exactly because of this lethal danger, that Michael Apple's approach gains an unquestionable remarkable importance, since it allows one to revert the situation, and, to use Fromm terminology, to fight for a humanized technology that would help consubstantiate a more just society. It is precisely this kind

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<sup>256</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 41* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>257</sup> Fromm, E. (1970) *Toward a Humanized Technology*. In. S. Deutsch and J. Howard (eds) *Where is At. Radical Perspectives in Sociology*. New York: Harper and Row, pp., 374-383, pp., 375.

<sup>258</sup> Brzezinski, *Apud* Fromm, E. (1970) *Toward a Humanized Technology*. In. S. Deutsch and J. Howard (eds) *Where is At. Radical Perspectives in Sociology*. New York: Harper and Row, pp., 374-383, pp., 374.

of argument (already visible in *Official Knowledge*) that we could trace in a recent piece from Youl-Kwan Sung and Michael Apple. According to them technology build opportunities to develop counter hegemonic dynamics that can challenge the curriculum dominant tradition. In fact as they highlight, technology can “create partly counter hegemonic spaces for teachers to resist dominant forms of curriculum and teaching and the centralized modes of control that accompany them”<sup>259</sup>. That’s why as Silva<sup>260</sup> warns us, that an accurate understanding of technology as an educational framework can only be achieved through curriculum theory apparatuses.

We’ve been suggesting a kind of cartography of Michael Apple’s political leitmotiv - one that as we will see later on, is not only about power and social control, but about hegemonic compromises. However, this leitmotiv does not stop here. This line of thought is not tied to mere critical explication, although that would be already an outstanding achievement. Michael Apple’s analyses go beyond this, assuming a non *Leninan* approach which explicitly questions “What is to be done?” He carefully and prudently gives us an idea of what he has been doing as a radical critical educator in his classrooms courses. In so doing, Michael Apple challenges some of the criticisms quite commonly levied against the left literature (some of which are reasonable criticisms given the weak analyses offered in much of the literature), and the pedagogical position among the right educational literature that exhibit an unwise arrogance and a reckless superiority in stipulating and prescribing bit by bit what is to be done (Hirsh’s countless artillery of volumes of what our children need to know is one clear example).

Challenging this irresponsible stance, Michael Apple puts forward for the reader of *Official Knowledge*<sup>261</sup> a strategy he used to tackle the logic of unequal power and social control in one of his classroom courses. Actually, this example that he shared in his book is quite similar to the many examples that we had the privilege to experience in his *Elementary School Curriculum* course doctorate course in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, in the fall of 2001. The focus of the *Elementary School Curriculum* course is not on “the usual ways

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<sup>259</sup> Sung, Youl-Kwan and Apple, Michael (2001) Democracy, Technology and Curriculum: Lessons from Korean High School Teachers’ Practice. *Delta. Policy and Practice in Education*, 53, 1,2, pp., 93-108, p., 104.

<sup>260</sup> Silva, B. (1998) *Educação e Comunicação. Uma Análise das Implicações da Utilização do Discurso Audiovisual em Contexto Pedagógico*. Braga: Centro de Estudos em Educação e Psicologia.

<sup>261</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.



technology is used in schools, but its personal, political, and aesthetic possibilities to do different things in schools. The focus is on filmmaking<sup>262</sup>. Although technology has been used in so many classrooms throughout so many nations, not only as a means to “take the student from point A to point B, efficiently and cheaply”<sup>263</sup>, but also as a way to “get prechosen knowledge into the heads of students”<sup>264</sup>, it is possible to subvert this kind of banking curriculum approach. In order to do that, as Michael Apple stresses, one has to “think of film not as a ‘delivery system’ of prechosen messages, but as a form of aesthetic, political and personal *production* (...) as a way that people help produce their own critical forms of visual literacy”<sup>265</sup>. To be more pragmatic, filmmaking, as Michael Apple argues, not only allows each one (teacher and students) to experience “the connections among symbolic, material and human resources in a environment”<sup>266</sup> but also it is clear evidence of “how curricular areas in the elementary school can be integrated together through (...) film projects”<sup>267</sup>. Ramona’s own story (she is now a commercial artist<sup>268</sup>) is but one example of this more accurate way of doing curriculum. One might say this is an *Appleian* approach with a *Deweyan* and *Freirean* scent and a *Hubnerian* seasoning. Actually this political and pedagogical filmmaking strategy portrayed by Michael Apple, a kind of liberation process, has much in common with the Russian formalist film perspective. The formalists (for whom one could not reduce the object of literary study “to factors of the author’s biography, socio-historical determinants or philosophical ideas”<sup>269</sup>) saw film as a powerful theoretical laboratory, an indisputably great opportunity for the development of an art form from the materials of life. Thus, filmmaking should be seen as a process of communication within a culture, a process that “develop[s] its intrinsic potentials”. As Eagle clearly argues, filmmaking occurs “in the intersection of technology and art (...) and it is art that *dictates* the technical devices, it art that, in its onward march, selects them, changes their application and function, and, finally, discards them - not the reverse”<sup>270</sup>. Moreover, film has its own independent semantic laws and “the development of its own

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<sup>262</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>263</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>264</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>265</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>266</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>267</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>268</sup> Op. Cit., p., 144.

<sup>269</sup> Eagle, H. (1981) *Russian Formalist Film Theory*. Michigan: University of Michigan, p., 2.

<sup>270</sup> Op. Cit., p., 83.

semantic laws, and the liberation of these laws from the necessity of naturalistic motivation”<sup>271</sup> constitute a powerful influence on one’s creativity.

In this particular filmmaking experience that Michael Apple shared with us in *Official Knowledge*<sup>272</sup>, one can see the real possibility that students and teachers have to build new paths of knowledge and new perspectives, issues of extreme importance for one’s identity and self esteem. Wolff claims that art (in this particular case, filmmaking) is not a creation of a genius, a transcendent existence, but rather “the complex construction of a number of real, historical factors”<sup>273</sup>. Filmmaking should be understood as pure manifestation of art. As Shklovsky argues,

art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone ‘stony’ [that is to say] the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of reception, because the process of perceptions in an aesthetic end itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experience the artfulness of an object. The object is not important<sup>274</sup>.

Some of Michael Apple’s students take these crucial arguments even further. Like Franklin’s insight helped complexify Michael Apple’s path over curriculum and power, the politics of knowledge – as we mention previously - so too Beyer’s approach might be very helpful, with regards the *Appleian* curriculum aesthetic approach. By scrutinizing the effect of the Aesthetic Educational Program developed by the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory in building possibilities for non-reproductive dynamics, Beyer, stimulated by Michael Apple arguments and based on Williams’ perspectives, suggests that we should not perceive art narrowly “focused on the realization of some overt political or ideological position”<sup>275</sup>. Conversely we need

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<sup>271</sup> Op. Cit., p., 89.

<sup>272</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>273</sup> Wolff, J. (1981) *The Social Production of Art*. New York: New York University Press, p., 2.

<sup>274</sup> Shklovsky, V. (1989) Art as Technique. In P. Rice and P. Waugh (eds.) *Modern Literary Theory. A Reader*. London: Edward Arnold, pp., 17-21, pp., 18-19.

<sup>275</sup> Beyer, L. (1981) *Aesthetics and the Curriculum. Ideological and Cultural Form in School Practice*. Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison, Doctoral Dissertation, p., 378.

“to reconnect aesthetic experience to those material, social forces which provide the ideological grounding for production, whether cultural or other types”<sup>276</sup>. It is in this perspective that Beyer stresses that “art and the aesthetic have the power to make us see our world differently, to view our individual and collective situations from new perspectives and change how we will respond to the events in our lives”<sup>277</sup>. Thus our “perception of aesthetic forms can make a genuine contribution to our knowledge of the world in which we live and work, and can provide us with alternative conceptions of different, divergent worlds. Aesthetic forms, can, in brief, move us to enlightened social action”<sup>278</sup>. In essence Michael Apple’s aesthetic approach allows one to understand the connection between art and politics. As Zinn highlights “art and politics enhance one another. Art is inevitably political. [...] I think for anybody who’s interested in political and social issues, art plays a very special role in enhancing statements that otherwise would be prosaic and dull, in lending passion to something, to facts that need something more than simple statements”<sup>279</sup>. Furthermore art plays a crucial role in a collective agency. As Zinn notes “movements have always been given enormous stimulus and inspirations by art and artists”<sup>280</sup>.

In the above analysis, we see that Michael Apple’s focus line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control) is embraced in both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>281</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>282</sup>. Drawing from this specific line of thought, one can understand quite powerfully, how hegemony is built ‘smoothly’, based on a “dialectic between common senses and conflict”<sup>283</sup> in order to perpetuate specific (unequal) power relations. We are aware that this line would be more complex if one included *Teachers and Texts*<sup>284</sup> in which Michael Apple goes straightforwardly through a conceptual window already designed in *Ideology and Curriculum* (curriculum knowledge should embrace cautious analyses of “the ideology and economics of the

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<sup>276</sup> Op. Cit., p., 378.

<sup>277</sup> Beyer, L. (1983) Aesthetic and Cultural Reproduction. In Michael Apple and Lois Weis (eds) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp., 89-113, p., 106.

<sup>278</sup> Op. Cit., p., 106.

<sup>279</sup> Zinn, H. (1999) *The Future of History*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, p., 47.

<sup>280</sup> Op. Cit., p., 47.

<sup>281</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>282</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>283</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 39* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>284</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.

corporate publishing industry”<sup>285</sup>) and challenges the text[book] policies in a much more powerful way. The same would be true if we included *Education and Power*<sup>286</sup> where the author also enters another conceptual window already prepared in *Ideology and Curriculum* in the last chapter *Beyond Ideological Reproduction* and “think[s] through the complicated structural and cultural conditions surrounding schools, to uncover the cracks in these conditions, and in doing so to find spaces for critical action”<sup>287</sup>. However we do trace in *Official Knowledge*<sup>288</sup> - and it is very important to flag it right here – a reevaluation of one of Michael Apple’s target – the dominant tradition. In a way, and we will recapture this argument later on, it was easy to fight liberalism, it was important to fight liberalism within *Ideology and Curriculum* because it was the dominant tradition. However, in *Official Knowledge* we have a Michael Apple unveiling what has happened. And what happened was the following. Conservative restoration has destroyed the liberal tradition to such an extent the big gains that many people took for granted are under threat, and they have to be defended. As a graphic example, *The Politics of Common-Sense: Why the Right is Winning*, (which constitutes the second Chapter of *Official Knowledge*) shows a clear re-thinking over what was going on, and that issue is central to both *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Official Knowledge*. So there’s a kind of continuity despite the fact that Michael Apple really reevaluates the ‘target’. Also we do trace in *Official Knowledge*<sup>289</sup> an analyses of “cultural politics and the text” that can help one perceive the critical role that text(books) play within the curricular dynamics of power and social control. As Michael Apple put forward, the textbook is one of the major mediators within the intricate complicity between school and knowledge since it defines “whose culture is taught”<sup>290</sup>. After criticizing so many studies related to the text[books] given their lack of concern for the politics of culture, Michael Apple, drawing from Lukes’s analyses, argues that “texts are not simply delivery systems of facts. They are at once the results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles and compromises (...) conceived, designed and authored by real people with real interests [and] they are published within the political

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<sup>285</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 157.

<sup>286</sup> Apple, Michael (1995) *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>287</sup> Op. Cit, p., xiv.

<sup>288</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>289</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>290</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power”<sup>291</sup>. Thus, and based on Williams’ concept of selective tradition – one that we just mentioned – Michael Apple argues straightforwardly that the textbooks “signify, through their content *and* form, particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing that vast universe of possible knowledge, [that is to say they represent] someone’s selection, someone’s vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group’s cultural capital disenfranchises another’s”<sup>292</sup>. Thus, one must be critically aware of the fact that “it is not a ‘society’ that constructs such texts, but specific groups of people”<sup>293</sup>. This analysis is quite powerful and helps one to perceive the connivance between the texts (and their economic and cultural policies) and the dynamics of unequal power relations and social control permeating the curriculum platform – an issue that we will return on the next section.

Despite the fact that we did not include both *Teachers and Texts*<sup>294</sup> and *Education and Power*<sup>295</sup> in our analyses (due to methodological reasons), we think that both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>296</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>297</sup> exhibit an enormous range of arguments that validate curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control as one of Michael Apple’s leitmotifs. Moreover, this *Appleian* leitmotiv actually started dancing in our minds when we first started digging in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>298</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>299</sup>. As we dived in and went deeper and deeper, we could clearly identify a powerful internal ‘coherence’ in this *Appleian* leitmotiv. However, notwithstanding this powerful consistency exhibited by this line of thought, one can pinpoint a few concerns that could be quite puzzling for the reader, some of them probably need to be dealt with by Michael Apple in the near future.

Throughout all of this, as you may notice, Michael Apple in his work has maintained ‘curriculum’ as a very broad word. In order for us to understand this, we must

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<sup>291</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>292</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

<sup>293</sup> Op. Cit., p., 47.

<sup>294</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>295</sup> Apple, Michael (1995) *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>296</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>297</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>298</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>299</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

understand why he has showed such a position. In so doing we will be able to put forward some of our concerns towards his approach.

One of our major concerns is Michael Apple's silence towards a curriculum definition. As we mentioned at the beginning of this section, this (political) position is quite powerful throughout his vast work with some noteworthy exceptions that we mentioned before. Having questioned this silence, it is our aim to understand not only the reason for it, but also what Michael Apple did gain from this silence. In order to apprehend deeply the main reasons that undergird this silence (a political and pedagogical strategy pursued by the author), one has to pay attention to some of the towering influences on his thought and work, most of which we have already given ample analysis in chapter 2.

After cautious and careful (arguably thorough) research of the most significant works of critical curriculum scholars crucial to Michael Apple's thought and work - namely, Dewey, Bode, Rugg, Counts, Soltis, Huebner, MacDonald, among many others - we examined one of Soltis's works, *An Introduction to the Analysis of Educational Concepts*<sup>300</sup>, that helps us understand the root of Michael Apple's political and pedagogical strategy with regards to his silence on a curriculum definition. Actually if we had to point out an explicit mark of Soltis' influences within Michael Apple's intricately developed rationale, without a doubt the spot would be, precisely, the silence that Michael Apple demonstrates with regards to a curriculum definition.

Soltis, an analytical philosopher and Michael Apple's Master Adviser in his master's degree, uses Scheffler's analyses in dealing with the problematic of a definition for educational phenomena. For Soltis, in an attempt at systematization, there are three types of definitions, namely stipulative ("one which is invented or, better, one which is given by its author, who asks that the defined term be consistently taken to carry this stipulated meaning throughout the entire discussion"<sup>301</sup>), descriptive ("such a definition purports to adequately describe what is being defined or the way in which the term is used"<sup>302</sup>) and programmatic ("which tells us overtly or implicitly that this is the way things should be"<sup>303</sup>). However, according to Soltis, the educational dilemma was not a

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<sup>300</sup> Soltis, J. (1968) *An Introduction to the Analysis of Educational Concepts*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

<sup>301</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>302</sup> Op. Cit., p., 8.

<sup>303</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

lack of definition, but precisely the excess of it, and what makes this worse is the naïve fighting over educational definitions. As he highlights, “in fact, it is not a definition of education which is lacking. Part of the problem involved in talking and thinking about education is the variety of definitions and views of education offered to us on all sides”<sup>304</sup>, and “under this barrage of definitions, a very critical assumption is frequently hidden. That is, we assume that there is only ‘a’ definition of education or ‘the’ definition of education”<sup>305</sup>.

With this in mind, Soltis adds that the emphasis should be oriented not exactly to finding satisfying answers but “on provoking thought by examining and questioning some basic educational concepts”<sup>306</sup>. This concern was not marginal also to Dewey. According to Dewey the educational phenomena are abstract and he worried that definitions (let alone, aims and purposes) depended only on peoples’ perspectives<sup>307</sup>. Thus, and as we mentioned previously, one can see that Michael Apple comes from and is shaped by a specific school of thought (in this case analytical philosophy) that it is concerned much more with the detailed logic that stands behind curriculum claims, in order to understand deeply the very nature of the curriculum dilemmas, instead of advancing a definition of the curriculum. Challenged by this concern, Michael Apple openly admits to his surgical silence but argues:

That’s right, it isn’t important. You are quite right. Something is defined by its use. So I’m looking at the social uses of official knowledge and unofficial knowledge. Any definition of curriculum is implicit and what’s implicit in there is curriculum which is defined by what is official. And it’s also the unofficial stuff that’s missing as well as what’s there. So the material on hidden curriculum and nature of conflict is not only the official knowledge and the unofficial knowledge, it’s what’s invisible, what’s not there. My position is also relatively *Deweyian* since I’m talking about the influences of issues outside the school. I wouldn’t want to say that curriculum is everything because in my criticisms of Pinar, when I did criticize him in print, I’m saying, if curriculum is everything it’s nothing, so I want to say it’s the material by and large that’s official, that it’s the influence of popular culture in schools, that it’s the form by which it’s organized and it’s what’s not there as well as what’s there, and it’s the hidden curriculum. It’s

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<sup>304</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>305</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>306</sup> Op. Cit., p., 2.

<sup>307</sup> Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Macmillan.

the norms and values. It is like the *Althusserian* perspective that maintains that everything is ideological. Well that's helpful for me in thinking about the field. But that's all. Remember that part of my training was in analytic philosophy and there is a literature in analytic philosophy that says that the definition of a concept is less important than its use. Basically we have three different kinds of definitions. There's the stipulative, descriptive, and programmatic. So to say Tyler is programmatic doesn't describe anything. Let's say we produce a simple definition such as education is learning. So curriculum is learning. Learning all the things. Such a definition might possibly satisfy all, by the same token it would say very little to anyone. One can learn to be a burglar as well as a lawyer. In essence then, we might be able to produce a simple all-purpose descriptive definition of education or curriculum. It may very well leave us cold though for such a broad and indiscriminate and non-evaluative use of the term is not very useful. This is my training that I first did in graduate school; this was the first thing I studied. So these were the first lectures I was in. It says don't start out by trying to find a broad and general definition. It's not a useful act. Instead look at how the word is used. Who is using it? For what purposes? What are the interests involved, the hidden interests, in that definition? So if someone says the curriculum is the subject of knowledge, my task is to say, what's smuggled into that definition? So part of it is not simply that I don't happen to stipulate that curriculum is all the learning, all the formal learning experiences organized by the school. Or that curriculum is the subject matter that the school teaches, or that curriculum is all the learning experiences, formal and informal, inside and outside the school. My position is it's not a useful act. It leaves one out in the cold, to quote Mr. Soltis, so there is a method that comes from a tradition within analytical philosophy that I'm drawing upon<sup>308</sup>.

As one can gather from this explanation, Michael Apple comes from a long history of analytic philosophy where definitions tend to be meaningless. It is the assumptions behind them that they worry about. Thus, unsurprisingly according to Michael Apple, a curriculum definition is not the question. The real question is (and we are here complexifying Michael Apple's argument): for and through whom does curriculum work? With this in mind, and anchored within a specific tradition (one that we already identified), he refuses to draw a definition and shows how other scholars use their definitions and promotes analyses that uncover the interests behind those definitions. That is to say, since defining curriculum is not useful and a bad strategy analytically, Michael Apple's goal was to understand the complexities behind the curriculum and

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<sup>308</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 38* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.



repolitize the field along the line of Dewey, Bode Ruggs, Counts, Huebner, and Macdonald. And that he achieved.

A second possible concern is related with another of Michael Apple's silences. Since he showed what he is really doing in one of his Doctoral Courses (rejecting a *Leninan* perspective), it may be puzzling for the reader why he did not lay out a curriculum model challenging, for instance, the strategy portrayed by Hirsh. In order to understand this silence, we tried to uncover the fundamental reasons over such an absence. As Michael Apple highlights,

I understand what you're saying and obviously I find that it's a serious issue. I might do that, later. I've actually thought about that but I haven't done it and I'm not concerned. You've been in my curriculum class, you know that the theory is coherent. It doesn't always work, but it's coherent. That is, as a pedagogue I sometimes make the wrong choices like everybody else, but people who see me only as someone who writes don't understand, I think, that there is a vision of curriculum that I have that's quite elaborate and able to be said and demonstrated or that I practice or I do it. I don't mean this to be defensive, but I am not only a writer, I am a teacher. I don't want there to be an Apple model. As a pedagogue, I actually reject the idea that there is a model that we can just take from one place and put it on another place. I may be wrong but I just feel uncomfortable with that, for the same reasons that I reject Tyler. What if I said to people here's my model. How could I criticize Tyler for giving us the model that is universal and then try and do it myself? Some day I may write that book, *Curriculum as a Design Process* or *Curriculum as Environmental Design*. That would be an interesting text. But not a model. Again it is a political pedagogical position<sup>309</sup>.

Although we do understand and sympathize with Michael Apple's political and pedagogical position, challenging the step-by-step *Tyleran* approach, and consequently rejecting the idea of what we might call an *Appleian* model, we wish that the author would address this concern in the near future. Given the incredible pressures that teachers are facing, paced by the neo-liberal policies, one should admit that it is much easier (if not pragmatically wiser) for a teacher (especially for neophytes) to read roughly 127 pages from Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* or E.D.

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<sup>309</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 40* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

Hirsh's *What your Children Need to Know* grade by grade, than reading Michael Apple's heavy weight artillery. Michael Apple's work requires time and space to digest and explicitly does not provide a response to Holt's famous question *What should I do on Monday* (one of the crucial teacher concerns). As Callahan<sup>310</sup> reminds us, curriculum efficiency measures transformed the lives of so many teachers faced with a terrible clerical nightmare.

Few people have had the opportunity (and we could consider ourselves lucky or fortunate since we had the opportunity to be part of Michael Apple's 662 *Elementary School Curriculum* course) to witness an alternative curriculum model, and to see how it really works. However, as we just mention, we are just a few. Challenged by this concern Michael Apple reminds us over his background and straightforwardly says the following:

Remember I said Huebner taught a seminar. We went into schools and we had to come back and not use words like curriculum, learning, teaching. We had to talk about it aesthetically. Well, that's what you call the phenomenological 'epoche' and that's part of my background too. The first curriculum theory conference was held in 1947. That's interesting, there I was in the mid-60s, after almost 20 years of serious curriculum theory, and everything was about "What do I do on Monday?" It was all programmatic and we had lost the capacity for social and intellectual and political criticism. So how do we rebuild that crucial tradition? We wanted to suspend (temporarily) the question of "What do I do on Monday?" Not to say it's not important, but before we can answer that, we must ask what we are doing now. We had to look at the hidden functions of curriculum school teaching. So in that context there was also a fight internally within the field over establishing and re-establishing the critical tradition and the press constantly is on answering the question "What do I do on Monday?" which is not an unimportant question, but it's a vacuous question if that's all you ask. So remember the river that I was swimming in was going in one direction, it was leading us to forget the tradition of social criticism. My task was to pull that river back. So in terms of the "What do I do on Monday?" issue, I was consciously not going to respond to that other than in general terms because the intellectual and social context of the times required certain kinds of arguments. Now fast-forward to the mid-90s. The critical tradition is already well established. I luckily am one of the founding members; I'm not alone. That work has partly been done, but, in so doing, the curriculum theory tradition has become so ethereal, so arrogant and disconnected from daily life,

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<sup>310</sup> Callahan, R. (1970) Education and the Cult of Efficiency. In C. Monson, Jr. (ed.) *Education for What? Readings in the Ends and Means of Education*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, pp., 156-170.

that my task is to write in a different way because the context has changed. So while I was always interested in “What do I do on Monday?” and even when I didn’t write about it, I was in schools a lot doing and showing how you can do aesthetics and curriculum, how you can organize knowledge and curriculum around daily life experiences. Thus, I was always trying to answer the question of “What do I do on Monday?”, but I wasn’t writing about it. However, now the idea of “What do I do on Monday?” becomes more compelling because the context is now changed. Now that is exactly what some of my work has had to be about. I respond to context<sup>311</sup>.

His work *Democratic Schools*<sup>312</sup>, co-authored, and co-edit with James Beane, tries to address this concern and we will deal with it later on.

This concern that we examined takes us to a third one. We think that although Michael Apple’s scrutiny over Bowles and Gintis’s approach is quite accurate (as we already mentioned) and notwithstanding their asymmetrical perspectives, we fear that from time to time Michael Apples’ analyses suffer from specific holes quite identical to those that we can identify in Bowles and Gintis’s approach. As we mentioned before, Bowles and Gintis agree that they “avoid, for the most part, the question of what schools should be, focusing instead on what schools actually are and do”<sup>313</sup>, but also they “neglected to devote much attention to how economic systems other than capitalism may better facilitate the achievement of the enlightened objectives of schooling”<sup>314</sup>. Reading Michael Apple’s *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>315</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>316</sup>, and examining curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control as one of his line’s of thought, we can identify the same kind silences. Unquestionably, and despite an absence of an analyses over schooling within social systems other than capitalist ones, an issue that we intend to deal later on, Michael Apple’s concern is more over what the curriculum really is and why it ends up with a particularly harmful

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<sup>311</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 38* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>312</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James. (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>313</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2002) Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75, pp., 1-18, p., 15.

<sup>314</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

<sup>315</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>316</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

framework, than with what the curriculum should be. Confronted by this absence in his work, Michael Apple said the following:

I do want to talk about what schools should do, but they're economists, they're not interested. They assume a functionalist understanding of schools, which is exactly what I argue against in *Official Knowledge*. I argue that schools are always compromised, curriculum is compromised, and that there are elements of good sense as well as bad sense, and they don't recognize that. The language of contradiction doesn't cover that; the language of struggle and compromise and hegemonic blocks does cover that a hell of a lot better. Schools are part of conversion strategies, and you have to talk about them as having relative autonomy and different class fractions engage in different kinds of conversions and there's a difference between those classes in dominance in the State, and those classes in dominance in the economy, and those classes in dominance in school. So at the broadest level, we agree that the problem is to say what the schools do, but that's about where the agreement ends I think"<sup>317</sup>.

In fact, Michael Apple is deeply sensitive to this particular concern. As he explicitly and humbly stresses in *Official Knowledge*, one should be cautious with some (leftist) theoretical apparatuses that were build in such a hermetic way that one is unable to relate them to daily life:

I think many of us created troubling results (...) much of the discourse that we participate in was truly negative criticism. Negative work is important of course as a form of "bearing witness" to oppression, but often it did not give people a sense of possibility (and) it was done at such a theorized level that it was unable to connect to real life experiences of people – and that is a tragedy. (W)e have been too concerned with our elegant abstractions and have forgotten about the connections we have to make with real life. For too many of us, our only political work is writing for other theorists<sup>318</sup>.

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<sup>317</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 39* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>318</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, pp., 166-167.

Michael Apple stresses that although “such writing is critical”<sup>319</sup>, the fact is that in the process “we have often given the political and educational field over to the Right and let them define the public agenda”<sup>320</sup>, an issue that we will turn to later on. As Chomsky clearly highlights “professionals certainly have the responsibility of not making people believe that they have some special knowledge that others can’t attain without special means or special college education”<sup>321</sup>.

It seems to us both from Bowles and Gintis’s<sup>322</sup> and Michael Apple’s analyses<sup>323</sup> that race, class, gender, sexual orientation and economic, cultural and religious dynamics are at the top of any social system be it capitalist, socialist, or Marxist. To be more precise, one is left with a powerful and frightening sense that those dynamics portray a life on their own, regardless of the social system. They operate above the political umbrella although that umbrella (be it capitalist, be it socialist) really instigates, promotes and sediments those dynamics within an unequal societal platform, through social spheres such as the educational, health, judiciary, and military systems. It is like oil on water. Chemically they will not mix, but coexist with one another autonomously, even though it leads to polluted promiscuity.

A fourth concern is related to Michael Apple’s passionate and perhaps somehow uncritical vision of teachers as a class. Of course, it is true that, in between *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>324</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>325</sup>, precisely in both *Education and Power*<sup>326</sup> and *Teachers and Texts*<sup>327</sup>, the author accurately analyzes teaching as a variable crossed by race, class, gender and sexual orientation dynamics. In these works Michael Apple argues that teachers have a contradictory class location as a group so that they are simultaneously within the middle class position and hence are interpolated by the class

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<sup>319</sup> Op. Cit., p., 167.

<sup>320</sup> Op. Cit., p., 167.

<sup>321</sup> Chomsky, N. (2000) Language and its Design. The Delhi Lecture. In N. Mukherji, B. Patnaik and R. Agnihotri (eds) *The Architecture of Language*. Oxford: University Press, pp., 1-38, p., 2.

<sup>322</sup> Bowles, S. & Gintis, S. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books; Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2002) Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75, pp., 1-18.

<sup>323</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge; Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>324</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>325</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>326</sup> Apple, Michael (1995) *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>327</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.

ideology of the middle class and are being proletarianized, (which means that teachers will have contradictory consciousnesses). But even so, in examining Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control) that crosses both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>328</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>329</sup>, we have with the feeling that for the author, all teachers are progressive, all of them are competent, none is capable of assuming reactionary and conservative behaviors, and they are always ready and worried about the students. It is this sense of monolithism that we clearly detect in both books, a sense that makes us think carefully over this issue since we know that teachers comprise a group of individuals who are quite divergent with regards to political, economic, cultural, ideological and religious views. Part of the problem lays in the fact that we are analyzing just two of Michael Apple's numerous works. There is a danger in embracing a limited representation of an author's work in this kind of analysis. In fact, Michael Apple does not discuss contradictory class locations in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>330</sup> or in *Official Knowledge*<sup>331</sup> but he does so in *Education and Power*<sup>332</sup>, which for methodological reasons is not part of our dissertation. Nevertheless, one cannot help but notice that teacher always escape the criticism of Michael Apple's fierce pen.

However, considering both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>333</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>334</sup>, one should say that this monolithical designation of teachers could be perceived as a political strategy to block the class against the many damages perpetrated by the (rightist) educational and curriculum policies. As the author stresses,

I think that there is a tendency in the text for that to be true. I don't see teachers as always a totally progressive front at all. I had more debates internally in the teachers union when I was president than between the teachers union and the administration because many teachers are not progressive, but I do think it's a correct criticism. That is, because teachers are under attack,

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<sup>328</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>329</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>330</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>331</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>332</sup> Apple, Michael (1995) *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>333</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>334</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York: Routledge.

there is a tendency for me to lump them together, to protect them, and that's the labor part of me coming out. But that ignores the fact that some teachers actually may be strongly supportive of rightist policies, so I agree with that criticism. I think that's accurate<sup>335</sup>.

As one can overtly perceive, Michael Apple assumes clearly, a strategic position. However this does not mean that he is not conscious of his dangerous and delicate position. As an example, one should not minimize that in *Educating the Right Way* for instance, Michael Apple warns us over this complex issue. However, while this shows, in a way, a form of auto criticism, it is also undeniable that, it is quite sporadic and not in enough depth. Especially at a time when the grasp of the neo-liberal educational and curriculum policies leads to more and more harm to teachers, Michael Apple chose this approach in order to protect a class that he admits is profoundly heterogenic. While this strategy is quite understandable, still it points to a concern that could have been avoided in the second editions of both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>336</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>337</sup>. Beyond the concern for his monolithical vision of teachers, one can trace another silence: teacher training. Given Michael Apple's rich and powerful experience in becoming a teacher (that, actually, has a lot to do with his political and pedagogical identity as a pedagogue), we think that, to use Sousa Santos's terminology<sup>338</sup>, making this silence speak (and not in a descriptive way as in *Official Knowledge*<sup>339</sup>) will carries political pedagogical value, not only for Michael Apple's approach, but also for Michael Apple's reader, especially now when new Right policies are prevailing. One would be naïve (and without doubt Michael Apple would agree with us on this particular matter) not to admit that teacher training is one of the most (if not the most) critical cornerstones of any curriculum platform.

A final concern is linked to the author's position towards a classless society. That is to say, although he is quite clear and explicit in his fight for a more just society,

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<sup>335</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape n. 40*. Recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>336</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>337</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>338</sup> Sousa Santos, B. (2000) *A Crítica da Razão Indolente. Contra o Desperdício da Experiência*. Porto. Afrontamento.

<sup>339</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

denouncing quite straightforwardly a society segregated by racial, class, gender and sexual orientation dynamics (a segregation in which the curriculum platform is not innocent at all), it is not easy to perceive if Michael Apple (as a neo-*Gramscian* and a *Williamsean*) defends a just society based on a neo-Marxist approach, in which social segregation is dissolved through a recognition of the nature of the persons as human beings and unique individuals. It is possible that his defense of a just society relies upon the development of a nonstop process of social homogeneity; based on both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>340</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>341</sup>, whereas is quite limp that Michael Apple is smashing the perverted way in which social homogeneity, as a political project did occur, it is not quite clear if he is against any “model” of social homogeneity tough. To be more precise, how can society dissolve or attenuate class, gender, race, economic, and cultural segregation through the curriculum platform, through the curriculum platform? Is it by a process of proletarianization, or by a process of social homogeneity, or even by a process of class, gender and racial consciousness in which each individual participates dynamically in the process of power control?

To be even more exact, if the current political pattern that dominates the curriculum field is a direct result of so many struggles and compromises that started at the end of the nineteenth century, how can one reverse the situation? How can we build a new cultural order? From inside? From outside? From both simultaneously? Confronted with this complex concern, Michael Apple shows no solution, only a political strategy:

That's a hard question. I've spent my life trying to answer that question. The schools have relative autonomy. That whole debate about relative autonomy is going to attempt to answer this question, that is, conceptually how do we think about the relationship between the outside and the inside? That's one of the reasons that I spent so much time in *Official Knowledge* on the compromises. Let's look at how this was done in the past. Let's take an empirical historical example about oppressed groups trying to bring their knowledge into schools. The test case of that is textbook adoption policies. They are the result of pressure from populist groups from below, people who say that the “God Mamom” cannot come into my school. Northern capitalists will destroy southern farmers. So they want northern knowledge out because it's northern capital, and it will destroy them. Traditionally it will come in and destroy the land and

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<sup>340</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>341</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge..



destroy the small farmers. It's probably true. But they want to defend their idea of cultural dominance against black sharecroppers who have now been freed and have some land that they want back. The Civil War says 40 acres and a mule to every black farmer. Where do you think the land is coming from? White owners, and they've never followed through on giving it up. Thus, for many African Americans the fiction was that you got a mule and land. But for all too many Black people you never did get the land. You were forced back into slavery but we called it sharecropping. So, you know, we'll let you live on the land, you get a little bit of the crop, but you're going to work for me and you don't own it, but you're not a slave. You're going to starve to death; your conditions are sometimes worse than slavery. At least we fed you then. This was an all too common situation. Here we have an instance where there are dominant groups, and the subordinate groups are struggling, making compromises, and the result is the activist state with some progressive tendencies getting instituted but, by and large, it's still under the leadership of dominant groups, and not just previous dominant groups, but new dominant groups as well such as the emerging new middle class within the south. Here we have these groups of folks from below, trying to struggle over getting different knowledge and a different sense of control in, and they're partly successful. This test case reminds us that in order to understand these kinds of situation and their curricular politics, we have to link inside and outside together, understand the relative autonomy of the school and struggle for the knowledge, know what's happening in agricultural economics at the time, uncover newly emergent classes outside of school that are taking charge of the State, be clear about regional politics, about the north and the emerging industrial giant from the north coming into the south and trying to colonize that space. So how do we answer the question? Here are oppressed groups. How do they get knowledge, you know, can they win? Well, that raises some questions. These things have to change outside for every step that goes on inside"<sup>342</sup>.

Before this political strategy, one must say that we take an approach diametrically different from that exhibited by Bowles and Gintis. One can detect mild sympathy from Michael Apple towards Bowles and Gintis as he mentioned, although he criticized the hidden curriculum as insufficient for understanding schooling and noted it was unwise to study schooling by comparing children to class trajectories. He argues that Bowles and Gintis's perspective "was at least an attempt at politicizing a tradition and destabilizing the more conservative and reformist liberal tradition"<sup>343</sup>. However, according to Michael Apple, as one can trace in *Official Knowledge*<sup>344</sup>, the social fabric

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<sup>342</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape n. 39*. Recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>343</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 162.

<sup>344</sup> Op. Cit.

is an intricate plethora of economic, political and cultural struggles. It is an overdetermined dynamic. These struggle go on simultaneously, are interconnected, and it is thoughtless to try to separate them. Within this complex plethora, some gains are made but they remain limited and they sow the seeds for further conflicts in which other gains are made. Thus, as Michael Apple<sup>345</sup> argues, one can perceive that to reverse the curriculum hegemonic platform, one needs to understand as accurately as possible the relationship, not only between the State and the economy, and between the State and education, but also the struggles in the State and how they are related to struggles in schools, what the social groups are verbalizing, and what the partial victories and the partial losses are. As he keeps arguing “there is never a total loss; there are always partial victories because dominant groups are forced to compromise”<sup>346</sup>.

The difficulty around a truncated issue as such takes one to Sousa Santos’s approach. According to Sousa Santos,<sup>347</sup> one has to reformulate an approach that is as accurate as possible in such a complicated issue. That is to say, the real issue is how to embark on multicultural dialogue when specific cultures have been reduced to silence and their forms of seeing and understanding the world become unpronounceable? In other words, as Sousa Santos stresses, how can we make (the) silence speak without necessary speaking through (and based on) the hegemonic morpho-syntactic and semantic system that forces them to speak? As he argues, the silences, needs, and the unpronounceable aspirations could be dealt with only by what he called the “sociology of absences” since these silences are actually a construction that affirms itself as a block symptom. We perceive that frontline radical multicultural scholars are neglecting the linguistic issue, a powerful force that helps sustain the current neo-liberal hegemony.

We have highlighted some concerns that a Michael Apple reader might face in trying to examine his line of thought that we drew from both *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>348</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>349</sup> (curriculum as an instrument of power and social control). Notwithstanding our concerns, and before we proceed with complexifying the

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<sup>345</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 39* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>346</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>347</sup> Sousa Santos, B. (2000) *A Crítica da Razão Indolente. Contra o Desperdício da Experiência*. Porto. Afrontamento.

<sup>348</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>349</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

arguments that underpin this *Appleian* line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), dealing with the way Michael Apple build up his arguments over legitimate curriculum knowledge, one can clearly identify, by the way Michael Apple takes the curriculum field to task and strengthens his argumentation, a radical critical position nearly identical to one that is portrayed by Foucault. According to Foucault, a “critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought, the practices that we accept rest”<sup>350</sup>. Moreover, Foucault argues that criticism “is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such, [that is to say] practicing criticism...mak[es] facile gestures difficult”<sup>351</sup>.

In fact, for Foucault<sup>352</sup> critique is an independent theoretical tool that breathes regardless of the appreciation for and agreement among hegemonic platforms, having its own credibility and validity and engaging with, to borrow Michael Apple’s terms, non-official - non legitimate knowledges. Actually, one can trace in this position a kind of radicalism, since one can trace an appeal to the mutiny and rebellion of these non-official knowledges through which criticism not only is constructed, but accomplishes its social mission. Actually the more we dig and dive into the *Appleian* line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), the more we perceive an echo from Michael Apple’s pen (and voice), to use Foucault terms, battling obstinately and adamantly “for the [real] truth”<sup>353</sup>. Does this mean that Michael Apple has *Foucaultian* insights? Does this mean that both Foucault and Michael Apple are touching particular issues from an identical perspective? Why not? We will return to this delicate and provocative issue later on. For the moment, we will continue scrutinizing Michael Apple’s leitmotiv (or line of thought), trying to understand how knowledge, poured into the curriculum platform, participates actively in consolidating the dynamics of unequal power relations and social control.

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<sup>350</sup> Foucault, M. (1988) Practising Criticism. In L. Krizman (ed.) *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*. New: York: Routledge, pp., 152-158, p., 154.

<sup>351</sup> Op. Cit., p., 154.

<sup>352</sup> Foucault, M. (1980) Two Lectures. In C. Gordon (ed.) *Power-Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvest Press, pp., 78-108.

<sup>353</sup> Foucault, M. (1980) Truth and Power. In C. Gordon (ed.) *Power-Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Brighton: Harvest Press, pp., 109-133, p., 132.

However, before we turn to the next section, we must comment that some of the arguments that we have scrutinized in Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a power and social control device) were also raised in our analyses on the general tensions within the curriculum field in chapters 3 and 4, and partly in Chapter 2. Part of our research attempts to take a step forward beyond Kliebard's<sup>354</sup> approach, in order to call the reader's attention to the importance of specific phenomena within the history of the curriculum field, namely, the role of the so called romantic critics, the intricate and yet powerful dynamic of the Civil Rights Movement, and the vital political and cultural performance of the Highlander Folk School, while continuing to demystify the role of some pioneers in the field, such as Dewey and Bobbitt. One should say that, like Michael Apple, we also feel the need to rely on the history of the curriculum field in order to have an accurate understanding of Michael Apple's work and thought within the field, a strategy that without a doubt continues to teach us a great deal.

### **5.5 Regulating *Compromised Knowledge***

On a gray, cold, snowy morning, rather normal for the usual severe winters of Madison, we were returning to our Carrel 521 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the UW - Madison Memorial Library to continue working on our dissertation research, when we stumbled upon a political event that would be pivotal for the arguments that we intend to raise in this and in the following section. We happened upon a political rally organized by the *Madison Area Peace Coalition*<sup>355</sup>, which was protesting the imminent war on Iraq. The police presence was a clear indicator both of the dimension of the rally and of the political effect it would have. For a moment, the present felt as though it had been hijacked from our past. Through the shouting voices, which as late Machel used to say were 'words of order', ("What do we want? Peace. When do we want it? Now."), We let ourselves merge with the rally, and gradually we began to notice the content of the posters carried by the demonstrators, namely "No Blood for Oil"; "No War in My Name"; "What is 'Good' War for"; "War is NOT the Answer"; "US Needs a Leader.

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<sup>354</sup> Kliebard, H. (1995) *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>355</sup> "Madison Area Peace Coalition". According to this Coalition their "mission is to organize a broad-based movement to inform public opinion and promote U.S. government policies that truly further peace, justice, and freedom in the world." It is a coalition based on three core principles: (a) Peace and justice, not war and revenge; (b) Unity and respect for diversity, putting an end to scapegoating and harassment; (c) Protection of human rights and civil liberties at home and abroad. [www.madpeace.org](http://www.madpeace.org)

NOT a Bully”; “Labor SAYS NO War”; “Blair is Bush’s Lapdog”; “Kids 4 Peace”; “Frodo Failed. Bush was the Ring”; “Keep Hope Alive”; “ Hope is the ‘thing’ with Teachers”; “Start seeing Iraqi Children”; “Taxes for SCHOOLS, not for War”; “ Less B-52’s, More Schools”; “Poets Against the War”; “Bring our Troops Home”; “NOT in OUR Name”; “Who Would JESUS Bomb?”; “Read Between the Pipelines”; “Work with the UN”; “ Don’t Do it George”; “Serve Your Country. RESIST the War”; “Bombs Make Orphans”; “We Won’t Be Weapons of Mass Destruction”; “Queers Make Love, NOT War”; “Create. Don’t Destroy”; “Peace is a Family Value”; and “Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld. The Axis of Evil”.

Although some of these messages are more insightful than others, we perceived that they represented many different societal spheres, but also (and this is profoundly crucial) the message ‘sweating’ from their posters (even those that one could consider quite accurate) were diametrically different from those messages that constantly bombarded us from the mainstream U.S. media, namely “New York Times”, “Washington Post”, “USA Today”, “Chicago Tribune”, “CNN”, “ABC”, “CBS”, “MSNBC”, “FOX 47”, and “WKOWTV”. For one who intends to understand Michael Apple’s arguments over particular (yet quite explicit) dynamics of how curriculum knowledge is both a regulated and compromised ‘human artifact’ (as we mention elsewhere<sup>356</sup>) in order to perpetuate and secure an unequal power relation and social control within the social fabric, a better picture was impossible. To recapture the accurate Carspecken<sup>357</sup> terminology that we used in Chapter 1, stumbling on this political rally allowed things to “click” for me, not exactly in understanding Michael Apple’s arguments over the knowledge issue, but specifically in laying out our arguments for how curriculum knowledge interferes quite dynamically and powerfully in the “practices of everyday life” (to borrow De Certeau’s<sup>358</sup> approach). Furthermore, it helped reveal the substantive role played by the media in constructing a specific vision of the world, a core concept of Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical perspectives. Actually, the wide discrepancies between the messages of the peace activists’ posters and those spread by the mainstream media provide a fresh and ‘happy’ example for demonstrating not only the way knowledge becomes “legitimate and official”, but also the role that the

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<sup>356</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA.

<sup>357</sup> Carspecken, Ph. (1996) *Critical Ethnography in Educational Studies*. New York: Routledge

<sup>358</sup> De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley : University of California Press.

mainstream media plays in what Hall calls the “encoding-decoding”<sup>359</sup> process. Moreover, this particular political event provides a paradigmatic corollary example for understanding how textbooks intervene in the construction of particular kinds of knowledge while marginalizing too many others, as we will have the opportunity to see later on in Loewen<sup>360</sup>, Foster and Nicholls<sup>361</sup>, Anyon<sup>362</sup>, Brindle and Arnot<sup>363</sup>, and Michael Apple’s<sup>364</sup> research as well.

Following the sequence of the analyses that we offered at the beginning of this chapter, and the analyses that we initiated in the previous section (Michael Apple’s line of thought concerning curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), it is our aim to understand how Michael Apple outlined his political and pedagogical arguments on curriculum knowledge. In so doing, we will see how his arguments about compromised knowledge complexify his ‘own’ leitmotiv. Before we carry on analyzing Michael Apple’s arguments, it will be wise to map out how he builds his case with regards to curriculum knowledge. It is important not to ignore the roots of this particular issue: Michael Apple’s EDD dissertation, *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenological Sociology of Knowledge*<sup>365</sup>, in which he challenges the schools’ lack of relevance. With this in mind, as well as his later books *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>366</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>367</sup>, one can identify that Michael Apple’s arguments over schooling are anchored in a sharp and scathing criticism of curriculum content resulting from a societal selective tradition. What we describe as Michael Apple’s critical cartography over curriculum knowledge allows one to perceive the arguments that he builds to challenge hegemonic curriculum knowledge. Among countless issues, this

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<sup>359</sup> Hall, S. (1994) Encoding, Decoding. In S. During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp., 90-103.

<sup>360</sup> Loewen, J. (1995) *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New Press.

<sup>361</sup> Foster, J. & Nicholls, J. (2003) Portrayal of America’s Role during World War II: An Analysis of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA. *Study Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Studies Association*, Chicago, April, 21-15.

<sup>362</sup> Anyon, J. (1983) Workers, Labor and Economic History, and Textbook Content. In Michael Apple & Lois Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp., 37-60.

<sup>363</sup> Brindle, P. & Arnot, M. (1999) England Expects Every Man to do his Duty: The Gendering of the Citizenship Textbook 1940-1996. *Oxford Review of Education*. 25 (1,2), pp., 103- 123.

<sup>364</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>365</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenology and Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University.

<sup>366</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>367</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

cartography of curriculum content opens the door for one to understand (1) that schooling is not a neutral enterprise, (2) the need to complexify the secular *Spencerian* question (3) the way knowledge becomes regulated and (4) the role of the textbooks and what he calls a new version of texts plays in perpetuating specific hegemonic views of society.

Since we have already given considerable thought to that the arguments in *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenology and Sociology of Knowledge*,<sup>368</sup> we will now take into account Michael Apple's critical analysis of the four issues noted above, trying to reveal the way he builds his case around those issues. Again, we must highlight that it is not our intention to repeat what the author already said but to scrutinize carefully some of his arguments. Let us now examine how Michael Apple constructs his critical analysis of schooling. An important concern of Michael Apple's is that schooling should act as a dynamic device for economic and cultural justice. Based on a position that is more to the left than Rawls' approach, Michael Apple argues that "for a society to be just it must, as a matter of both principle and action, contribute most to the advantage of the less advantaged"<sup>369</sup>. One can identify here a view of schooling as a political mechanism to correct both economic and cultural segregation. Challenged by this concern, Michael Apple stresses the following:

The traditional social democratic, humane capitalism has very strong labor unions and a relatively strong social democratic state. People had to die to gain all of this. It was not a gift, but there are other choices. They are free education for everybody, decent pay, not a hell of a lot of wealthy people and not a hell of a lot of poor people, but a strong central state that tries to ameliorate the social garbage that is created by capitalism. However, I do not naturalize or accept capitalism as the end of history at all. I do believe that a democratic form of socialism is absolutely essential. I want social control of the means of investment and the means of production. I do not like strong state models of 5-year and 10-year plans, and I do not like the old Soviet model. As an example, I could not agree in any way to stop the free press, and we must in fact allow the production of material that criticizes us. Also I do not support a government that has abrogated some of the power of the local, and has just become too centralized. I am fighting for a society where there is money given so that there are free clinics,

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<sup>368</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenology and Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University.

<sup>369</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 12.

free hospitals, free medicine, free education as far as you can go, and with control over finances, over what products are generative and which are not, and a conscious attempt to build a self-reflective and critical socialist human being under the bounds of democratic form. And that also means that the curriculum is organized around social issues"<sup>370</sup>.

In fact it is precisely schooling's lack of a critical economic and cultural agenda schooling seeking to correct social injustices and inequalities that led Michael Apple to challenge the way schools, as institutions, operate in perpetuating a harmful segregated social framework. In order to expose this complex issue, Michael Apple stresses the need for a relational analysis of schooling. That is to say, one has to search for the way the distribution of economic and cultural power is deeply connected, not only within the "teaching of moral knowledge, as in some of the reproduction theorists", but also "in the formal corpus of school knowledge itself"<sup>371</sup>. It is precisely in this kind of approach that one can identify Michael Apple's analysis of schools.

According to him (and following an issue that was already dealt with at length in *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenology and Sociology of Knowledge*<sup>372</sup>), not only are schools and curriculum divorced from day-to-day reality, but also the educational debate is becoming more and more worthless since it is being framed and dominated by the oratory of efficiency, accountability and the technical skills fever<sup>373</sup>. This is of crucial importance as Spring<sup>374</sup> accurately reminds us that this hegemonic educational framework produces an atmosphere of mechanic practices which generate massive barriers for any critical reform to succeed. Thus, and drawing from Williams, Michael Apple stresses that an educational approach persists, which situates the individual as an abstract force within the "our social, economic and educational life [instead of] situat[ing] the life of the individual (and ourselves as educators), as an economic and social being, back into the unequal structural relations that produced the comfort the individual enjoys"<sup>375</sup>. We can find here a claim that the educator is a

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<sup>370</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 45* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>371</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 35.

<sup>372</sup> Apple, Michael (1970) *Relevance and Curriculum: A Study in Phenomenology and Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University.

<sup>373</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>374</sup> Spring, J. (1972) *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*. Boston: Beacon Press.

<sup>375</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 10.



political being; however, as Michael Apple stresses, this particular powerful claim is quite ineffective unless one embraces a critical approach that not only analyzes and challenges the multifarious dynamics outside schools, but also centers on a more radical theory of social justice<sup>376</sup>.

In an analysis quite unusual within the curriculum field at that time, Michael Apple highlighted that our educational dilemmas, namely “unequal achievement, the unequal returns, the selective tradition and incorporation, are also ‘naturally’ generated”<sup>377</sup> out of a particular social arrangement based on a biased view of economic and cultural democratic justice. It is based on this insight that Michael Apple destroys the reductive perspectives of “many economists and not a few sociologists and historians of education [who] envision the institution of schooling as something like a black box”<sup>378</sup>. He highlights their ‘input-output’ binary (as Michael argues “one measures input before students enter schools and then measures output along the way or when ‘adults’ enter the labor force”<sup>379</sup>), which essentially ignores “what actually goes on within [what they call] the black box”<sup>380</sup>. In other words “what is taught, the concrete experience of children and teachers is less important [...] than the more global and macroeconomic considerations of rate of return on investment, or, more radically, the reproduction of the division of labor”<sup>381</sup>. Actually, to him, the “logical error to attempt to derive a theory of curriculum from a theory of learning”<sup>382</sup> (a position that we mentioned before when we analyzed Huebner’s political and pedagogical perspectives) critically concerns “what is actually taught in schools? What are the manifest and latent social functions of the knowledge that is taught in schools? How do the disciplines of selection and organization that are used to plan, order and evaluate that knowledge function in the cultural and economic reproduction of class relations in an advanced industrial society like our own [become] part of the language game of psychology”<sup>383</sup>.

Aiming for a more comprehensive and relational approach that could explain school[ing] knowledge, Michael Apple intentionally demolishes what he calls the

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<sup>376</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>377</sup> Op. Cit., p., 12.

<sup>378</sup> Op. Cit., p., 26.

<sup>379</sup> Op. Cit., p., 26.

<sup>380</sup> Op. Cit., p., 26.

<sup>381</sup> Op. Cit., p., 26.

<sup>382</sup> Op. Cit., p., 29.

<sup>383</sup> Op. Cit., p., 30.

achievement and socialization traditions, given their reductionism. While the former “centered around the issue of academic achievement, [the latter] has been less concerned with questions of achievement than with the role of schools as a socialization mechanism”<sup>384</sup>. However, as Michael Apple continues to argue “these approaches were not totally wrong [and] have in the past contributed to our understanding of schools as cultural and social mechanisms”<sup>385</sup>. To be more precise, while the academic achievement approach deeply was influenced by a managerial framework seeking technical control and efficiency, it neglects the actual content of knowledge itself (“thus failing to take seriously the possible connection between economics and the structure of school knowledge”<sup>386</sup>). The socialization approach focuses on consensus and the parallels between “the ‘given’ values of a larger collectivity and educational institutions [but ignores] the political and economic context in which such social values function and by which certain sets of social values become the (by whose definition?) dominant values”<sup>387</sup>.

It is precisely because of this lack of concern with “some of the latent functions of the form and content of the school curriculum” portrayed by the said approaches that Michael Apple invites the reader to pay attention to a third approach based on a more critical tradition: the sociology of school knowledge. Drawing from Young, Michael Apple stresses that this approach relies on the argument that there is a “dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimize certain dominant categories, and the processes by which the availability of such categories to some groups enables them to assert power and control over others”<sup>388</sup>. Thus, and relying on Bourdieu and Passeron’s perspective, Michael Apple, not only highlights that this intricate problematic “involves examining how a system of unequal power in society is maintained and partly recreated, by means of transmission of culture”<sup>389</sup>, but also the critical need to understand “what is the place of schools in maintaining the way economic and educational goods and services are controlled, produced, and distributed?”<sup>390</sup> That is to say one needs to perceive how society reaches paths of

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<sup>384</sup> Op. Cit., p., 30.

<sup>385</sup> Op. Cit., p., 30.

<sup>386</sup> Op. Cit., p., 31.

<sup>387</sup> Op. Cit., p., 31.

<sup>388</sup> Young, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 31.

<sup>389</sup> Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J. C. *Apud* Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 31.

<sup>390</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 31.

stabilization. Drawing from Gramsci, one can understand how society ‘becomes stable’ based on a specific economic and cultural hegemony that perpetuates social segregation. Addressing this issue more bluntly, as Michael Apple did, “any society which increases the relative gap between [...] rich and poor in the control of and access to cultural and economic capital needs to be questioned: [that is to say, we need to understand] how is this inequality made legitimate [and] why is it accepted”<sup>391</sup>.

Summing up, and drawing on MacDonald’s insight, Michael Apple notes that this third approach (the sociology of school knowledge) relies on a notion of schools as sites of both economic and cultural reproduction. It is in this context that Michael Apple highlights the contributions of Bowles and Gintis (for whom “not only does education allocate individuals to a relatively fixed set of positions in a society, but the process of education itself, the formal and hidden curriculum, socializes people to accept as legitimate the limited roles they ultimately fill in society”<sup>392</sup>); Bernstein (for whom “through education the individuals ‘mental structures’ are formed and these mental structures are derived from the social division of labor”<sup>393</sup>); and Bourdieu (for whom “the cultural rules, what he calls *habitus*, are deeply rooted within the economic, cultural control and distribution”<sup>394</sup>). By allowing one to understand the connection between hegemony and reproduction, the ‘reproductive research’ allows one to perceive how a particular social stability is achieved. In essence, and as Michael Apple emphasizes, schools “process both knowledge and people”. Michael Apple claims here that schools are a political device for cultural transmission. Based on Gramsci, he maintains the critical importance of understanding schools as mechanisms of cultural distribution since “a critical element in enhancing the ideological dominance of certain classes is the control of the knowledge preserving and producing institutions of a particular society”<sup>395</sup>. To be more precise, and drawing from Mannheim, Michael Apple argues that “the ‘reality’ that schools and other cultural institutions select, preserve, and distribute [must be seen] as a particular ‘social construction’ which may not serve the interests of every individual and group in society”<sup>396</sup>. It is in this context that Michael

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<sup>391</sup> Op. Cit., p., 32.

<sup>392</sup> Bowles & Gintis, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 32.

<sup>393</sup> Bernstein *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 32.

<sup>394</sup> Bourdieu, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 33.

<sup>395</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 26.

<sup>396</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

Apple complexifies Berger and Luckman's approach to reality as a social construction, arguing that their approach cannot explain "the relationships that exist between cultural institutions, particularly schools, and the framework and texture of social and economic forms in general"<sup>397</sup>. Grounding his perspective in Whitty's arguments, Michael Apple stresses that understanding reality as a social construction simply minimizes the utter importance of questioning how and why a specific social construction becomes more visible and legitimate. Given these particular arguments, Michael Apple stresses the following:

Remember my training was in social phenomenology, which says reality is a social construction, and here's the constitutive ways in which it's constructed. I was strongly influenced by Berger and Luckman and by Alfred Schutz about the structures of knowledge and how they're constructed. That is clearly part of where I am coming from. I think my task is not to refute that, since this is partly the case. It is a construction, it is a social construction. But the next question must then be: whose construction is it? Therefore, I want to drag it to the next step. I am fully committed to a constructivist understanding, which denaturalizes things. There is nothing natural about the way the society, the school, this curriculum is organized. It is a construction, socially constructed. Fine, but the mere fact that something is socially constructed tells us nothing other than to remember that we built it so therefore we can change it. Of course, there is something important about that. But the key is how is it built, in whose interest, who benefits? So I am accepting the epistemological moment, that reality is a social construction, but I am saying that it does not tell us much. Now the real question is why do some versions of reality have the power to resist subversion. Why are they there and not another, and that requires that we think about the structural forms of ideology, class, race, gender.<sup>398</sup>

With such a claim, it is clear that Michael Apple's vision of curriculum is not one of mere selection. As he stresses, "curriculum [as] a selection is an innocuous concept"<sup>399</sup>, and that is not the real issue.

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<sup>397</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

<sup>398</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 43* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>399</sup> Op. Cit.

I can't imagine anyone who would say they were teaching everything. The first task is to make that a powerful question. If it's a selection, whose selection is it? But before we can answer what the selective tradition should be, we might want to ask and I think we must, what's there now, what are the functions, forms, etc? If it was everything, you wouldn't need a curriculum, that's everything; so curriculum requires selection, a relatively innocuous insight. My argument is the following and it's two or three-fold. First, before you can do anything else, whose knowledge is there? What are the social meanings? What are the functions of that? What does it mean that this is considered "real" knowledge, and how did it get there? Through what mechanisms? That's the focus on the textbooks, the history of textbook adoption policies. So what is my answer to this selective tradition? Not in *Official Knowledge* but in *Cultural Politics and Education* I say the following: We misconstrue the idea of a common culture, and common curriculum. I'm saying because curriculum is a selective tradition, it is about power. The answer cannot be taken neutrally. That is, there will never be a pristine point where we all agree. That recognition says that if we're to talk about curriculum, the only thing we share is that we disagree. In thinking about a common curriculum, a common culture, the answer to this is the question of the *process* of debating the selective tradition. Thus, curriculum is a series of debates, it is based on constant self-reflective actions, and the only solution to the issue of the selective tradition is to install the questions at the very outset, questions that recognize that every curriculum starts out with one question from someone's perspective. For me, the answer is that it is not only content; it is a process. The only way to deal with this is to assume that there will be no consensus. Thus, I started out arguing that consensus is a bad idea, and we must move through conflict. That's why I like *Democratic Schools* since it tries to address those questions. Unfortunately each book can't solve all the problems. There will always be a selective tradition and how do we solve it? It's through the constant deliberatory process. That should be the foundation, not the background, of how we plan the curriculum. That's the curriculum; the curriculum is indeed disagreement<sup>400</sup>.

However, one cannot make the claim here that Michael Apple should be understood as a "reproduction" theorist. Conversely, and in full disagreement with McLaren (for whom Michael Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>401</sup> is informed by a "mechanical conception of reproduction"<sup>402</sup>), one must say that although *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>403</sup> shows the reader a deep intellectual concern with class analyses, which are sympathetic to the reproductive approach, the fact is that one cannot ignore that *Ideology and*

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<sup>400</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 45* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison

<sup>401</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>402</sup> McLaren, P. (1989) *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*. New York: Longman, p., 199.

<sup>403</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

*Curriculum*<sup>404</sup> ends with an analyses showing that Michael Apple is keenly sensitive to the fact that “reproduction” by itself cannot explain schooling’s intricate dynamics. In so doing, Michael Apple allows one to trace a discontinuity in his intellectual journey; that is to say, his intellectual voyage did not remain fixed in the reproductive approach towards the educational process, rather the reproductive approach served as a take off point that allowed him to go ‘beyond reproduction’. In fact, *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>405</sup> opens the door for *Education and Power*<sup>406</sup> (and we maintain that the two books could be published in a single volume) and *Teachers and Texts*<sup>407</sup>, as well as the rest of his vast intellectual work.

Schooling, for Michael Apple, should not be understood as something that exists in a social vacuum. Rather, he<sup>408</sup> maintains that schools are both the cause and effect of a specific intricate social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in (and for) which they exist. In essence, as he<sup>409</sup> stresses, one must understand that any just analyses of schooling must be cautious about the role that education plays in a complex society, placing the knowledge, the schools and the educators within the social conditions that determine these elements.

Thus, according to Michael Apple, one would be naïve to think of schools as a neutral enterprise. The educational process (and the dynamics that directly or indirectly interfere in the educational and curriculum process) is not neutral, not only because it constructs segregated economic outcomes, but also because the knowledge that is taught in schools is a result of a specific selective tradition<sup>410</sup>. Drawing from Bernstein and Young, Michael Apple argues that the knowledge skills portrayed by our educational institutions are profoundly linked to the “principles of social control”<sup>411</sup>. As we analyzed earlier, schooling has served to control the immigration ‘threat’. In fact, schools do work, but just for a minority of students, since it is not built to give social, economic and cultural control to the more unprivileged<sup>412</sup>. Thus, schools participate in a

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<sup>404</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>405</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>406</sup> Apple, Michael (1995) *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>407</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>408</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>409</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>410</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>411</sup> Op. Cit., p., 2.

<sup>412</sup> Op. Cit.

‘fabrication’ of a particular economic and cultural consensus, placing each individual in his or her ‘rightful’ place within society, a society deeply segregated by the dynamics of race, gender, and class dynamics.

Not surprisingly, schools do perpetuate the reproduction of social inequalities, since “through their curriculum, pedagogical and evaluative activities in day-to-day life in classrooms, schools play a significant role in preserving if not generating these inequalities”<sup>413</sup>. In this sense, and as Michael Apple highlights, schools do act as hegemonic ‘engines’ since they portray “cultural and economic values and dispositions ‘shared by all’, [but at the same time] ‘guaranteeing’ that only a specific number of students are selected for higher levels of education because of their ability to contribute to the maximization of the production of technical knowledge also needed by the economy”<sup>414</sup>. Based on this and drawing from Williams, Michael Apple asserts that school knowledge is based on a selective tradition, a particular ‘significant’ past. Thus Michael Apple fully concurs with Williams to whom “educational institutions are usually agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic as well cultural activity”<sup>415</sup>. This Welsh ‘organic intellectual’ highlights the process of education as one of selective tradition “which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as ‘the tradition’”<sup>416</sup>. Thus, as Williams straightforwardly argues, “the selectivity is the point [in] which from a whole possible area of past and present certain meanings and practices chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings are neglected and excluded”<sup>417</sup>.

It is also precisely Michael Apple’s critical political perspectives of school knowledge as a selective tradition that drove him to put forward a group of questions central to his analysis of schooling; namely: “Whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organized and taught in this way? To this particular group?” In so doing, as we will see later on Michael Apple ends up complexifying the secular *Spencerian* question - *What knowledge is of most worth?* We are not claiming here that Michael Apple was a demiurge with regards to the concerns of school knowledge. In fact as we had the

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<sup>413</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

<sup>414</sup> Op. Cit., p., 61.

<sup>415</sup> Williams, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 6.

<sup>416</sup> Williams, R. (1976) Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory. In R. Dale, G. Esland and Madeleine MacDonald (eds.) *Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp., 202-210, p., 205.

<sup>417</sup> Op. Cit., p., 205.

opportunity to mention at great length elsewhere<sup>418</sup>, school knowledge should be considered as a secular concern among scholars.

What we are claiming here is that Michael Apple, following a long and complex (yet rather particular) line of a critical progressive curriculum tradition (in which one should not minimize the works of Dewey, Bode, Counts, Rugg, Huebner, Macdonald, and Mann), complexifies this secular “curriculum” concern by pushing, pressing, and ‘driving’ the debate to a much more deep and complex political platform. That was (and still is) a major step within the curriculum field, a step that has powerfully reshaped curriculum research.

According to Michael Apple, and it will be wise to recapture this claim, only by setting out and pushing the school debate to such a level of complexity can one understand that it is “through the definition, incorporation and selection of what is considered legitimate or ‘real’ knowledge, through a false consensus on what are appropriate facts, skills, hopes and fears (and the way we all should evaluate them) [that] economic, and cultural apparatus are dialectically linked”<sup>419</sup>. Thus, knowledge should be understood as power, “primarily in the hands of those who have it already, who already control cultural capital as well as economic capital”<sup>420</sup>. In essence Michael Apple warns us of the need to understand in a deep sense the intricate connections between what is considered ‘real’ curriculum knowledge and the cultural and economic asymmetries that constitute the social fabric. It is with this in mind (and drawing from Gramsci) that Michael Apple goes beyond the Marxist perspective that maintains that the dominant ideas in a specific society are the ideas of the dominant class. In fact, for Michael Apple this perspective should be seen as a kind of ‘tip off’ in order for one to understand the relations that are created involving the dominant ideas of a specific society and the interests of particular groups and classes. In so doing, Michael Apple not only reveals his political and pedagogical position against particular curriculum sociologists who naively maintain curriculum knowledge is something neutral, but he also puts forward a critical alternative perspective, a perspective that sees the forms of

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<sup>418</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA.

<sup>419</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge, p., 154.

<sup>420</sup> Op. Cit., p., 154.



curriculum knowledge as “potential mechanisms of socio-economic selection and control”<sup>421</sup>.

This political position requires us to complexify our concerns over curriculum knowledge. That is to say, the real concern should not be if student ‘A’ achieved a level ‘A’ (although one should not dismiss this concern), but rather our attention should focus “on the necessary ‘prior’ questions that must be asked before one engages in the usual types of research on school knowledge”<sup>422</sup>. Again it is necessary to mention that the real issue is not if “the students achieve such and such a level of knowledge”<sup>423</sup>, but the need to complexify our analyses of curriculum knowledge by focusing our attention on particular yet powerful questions; namely: “Whose knowledge is it? Why is it being taught to this particular group, in this particular way? What are its real or latent functions in the complex connections between cultural power and the control of modes of production and distribution of goods and services in an advanced industrial economy like our own?”<sup>424</sup>. In fact, without a profound understanding of the critical importance of addressing these kinds of concerns, trying to address issues such as student achievement, discipline, drop outs, among others, is a waste of time. In fact, not only are the above questions profoundly ideological, but at a conceptual and political level, they establish a critical challenge to current approaches within curriculum research. Only by trying to address the complex problem surrounding ‘legitimate’ curriculum knowledge is one able to perceive that curriculum studies are a constitutive part of a much larger and convoluted problem.

Thus, one can trace in Michel Apple’s arguments over curriculum knowledge a parallel that he establishes between culture and knowledge. Drawing from Williams, Michael Apple argues that like culture (“the way of life of a people, the constant and complex process by which meanings are made and shared – does not grow out of the pre-given unity of a system; [conversely] in many ways, it grows, out of its divisions”<sup>425</sup>), knowledge should not be seen as something that is created in a social vacuum impermeable to power relations. Based on Fiske’s analyses, Michael Apple stresses the

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<sup>421</sup> Op. Cit., p., 155.

<sup>422</sup> Op. Cit., p., 155.

<sup>423</sup> Op. Cit., p., 155.

<sup>424</sup> Op. Cit., p., 156.

<sup>425</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, pp., 42-43.

need to understand knowledge as something “never neutral [that] never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real”<sup>426</sup>. That is to say, knowledge must be perceived as power since “the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power”<sup>427</sup>. Therefore, reality “doesn’t stalk around with a label [of] what something is, what it does, one’s evaluation of it – all this is not naturally preordained”<sup>428</sup>. Rather, it is a social construction, but a social construction that emphasizes particular views of reality, while silencing many others.

As we continue analyzing Michael Apple’s line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), we gradually become more and more aware of how this leitmotiv is complex, elaborate, and strong. That is to say, by dealing with the intricate issue of curriculum knowledge the way Michael Apple did (and still does), curriculum is not a vague and insipid device of power and social control (as we mentioned previously, an approach already visible in the works of Dewey, Bode, Riggs, Counts, and Brameld), but a rather lethal mechanism that ‘tunes up’ and perpetuates a particular assemblage of knowledge. This knowledge should be seen as the result of political, economic and cultural compromises, which mirror a multifarious set of struggles, the most important of which are hidden. Actually, under his political scrutiny of curriculum knowledge, the curriculum becomes not only a mechanism of power and social control, but also a perfect ‘human artifact’, an assemblage of compromise knowledge, a facsimile of a myriad of struggles, confrontations, concessions, and (re)conciliations.

It will be now crucial for us to understand how Michael Apple interrogates the dynamics that make curriculum knowledge a compromised commodity. In so doing, we will return to some of the arguments we raised before over the textbooks along with what Michael Apple calls the advent of a fresh “text”<sup>429</sup>, Channel One. We will also return to the Madison Peace Coalition rally that we used as a theoretical tool to illustrate some of the arguments that we want to raise both on this and the following section as well. As already noted, Michael Apple maintains that curriculum knowledge should be

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<sup>426</sup> Fiske, *Apud* Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 43

<sup>427</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 43

<sup>428</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 43.

<sup>429</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 90.

seen as a result of a myriad of intricate and truncated struggles and compromises over what should be taught and evaluated. It expresses a specific selective tradition. Thus, one should perceive curriculum knowledge as an assemblage of compromised knowledge that, given its very 'selective' nature, helps to reproduce an unjust social fabric, multiplying inequalities. We will now consider how Michael Apple examines the way schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, assist in the regulation of this compromised curriculum knowledge, and in so doing, we will understand how curriculum is, in fact, an important political instrument for maintaining a specific hegemonic tradition.

In looking through Michel Apple's political lenses, we see two major social artifacts, which act dynamically within the intricate process of knowledge regulation in schools, namely the textbooks and Channel One. The former has secular roots in the field, the latter is still quite new but is already a powerful part of the process. As previously noted, in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>430</sup> one can identify Michael Apple's explicit awareness of the need to amplify his analyses of textbooks. As he stated, addressing issues such as 'what is it in vs. what it is left out' of the curriculum platform, and addressing "whose cultural capital, both overt and covert, is placed within the school curriculum"<sup>431</sup> is, in fact, dealing with complex issues such as power and economic resources and control with regards to school curriculum, and also "with the ideology and economics of the corporate publishing industry"<sup>432</sup>. Thus, in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>433</sup> Michael Apple really left the door open, not only for what later on would constitute the core of *Teachers and Texts*<sup>434</sup>, but also for the subsequent analyses of textbook policies and with the way knowledge becomes regulated, as one can clearly find in *Official Knowledge*<sup>435</sup>.

As Michael Apple straightforwardly reminds us, to understand thoroughly the way knowledge becomes official and legitimate, one has to understand that the "complicated

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<sup>430</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>431</sup> Op. Cit., p., 157.

<sup>432</sup> Op. Cit., p., 157.

<sup>433</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>434</sup> Apple, Michael (1986) *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>435</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

politics of the text that is seen in [...] state adoption policies”<sup>436</sup> are profoundly implicated in “the process of making knowledge official”<sup>437</sup>. In order to do that, Michael Apple stresses the need to both dissect some of the issues surrounding the rule of the state-government “in making some groups’ ‘cultural capital’ more legitimate than others”<sup>438</sup>, and in so doing, trying to perceive “what happens within this process, what are its roots on the past, what can we learn about this that can help us challenge”<sup>439</sup> a specific cultural hegemony. It is in this context that Michael Apple highlights the need to uncover some of the conflicts involving the state adoption policies, and in so doing to understand the connection between symbolic control and state policies. Because of the importance of Michael Apple’s arguments on this particular issue, we will consider them carefully. They teach us great deal about how curriculum content is based in a selective tradition, a ‘significant past’ which helps maintain a particular hegemonic platform, despite the fact that this platform perpetuates social inequalities and injustice.

Although each one has the right to be represented within the debates over whose cultural capital and whose knowledge will be declared official, (and hence ‘reproduced’), the fact is only particular groups of knowledge become accepted as official, since, as we mentioned before, the process is anchored in a selective tradition, and the freedom to assist in the selection of the framework of curriculum knowledge “is bound by power relations”<sup>440</sup>. Based on Mandel’s notion of positive freedom (“the positive definition of a free press, means the effective material capacity of individuals or groups of individuals to have their opinions printed and circulated”<sup>441</sup>) that links freedom with economic power relations, Michael Apple stresses that the right to cultural distribution is partially dependent on economic and political premises, and actually “what counts as legitimate knowledge and one’s right to determine it is lodged in a complicated politics of symbolic control of public knowledge”<sup>442</sup>. Thus, one cannot address the issue of the right to determine what constitutes official knowledge in an intangible way, but must focus on the political and economic mechanisms of regulation.

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<sup>436</sup> Op. Cit., p., 62.

<sup>437</sup> Op. Cit., p., 62.

<sup>438</sup> Op. Cit., p., 62.

<sup>439</sup> Op. Cit., p., 62.

<sup>440</sup> Op. Cit., p., 62.

<sup>441</sup> Mandel, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 63

<sup>442</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 63.

This regulation is what really constitutes legitimate knowledge and the individual or groups' right to determine 'what is in vs. what is out' is deeply rooted within the intricate policies of symbolic control of public knowledge.

As Michael Apple argues, "one of the most interesting historical dynamics has been the extension [...] of the direct or indirect State authority over the field of symbolic control"<sup>443</sup>. Quite naturally, according to Michael Apple (drawing from Bernstein) "education has become a crucial set of institutions through which the State attempts to 'produce, reproduce, distribute, and change the symbolic resources, the very consciousness of society'"<sup>444</sup>. Schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, are indeed sites of struggle over what symbols are 'in and out', based in someone's principles which organize and transmit that selection, and the State should be seen as at the center of this political struggle.

This particular analysis gives us another critical view of State policies towards schooling. In fact, and based on Michael Apple's scrutiny, one cannot see the State as a frontline monolithic entity that "uniformly supports only the knowledge of the dominant groups"<sup>445</sup>. In fact, the State, should be understood as a site of struggles; a space marked by the rhythms of conflicts, and power relations; a theater for class, race, gender and sexual conflicts, as well as economic, cultural, ideological and political dynamics. Thus, the State serves to balance a myriad of antagonistic interests. Precisely by being and acting as the site of non-stop struggles, there are times when the State acts in a progressive way. To be more precise and relying on Michael Apple's own words "because the State 'is' a site of conflict, compromises or accords will have to be formed that will sometimes signify at least partial victories for progressive or less powerful groups"<sup>446</sup>. When this occurs, Michael Apple notes it is a 'trade-off', "between the meeting of "State-sponsored goals and the wishes of groups outside the State itself"<sup>447</sup>. That is to say the economic, political, and cultural elites seek the highest possible support among less powerful groups to build their social and educational policies, allowing in return a minimum spectrum of diversification. Thus, and following Michael

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<sup>443</sup> Op. Cit., p., 63.

<sup>444</sup> Op. Cit., p., 63

<sup>445</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

<sup>446</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

<sup>447</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

Apple's arguments<sup>448</sup>, there is a need for a social accord that will incorporate as many groups as possible but always under the guiding values of the most dominant groups.

This analysis allows one to perceive that curriculum content and decision making over 'what is in vs. what is out' is not simply a result of an act of domination perpetrated by dominant groups. As Michael Apple tells us, "the cultural capital declared to be official knowledge, then, is 'compromised' knowledge, knowledge that is filtered through a complicated set of political screens and decisions before it gets to be declared legitimate"<sup>449</sup>. It is in this context that Michael Apple, relying on Bernstein's approach, stresses that the State acts "a 'recontextualizing agent' in the process of symbolic control as it creates accords that enable the creation of 'knowledge for everyone'"<sup>450</sup>. According to Michael Apple, in this "process of transformation in which knowledge is taken out of its original social or academic context and 'recontextualized' and changed by the political rules which govern its new setting"<sup>451</sup>, one should not minimize the powerful role portrayed by agents such as "textbook publishing houses, content consultants, and state and local educational authorities" whose function is to reproduce (and not produce) knowledge. Drawing on Bernstein's perspective, Michael Apple argues that the very process of recontextualization allows core knowledge from the disciplines to be "appropriate[d] by those groups of people who have power in the new context"<sup>452</sup>. That is to say, the text undergoes a transformation de-re-contextualization) prior to its repositioning in the new context. In an intricate process of dislocation and relocation, the text quite naturally loses its original meaning, assuming a new meaning. According to Michael Apple, one has to be acutely aware that political accords (compromises) and educational needs could lead to a radical transformation of knowledge, in its shape and organization, since (1) the text changes its own position and identity towards other texts (2) the 'final' text is simply a result of so many 'mutilations' be it selectively, conceptually, and at the level of both condensation and elaboration, and (3) the text becomes organized around distinct principles which naturally alters its very use.

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<sup>448</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>449</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

<sup>450</sup> Bernstein, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 65

<sup>451</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 65.

<sup>452</sup> Op. Cit., p., 65.

Thus, and based on Michael Apple's perspective, one can say that the processes of decontextualization and recontextualization are deeply rooted at the core of a struggle between political interaction and educational and curriculum needs identifiable in a dichotomy portrayed by the State adoption policies and profit needs of publishers. In fact, one should say that the way knowledge is profoundly transformed through policies of symbolic control is critical evidence that curriculum is indeed deeply rooted in unequal power relations and social control dynamics, dynamics that ultimately play an important role in whose cultural capital is made available and then official within schools. Thus, as Michael Apple articulates<sup>453</sup>, convoluted processes such as "decontextualization and recontextualization" imply a deep understanding of government regulation forms and the political economy of the textbooks.

We just finished revealing how Michael Apple clarifies the relation between knowledge, symbolic control and the State. Before we turn our attention to the way Michael Apple lays out his arguments on the impact of the textbooks and of what he calls the new version of texts, it will be wise to note that it would be naïve to claim Michael Apple arguments are built in such a way that one is led to understand State control as a top-down movement. Quite conversely, Michael Apple is arguing that State control is not something massive, reminding us that State identity is based in struggles between dominant and less dominant groups, struggles that lead to compromises achieved through processes of articulation and mediation. Thus, one should say that the intricate processes of decontextualization and recontextualization are an expression of struggles and compromises produced through overdetermined dynamics from the top and from below.

Thus, curriculum knowledge should be seen as a political device of power and social control, and also (and this is quite important) as a result of nonstop processes of mediation and articulation that lead to particular compromises. It is precisely in the center of these compromises that (temporary) "stability" is achieved, that hegemony is reached. In fact, by thinking of curriculum knowledge as a power device, that perpetuates social segregation (since it expresses a selective tradition), Michael Apple pushes this complicated issue to a thornier corner. That is to say, in order for curriculum research to be accurate and to have a critical impact in transforming the day-to-day

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<sup>453</sup> Op. Cit., p., 65.

school practices, it cannot indulge in the luxury of avoiding issues such as what counts as compromised knowledge, who has the power to influence the way that knowledge is taught, and how this particular knowledge 'determines' not only what we mean by 'knowledge', but also what we mean by 'knowledge vs. not knowledge' or 'truth vs. falsity'. Thus, curriculum research should be aware that education, in general, and curriculum, in particular helps (and interferes in deep sense) one to frame, define, and format what we see as real and how we perceive it. Thus, through curriculum one does produce reality. By processing both knowledge and people, as Michael Apple reminds us, schooling, in general, in curriculum, in particular, are producing reality on a nonstop basis. However, and applying an aesthetic image here, since curriculum is based on a deeply biased platform (a selective tradition), reality is brushed with particular colors and specific rhythms that exhibit embarrassing absences, silences, and shadows for those deeply concerned with a real democratic daily life based on real social justice and equality. In this context, and as we mentioned elsewhere<sup>454</sup>, we do produce curriculum, and in so doing, the curriculum produces us.

As Michael Apple overtly warns us, reality "doesn't stalk around with a label"<sup>455</sup>. In fact, as he adds what "something is, what it does, one's evaluation of it – all this is not naturally preordained"<sup>456</sup>. Conversely, reality is 'something' socially constructed and schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, do have a critical role in that process. It is precisely because of the unavoidable need to understand the intricate connections between schools, knowledge, and society which we are part of, that Michael Apple, as we mentioned previously, stresses the need to recognize that underneath the question formulated by Spencer at the turn of the nineteenth century, ("What knowledge is of most worth?") is another much more complex yet powerful one ("Whose knowledge is of most worth?"). Within schooling, one of the important tools for 'producing reality' is the textbook. We will now turn our attention to this potent human artifact, trying to understand the way Michael Apple builds his case for textbooks and their connection in setting up the framework "whose culture is taught"<sup>457</sup>. It will be interesting to see how

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<sup>454</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001-2002) El Currículo como Práctica de Significaciones. *Kikirikiki*, Cooperação Educativa, 62, 63 pp., 8-16.

<sup>455</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 43.

<sup>456</sup> Op. Cit., p., 43.

<sup>457</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.



Michael Apple links the root of this particular concern both a personal and professional background;

I grew up poor in a very poor community, but with a very politically active family, with a mother who is both a communist and one of the founding members of one of the major anti-racist groups in the United States, the Congress of Racial Equality. Remember as a teenager I was the publicity director of that in Paterson which was a largely minority community. Because I was deeply involved in teaching in inner city schools where the dominant population was kids of color, and the textbooks are all white, and the curriculum itself speaks about a particular history, all of that even before I get to graduate school, and even before I'm reading about phenomenology and has this analytic background, this combination leads me to ask the question, whose knowledge is being taught? So that's already on my mind just by the very fact that I was involved in the struggles of illiteracy and struggles over education as a teenager. These personal root then complicate why I think they way I do. It comes from a background in sociology of knowledge or analytic philosophy or other areas, it comes from a rich and thick personal experience, trying to struggle about these issues, and as someone who went to school, a school system that was elitist, that didn't really care that much about working class kids, it was clear to me that I was bored all the time, and not just bored, angry about what was not being taught. So there are rich personal things that prepare you for certain issues. But I actually don't think I'm any different than anybody else about that. That is, I think anyone who comes from that background would have a tendency to raise particular kinds of questions. It just seemed more powerful to me, and the mere fact that I got into education meant that those questions were asked about knowledge. If I had gone into social work, I would have asked similar kinds of questions about them, so whose perspectives are organizing this idea that we have to break up families? If I had gone into nursing, I would have said wait a minute whose bodies are we doing this research on?"<sup>458</sup>

As Michael Apple<sup>459</sup> highlights, little attention has been paid to textbooks as artifacts of cultural transmission. According to the author, the vast majority of research on the role of textbooks within schooling simply neglects the cultural politics behind those particular curriculum materials. Thus, it is crucial that we understand textbooks as “state of the art” vehicles of specific cultural politics, since the texts are not simply “delivery

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<sup>458</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 43* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>459</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

systems [of] facts”<sup>460</sup>. Conversely, they express the result of struggles and compromises at the economic, cultural and political levels. It is precisely in this context that Michael Apple argues that one would be profoundly naïve and politically unmindful in understanding curriculum knowledge as something neutral and unadulterated. In fact, what counts as official and legitimate knowledge is beyond doubt an outcome (quite perverted) of complex and truncated power relations and quarrels among racial, gender, or class groups. Thus, and for those educators deeply concerned with real social justice and an equitable society, textbooks should not be perceived as a pale and inoffensive curriculum tool. Rather, as Michael Apple<sup>461</sup> stresses, textbooks allow one to recognize the puzzling connections between education and power, a relation that becomes increasingly visible in moments of social, political, economic and cultural ‘spasms’.

In order to support his analyses of the role that textbooks play in perpetuating a segregated social fabric, Michael Apple provides the reader with the history of the textbooks in Kanawha County and Yucaipa. Michael Apple writes that “in the mid-1970’s [Kanawha County] became the scene of one of the most explosive controversies over what schools should teach, who should decide, and what beliefs guide our educational programs”<sup>462</sup>. In fact, as Michael Apple highlights “what began as a protest by a small group of conservative parents, religious leaders, and business people over the content and design of the textbooks that have been approved for the use in local schools, soon spread to include school boycotts, violence, and a wrenching split within the community”<sup>463</sup>. In a less violent way, Yucaipa was a stage for similar tensions. Both Kanawha County and Yucaipa, to use Michael Apple words “document the continuing conflict over what schools are for and whose values should be embodied in them”<sup>464</sup>. Thus, it is quite important to realize “that controversies over ‘official knowledge’ that usually center around what is included in or excluded from textbooks signify more profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories”<sup>465</sup>.

Considering Michael Apple’s analyses of the textbook controversies in Kanawha County and Yucaipa, we concur that the conflicts over what counts as official and

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<sup>460</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>461</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>462</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

<sup>463</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

<sup>464</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

<sup>465</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

legitimate knowledge within the textbooks are, in fact, both a process and a product of political, economic and cultural relations, since the content of the textbooks only mirrors specific constructions of reality. Thus, as he<sup>466</sup> insightfully argues, the textbooks embrace a set of messages, which draw upon a distorted past and biased present, that help establish a particular canon. The textbook should be seen as a socially constructed artifact by particular groups. Hence, as we mentioned previously, and drawing on a *Williamsean* platform, Michael Apple demonstrates that textbook content is an expression of a 'selective tradition' and a 'significant past'. That is to say, by expressing a biased content, the textbook participates in the powerful process of regulating knowledge. That is why, according to Michael Apple<sup>467</sup>, in order to understand the cultural politics of the textbook, one would be naïve to detach the complex world of the textbook from the intricate world of the commerce of the textbook, since textbooks should be seen not only as cultural artifacts, but, importantly, also as economic commodities.

By accepting the textbook as an economic commodity (a reality familiar in the U.S. context as well as in many countries all over the world), one understands that this particular commodity belongs to a complex and profoundly volatile political network. To be more precise, the textbook is caught within a set of political and economic dynamics. These dynamics are deeply connected with the dangerous relation between profit and loss, a relation that strongly determines the design and implementation of the state textbook adoption policies. As one can perceive from Michael Apple's scrutiny, the textbooks are products of economic and political tensions. Michael Apple calls the reader's attention to the Texas textbook adoption policy, which has profoundly influenced a majority of U.S. states, and which is clearly based on an economic logic. According to the author, this particular tension interfered rather decisively with the content and form of the textbook. One witnessed increasing pressure from particular social groups to raise textbook standards, to highlight themes that emphasize American patriotism, and to promote the free market and Western traditions, themes that must be deeply connected with the system of national evaluation. Michael Apple highlights the economic and political tensions, which opened the space for the textbook 'to act' as a conservative tool, a tool that acts dynamically in the perpetuation of a segregated

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<sup>466</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>467</sup> Op. Cit.

society since the knowledge, desires, and choices of the less advantaged are overtly absent. With this in mind, we can see the textbook as a cultural and an economic commodity providing clear evidence of complex power relations promoting inequality and social control. Thus, by understanding textbooks, with the (political) lenses that Michael Apple offers to the reader, allows one to see the curriculum (deeply involved in textbook and evaluation mechanisms) as simultaneously text and context in which the (re)production of political, economic and cultural values occurs.

However, although the textbook should be seen as a conservative tool that stymies progressive practices, Michael Apple notes that on the one hand, (a) the textbook promotes overt negative power, since it is an instrument of segregated power relations, but (b) on the other hand, the textbook creates conditions for a positive power, one that is deeply linked to the possibility of acting democratically and collectively, open to better ideas. Thus, through the content of the textbook, students are able to promote regulating forms and hence social inequality, but also to develop mechanisms and practices of resistance and solidarity.

In essence, textbooks do act dynamically in the policies of cultural incorporation. Based on this, the author warns us that one “cannot assume that because so much of education has been linked to processes of gender, class, and race stratification [and one should add sexual orientation], that all the knowledge chosen to be included in texts simply represents relations of, say, cultural domination, or only includes the knowledge of dominant groups”<sup>468</sup>. As the author reminds us, reality is too complex to embrace as simplistic a perspective as this one. In fact, one would be careless to describe curriculum knowledge as a mere reflection of the ideas of the dominant class, imposed in a coercive and unmediated way. Quite conversely, the process of cultural incorporation exhibits continuities and discontinuities in the dominant cultural platform, and the making, remaking and (re)legitimizing of the plausibility of a particular cultural system. One should say along with Michael Apple<sup>469</sup> that curriculum is not something that is imposed within a particular political societal sphere (i.e. schooling), but rather a result of varying and forceful conflicts, negotiations and renegotiations, and attempts to continually recreate the hegemonic control, by incorporating the knowledge and the perspectives of the less advantaged within the larger umbrella of the discourses of the

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<sup>468</sup> Op. Cit., p., 53.

<sup>469</sup> Op. Cit.

dominant groups. Thus, the process of power and social control, the process of regulating the knowledge that is contained within the curriculum platform, in a word, the “process of domination”<sup>470</sup> based on Tyson-Bernstein<sup>471</sup>, occurs not exactly through a process of imposition, but rather throughout an elaborate process of compromises and “mentioning”.

In fact, as Michael Apple argues, one can easily trace within a textbook, isolated and limited elements of the cultural history of the less advantaged, or the ‘have nots’ to borrow Willis’s<sup>472</sup> terminology, “without any substantive elaboration of the view of the world as seen from their perspectives”<sup>473</sup>. Drawing from a critical stance promulgated by Bennett, Michael Apple reminds us that the dominant culture does not become dominant within dominated cultures by an alien force, but because it manages to address those dominated cultures in such a way that it shapes and reshapes them, “hooking them and, with them, the people whose consciousness and experience is defined in their terms, into an association with the values and ideologies of the ruling groups in society”<sup>474</sup>. Thus, the act of ‘mentioning’ expresses, in fact, a particular integration of selective elements within the dominant tradition. Based on Michael Apple’s accurate analyses of the textbooks, one can see that curriculum becomes even more complex. That is to say, it is not only a mechanism of power and social control; it is also a result of struggles over content, which makes curriculum compromised knowledge and a commodity.

However, as Michael Apple<sup>475</sup> reminds us, notwithstanding the conservative and segregational stigma that underpin the textbooks, one can find a progressive resonance in some of textbooks operating within schooling, clear evidence that within the politics of official knowledge one can point to gains and victories and not necessarily only losses. The Granada example (one that attempts to create “more democratic textbooks

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<sup>470</sup> Op. Cit., p., 53.

<sup>471</sup> Tyson-Bernstein, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 53.

<sup>472</sup> Willis, P. (1981) *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>473</sup> Op. Cit., p., 53.

<sup>474</sup> Bennett, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 53.

<sup>475</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

and other educational materials based on the express needs of less powerful groups”<sup>476</sup>) that the author<sup>477</sup> (grounded in Jules’s analyses) brings to the reader clearly documents that the textbook exhibits a transformative potential. However this should not lead the educator to romanticize this potential, since, as Michael Apple highlights, social institutions such as schools and the media deeply concerned with the transmission of this kind of knowledge are “grounded in and structured by the class, gender, sexual, and race inequalities that organize the society in which we live; [in other words] the area of symbolic production is not divorced from the unequal relations of power that structure other spheres”<sup>478</sup>. Complexifying in his analyses further, Michael Apple, taking Hall’s angle, stresses that whereas “ruling or dominant conceptions of the world do not directly prescribe the mental content of the illusions that supposedly fill the heads of dominated classes,”<sup>479</sup> the fact is that “the circle of dominant ideas *does* accumulate the symbolic power to map or classify the world for others”<sup>480</sup>. In fact this particular sphere of dominant ideas creates and recreates specific classifications that “do acquire, not only the constraining power of dominance over other modes of thought, but also the initial authority of habit and instinct”<sup>481</sup>. Thus, along with Michael Apple, we straightforwardly concur that “if texts don’t simply represent dominant beliefs in some straightforward way, and if dominant cultures contain contradictions, fissures, and even elements of the culture of popular groups, then our readings of what knowledge is ‘in’ texts cannot be done by the application of a simple formula”<sup>482</sup>. It is in this context that the author<sup>483</sup> stresses that the cultural authority, what really counts as real and legitimate knowledge within schooling, the norms, values and dispositions that ‘assemble’ the official knowledge, should be perceived as a complex arena in which negative and positive power relations that cross the textbooks are organized. In fact, as Michael Apple<sup>484</sup> reminds us, the struggles for the politics of official knowledge over the textbooks—be it a commodity, be it a set of practices of meanings—are deeply rooted

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<sup>476</sup> Op. Cit., p., 55.

<sup>477</sup> Jules Apud, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>478</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 55.

<sup>479</sup> Hall, Apud, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 55.

<sup>480</sup> Op. Cit., p.,55.

<sup>481</sup> Op. Cit., p., 55.

<sup>482</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p.,57.

<sup>483</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>484</sup> Op. Cit.

in a previous history of conflicts and compromises. It is precisely the non-neutral nature of the politics of the official knowledge that is based on a non-stop process of accords, that the radical educator should perceive as providing fruitful space to operate transformative and emancipatory practices. Relying on De Certeau's<sup>485</sup> terminology, one can see that the cultural politics of the textbook are given a conservative imprimatur, aiming to promote and maintain an economically and culturally segregated social fabric. On the other hand, given the very nature of politics anchored in a complex set of accords, which reveal fractures and cracks, it is possible to act within the cracks of those accords, building and rebuilding them, aiming for a more just curricula, that unquestionably will promote a more just society. In fact, this calls to mind the *Gramscian* strategy of war of maneuvers vs. war of positions, a central component in Michael Apple's approach.

As one can see, textbooks do play a key role in the process of regulation of what Michael Apple called official legitimate knowledge. In fact, since curriculum development is heavily dependent on the textbook, which results from complex struggles over what counts as legitimate knowledge in the classrooms, subsequently, it expresses a selective tradition. Given its powerful role in empowering and disempowering teachers, one can understand how curriculum is more than a mechanism of power and social control, but is, in fact, a regulated device. It allows space for a myriad of pedagogical practices creating an assemblage of knowledge that is, in essence, a set of compromises. The further we follow Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), the more this leitmotiv becomes intricate, convoluted, and challenging. Hence, curriculum is not merely a social control device, but a political, economical and cultural artifact that sets the pace through which knowledge is presented as a regulated compromise commodity package.

However as Michael Apple noted, the textbook is not "the only text"<sup>486</sup> in this complex process of curriculum knowledge regulation. We are witnessing the emergence of a "new version of the text"<sup>487</sup> which is invading the classrooms in the classrooms of the U.S. in the form of Channel One. This is a powerful device that also has a strong

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<sup>485</sup> De Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley : University of California Press.

<sup>486</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 90.

<sup>487</sup> Op. Cit., p., 90.

affect on the intricate process of knowledge regulation. As Michael Apple explains, Channel One is a “commercially produced television news program that is now broadcast to thousands of schools in the United States”<sup>488</sup>. Although its explanation might be seen as inoffensive (“ten minutes of international and national news and two minutes of commercials originally produced very slickly by Whittle Communications [...] but now owned by the leveraged buy-out firm of K-III Communications Corporation”<sup>489</sup>), its effects are devastating. We will now examine how Michael Apple builds his arguments for this new version of text. In so doing we will see not only how Channel One creates a captive audience, and the role that it plays in the struggle over meaning, but also how ‘news’ constructs the ‘other’ in a distorted way, and the contradictions that this new text promotes within the classrooms. As we can notice from Michael Apple analyses, informed by Hoffman, Channel One is a much more complex and intricate political, economic, and cultural project than a simple and undemanding contract that is signed “for schools to receive ‘free’ equipment—a satellite dish, two central VCRs, and what amounts to approximately one color television receiver for each classroom—that will enable them to receive the broadcast. Schools’ contract with Channel One forces them to guarantee that 90 percent of the pupils will be watching 90 percent of the time”<sup>490</sup>. Unfortunately Channel One is a more complicated device than merely “ten minutes of ‘news’ and two minutes of commercials [that] must be watched every school day for three or five years as part of contractual agreement”<sup>491</sup>.

As Michael Apple argues, “we need to place Channel One in its economic, political and ideological context”<sup>492</sup>. That is to say, Channel One should be understood in the context of conservative modernization (an issue that we will analyze in the next section). In fact, Channel One provides clear evidence of the close connection between the so-called ‘public educational chaos’, economic policies and the dangerous transformation that we witnessed in the social and political role of schooling in our societies. Based on the simplistic and dangerous perspective not only of “the realities of the fiscal crises”<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Op. Cit., p., 90.

<sup>489</sup> Op. Cit., p., 90.

<sup>490</sup> Celis, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 93.

<sup>491</sup> Hoffman, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 93.

<sup>492</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 90.

<sup>493</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 91-94.



(a topic that we will leave for the next section when we will analyze Michael Apple's scrutiny of the impact of the rightist turn within education), but also that "our educational institutions are seen as failures"<sup>494</sup> and that "students are horribly misinformed about the world, given the texts and teaching now found in schools"<sup>495</sup>, Whittle Communications has invaded the U.S. school system. This invasion followed their widespread incursion into doctor's offices in the 1970s. For Whittle Communications "students simply do not know enough about the world around them to participate effectively in a democratic society"<sup>496</sup>, and Channel One is the 'cure' for this 'disease'.

As Michael Apple warns us, the impact of Channel One in schools is precisely the same as it has been for patients in doctor's offices. Since "not only are students sold as commodities to advertisers, but the satellite antennae themselves are 'fixed' to the Channel One station and cannot be used to receive other programs"<sup>497</sup>, it is a political, economic, and cultural scheme to construct a "captive audience". Moreover, it is a political project that participates in constructing and suturing particular meanings. As Michael Apple accurately stresses, "the production and the struggle over meaning itself are essential elements"<sup>498</sup> of this particular political and pedagogical project. Hence we need to understand the "ways that meanings are made and circulated". Since the "roles both these meanings and their organizations play in the structures of society and in the structure of the consciousness and unconsciousness of the subjects" are quite crucial, Michael Apple, relying on Johnson's analyses, highlights the need to embrace in a cultural study "the incessant play of meanings that relate the subject to the social system"<sup>499</sup>, and those "that underpin and maintain, and sometimes subvert, that system"<sup>500</sup>. In order to do that, and drawing from Fiske, Michael Apple argues for the urgent need to focus our analyses on the diverse dimensions of television discourse by (1) considering "how television constructs a picture of the world, and how it makes sense of the real", (2) "theorizing the work these meanings perform in and on the

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<sup>494</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>495</sup> Op. Cit., p., 95.

<sup>496</sup> Op. Cit., p., 95.

<sup>497</sup> Op. Cit., p., 95.

<sup>498</sup> Op. Cit., p., 97.

<sup>499</sup> Johnson, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 97.

<sup>500</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 97.

viewing subject”, (3) “relat[ing] this ideological work to the discourse form and mode of address of the television discourse”, and (4) “examin[ing] closely the negotiations and oppositional ‘readings’ of television, thereby moving away from the idea of television or any ‘text’ as closed, as a site where dominant meanings automatically exert considerable or total influence over its reader”<sup>501</sup>. That is to say, the real issue is not the impact of the television. Conversely, our concern should focus upon “how a particular television work, seen as polysemic potential of meanings, connects with the social life of the viewer or group of viewers; [in other words], how is a ‘television text’ created by an active reading of an audience [and] how does the process of common-sense making operate”<sup>502</sup>.

It is in this context that Michael Apple advance an analysis of the way the ‘news’ is done, in order to build a particular picture of the world. Since “cultural practices are not simply derived from or mirror an already existing order, but are themselves major elements in the construction of that social order reality”, our very understanding of our daily life is edified through the “construction, apprehension and utilization of symbolic forms”<sup>503</sup>. Thus, “meaning in the media, not only...is variable, since “real people actively intervene, interrupt, and create meanings in interaction with the media”, but it is also patterned “by the social, economic, and political conventions that set limits on what can and cannot be said or shown, and on who can say and show it”<sup>504</sup>. It is precisely because of this, that Michael Apple challenges the way the very ‘news’ is done, at the level of form and content. Thus, we do concur with Michael Apple, that in order to perceive the way the ‘news’ is done, one must put forward concerns such as “what will be reported, whose news, under what ideological umbrella, what do we know about what counts as news”<sup>505</sup>, and one could add “how is it built and ‘delivered?’” Both the form and the content are quite crucial political segments constructing an “understanding of reality”.

As Michael Apple bluntly argues, both the form and the content help create a distorted and perverted view of the so-called “third world” (such as the ‘natural’ floods in South

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<sup>501</sup> Fiske, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 98.

<sup>502</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 98.

<sup>503</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 98.

<sup>504</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 99.

<sup>505</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 99.

America and Southern Africa). Since this is a political view based on biased norms, it is of great importance that one engage in a process of deconstructing and reconstructing what counts as 'news'. Also, it is both the form and the content of the news that helps construct the other and makes the other familiar. Recalling Paul's story that opens *Official Knowledge*<sup>506</sup>, it is clear that particular cultures have a voice within the 'news' apparatuses, but it is also apparent that when the vast majority of humankind, that is to say the less advantaged, do not make the 'news', the issue, be it at the level of the form or content, is profoundly distorted. As Michael Apple highlights accurately, the media attribute violence to the black citizen as though it were something genetic and something that is 'very natural' within the black culture, but also anchored in a tribal platform. Hence, the violent political struggle over apartheid in South Africa was often treated in a reductive and simplistic way, labelling the people as culturally undeveloped and unprepared for democratic change. This reductive approach hid the real issue, which was that for almost a century of a very specific white dominance, based on an inhumane segregated state, considered and treated black and non-white people as not humans. This regime committed genocide, as determined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, created in July 26<sup>th</sup> 1995 under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act n°34-1995.

Michael Apple highlights the dangerous tendency of the 'news' to "focus on personalities rather than social forces or social processes"<sup>507</sup>, in which Walesa vs. Solidarity in Poland is a clear example. Drawing from Caragee's analyses, Michael Apple stresses the danger of this premise, since it builds within our common sense understanding of the world the idea of the individual as the engine of history while minimizing the crucial importance of collective action. To be more precise, the individual is extracted from a specific collective action context and is understood to be acting in an abstract time and space. That is to say, instead of amplifying the crucial collective role of a social movement such as Solidarity, in which Walesa was undeniably a key personality, the Solidarity union was reduced and simplified to a 'great' figure 'exemplified' in Walesa. In so doing, as Michael Apple argues, "it ignored

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<sup>506</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>507</sup> Op. Cit., p., 103.

Solidarity's relationship to the politics of worker control and egalitarian 'welfare' policies"<sup>508</sup>.

According to Michael Apple, Channel One constructs similar contradictions within the classroom. First, one cannot make the claim that there is an unproblematic relationship between the message sent and the message received. That is to say, since "meanings are polysemic [and] there can be and are multiple meanings in any situation"<sup>509</sup> indeed "what counts as 'the news' may be actively deconstructed by students"<sup>510</sup>. In fact, and based on Fiske's perspective, Michael Apple asserts that consumers of television "are not cultural dupes lapping up any pap that is produced for them"<sup>511</sup>. A second curricular impact of Channel One within the classroom is the fact that the news is "walled in and set apart from 'real knowledge'"<sup>512</sup>. That is to say, "by admitting that the world outside the school, outside of academic knowledge, is essential and now has an officially sanctioned and recontextualized place in schools' daily life"<sup>513</sup>, this creates a condition for what Michael Apple calls a "semiotic surplus of meanings"<sup>514</sup>, a complex quilt of struggles for meanings "that could enable further interrogation of the routine curriculum to go on"<sup>515</sup>. To be more precise, this opens a fertile space and time for a complex and elaborated inter(con)textuality generating "subtle pressures upon what counts as more legitimate knowledge"<sup>516</sup>. A third curricular impact of Channel One is what Michael Apple calls the politics of pleasure. Based on a study conducted by DeVaney, Michael Apple point out that students "do not always engage in such deconstruction of the news process"<sup>517</sup> since, quite often they are talking to each other or doing homework during this segment of the Channel One broadcasts but become interested when the commercials air.

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<sup>508</sup> Op. Cit., p., 104.

<sup>509</sup> Op. Cit., p., 106.

<sup>510</sup> Op. Cit., p., 106.

<sup>511</sup> Fiske, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 106.

<sup>512</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 107.

<sup>513</sup> Op. Cit., p., 107.

<sup>514</sup> Op. Cit., p., 107.

<sup>515</sup> Op. Cit., p., 107.

<sup>516</sup> Op. Cit., p., 107.

<sup>517</sup> De Vaney, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 108.

As we can clearly understand given Michael Apple's scrutiny, both the textbooks and this new version of text, Channel One, play a crucial role in maintaining specific "artifactualities" to use Derrida's terminology.<sup>518</sup> We will return to this particular issue later on. It is precisely this kind of 'artifactuality' that we identified in the contradiction between the messages presented on the peace activists' posters and those broadcast in the mainstream media. As already mentioned, recognition of this contradiction allowed us to construct a paradigmatic example for the way textbooks and Channel One construct particular messages within U.S. classrooms.

Since in the next section we will analyze the media's role in perpetuating a segregated societal platform (and in so doing we will return to the rally story that we used as a tool to illustrate the complex issues that we have been dealing with), it will be wise now to dig a bit more, not only into the complexity surrounding the negative role that the textbooks play in the classrooms in the U.S., and arguably in too many nations throughout the world, but also into the way Channel One embraces the process of producing identities, a central aspect of Michael Apple's curriculum argument.

One of the major arguments that Michael Apple raises with regards to Channel One is the insidious covert construction of captive audiences as already mentioned. Underneath the creation of these captive audiences lies the process of identity construction. Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney<sup>519</sup>, and Hall<sup>520</sup> teach us great deal here, making Michael Apple's arguments even more powerful. According to Grossberg and his colleagues, "people have always needed a sense of who they are and a place to ground that sense of their identity in one or more of the institutions or activities of their lives"<sup>521</sup>, namely the church, their work, their families, and "increasingly in the twentieth century, their leisure and consumption activities"<sup>522</sup>. In a well considered description of the dimensions through which people have a sense of their own identity, Grossberg and his peers argue that "(1) politically, people exist as citizens and as members of a public, (2) socially, people exist as exemplars of social roles—fathers,

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<sup>518</sup> Derrida, J. (2002) Artifactualities. In J. Derrida & B. Stiegler *Echographies of Television*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp., 1-27.

<sup>519</sup> Grossberg, L., Wartella, E. & Whitney, D. (1998) *Media Making. Mass Media in a Popular Culture*. London: Sage.

<sup>520</sup> Hall, S. (1998) Introduction: Who Needs Identity. In S. Hall & P. du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp., 1-17.

<sup>521</sup> Grossberg, L., Wartella, E. & Whitney, D. (1998) *Media Making. Mass Media in a Popular Culture*. London: Sage, p., 205.

<sup>522</sup> Op. cit., p., 205.

children, teachers, and so on—(3) culturally, people exist as exemplars of social groups—often defined within semiotic systems of difference, such as black, white, male and female, and (4) economically, people exist as consumers and members of an audience”<sup>523</sup>. However as they stress, it would be a “mistake to conceive of the concept of the audience as only an economic category [since] the concept of the audience is intricately bound up with the dimensions of social and cultural identity”<sup>524</sup>. Thus, according to these scholars, one has to be deeply concerned with “how the notions of the audience and identity actually involve an image of the entire process of communication”<sup>525</sup>. As they argue, the audience is something that is constructed, since an “audience as such does not exist [and] is itself constructed by people who use the term for a particular purpose”<sup>526</sup>. That is to say, “the audience does not exist out there in reality apart from the way in which it is defined by different groups, for different purposes [and how] the concept of audience is constructed determines how it can function and how the relationship between the media and their audiences can be described, measured, and evaluated”<sup>527</sup>. Thus, the audience is indeed a social construction.

It is in this context that Grossberg and his colleagues put forward the notion of audience as a market device. As they stress, “the most common conception of the audience within the media industries is a conglomeration of potential and potentially overlapping markets, [that is to say] a market identifies a subset of the population as potential consumers of a particular identifiable product or set of products”<sup>528</sup>. Thus, one can see that to Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney<sup>529</sup>, the audience as market implies a two-fold construction, one based on the consumer and the other based on commodities. As for the former, we concur with Grossberg and his peers for whom “the most common way that those involved in the media industries think of the audience is as made up of consumers [that is to say, in order to] sell a book, a film, a record, a videotape, or any media product, or even to get people to watch, listen, or read something, the media producer has in mind the type of person who will purchase or tune

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<sup>523</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 206-207.

<sup>524</sup> Op. Cit., p., 207.

<sup>525</sup> Op. Cit., p., 207.

<sup>526</sup> Op. Cit., p., 208.

<sup>527</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 208-209.

<sup>528</sup> Op. Cit., p., 209.

<sup>529</sup> Op. Cit., p., 209.

in to that product”<sup>530</sup>. Unsurprisingly “the media industries spend a great deal of time and money in the search for more and more information about media consumers and the appropriate appeals to make to convince media consumers to buy a particular media product”<sup>531</sup>. In fact, what one can gather from Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney’s analyses of the media is that by embarking on a non-stop process of categorizing consumers according to market categories “at least part of their identity is defined by their participation in this market”<sup>532</sup>. This meticulous process becomes more pernicious when media corporations play close attention to what Grossberg and his colleagues call market types, namely demographics (class, race, gender, income level, education level, employment category), taste culture and lifestyle clusters (“a mixture of demographic categories and consumption habits or tastes”<sup>533</sup>).

However, as the authors highlight, “the media not only created a consumer society by constructing the audience for its messages as a market, but it also constructed the audience as a commodity object produced in order to be sold for a profit”<sup>534</sup>. Notwithstanding the fact that it would seem quite odd for the less cautious “to think of an audience as something that is produced and sold, something from which someone can make a profit”<sup>535</sup>, the fact is that the relation between the media and the advertising process makes the audience one of the most profitable commodities. In fact, this particular concern is quite clear in Michael Apple’s argument that Channel One provides clear evidence of how children have been sold as commodities.

As Grossberg and his peers highlight, “the media produces an audience for their own media products and then delivers that audience to another media producer, namely, an advertiser”<sup>536</sup>. Actually, “when people watch their favorite TV program, they are also watching the ads embedded in the show”<sup>537</sup>. Despite the fact that few “people choose to watch TV programs for the advertising, [in fact] viewers are inevitably an audience for the ads [and] increasingly, advertisers (as well as other media producers) attempt to link

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<sup>530</sup> Op. Cit., p., 209.

<sup>531</sup> Op. Cit., p., 209.

<sup>532</sup> Op. Cit., p., 210.

<sup>533</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 210-211.

<sup>534</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

<sup>535</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

<sup>536</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

<sup>537</sup> Op. Cit., p., 216.

their products to specific, highly desirable social groups and identities”<sup>538</sup>. Of course, the need for audiences as commodities can be bypassed through technology achievements (one can in fact, avoid the ads, by zapping them with the remote control). However, ads are becoming shorter in order to “keep the audience’s attention”<sup>539</sup>. As the authors argue straightforwardly, one would be naïve not to accept that “the audience is composed of individuals who are each members of one or more social groups that define their identity”<sup>540</sup>. Thus, “to characterize the audience as a market and commodity, then, we can think of the audience as cultural identities represented in the media”<sup>541</sup>. That is to say, the media participate not only in the social construction of audiences as simultaneously consumers and commodities, but also in what Grossberg and his colleagues call producing identities. This perspective portrayed by Grossberg and his peers pushes us to Hall’s approach towards identity. According to Hall, identity should be seen as part of a non-stop complex process of identification, which is “a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination and not a subsumption [that is to say] there is always ‘too much’, or ‘too little’—an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality”<sup>542</sup>. Thus, we do concur with Hall’s non-essentialist concept of ideology. His strategic and positional concept of identity is not a “stable core of the self unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes without change”<sup>543</sup>. Rather, the strategic and positional concept of identity accepts that identities “are never unified and, in late modern times, are increasingly fragmented and fractured [...] never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions”<sup>544</sup>. Thus, as Hall accurately reminds us “identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse” and we need to “understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies”<sup>545</sup>. In fact, identities, as Hall highlights, emerge “within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of

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<sup>538</sup> Op. Cit., p., 216.

<sup>539</sup> Op. Cit., p., 217.

<sup>540</sup> Op. Cit., p., 218.

<sup>541</sup> Op. Cit., p., 218.

<sup>542</sup> Hall, S. (1998) Introduction: Who Needs Identity. In S. Hall. & P. du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp., 1-17, p., 3.

<sup>543</sup> Op. Cit., p., 3.

<sup>544</sup> Op. Cit., p., 4.

<sup>545</sup> Op. Cit., p., 4.



an identical naturally-constituted unity”<sup>546</sup>. Thus identity should be seen as a “meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’ [that is to say] identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices constructed for us”<sup>547</sup>.

Grounding our theoretical framework within Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney’s, and Hall’s approaches, one can say that its is precisely this *Althusserian* process of interpellation and articulation that one overtly identifies at the very root of Michael Apple’s analyses of Channel One. In fact, the construction of captive audiences, something that we already analyzed as consumer and commodity, is a very powerful strategy of “hailing the subject by [particular kinds] of discourse”<sup>548</sup>. Thus, both Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney’s and Hall’s analyses allow one to build a more extensive argument around Channel One, which is that it constructs a consumerism commodity, and thereby a specific set of identities. Undeniably the meaning of the messages that one can see within Channel One news is quite different from those presented at the peace rally. This claim over the way curriculum materials act within the political, cultural and economic realm becomes even much more powerful if one dares to dig a bit more into textbook policies.

A good way to start digging is to consider Zinn, Chomsky, Todorov, and hooks’s critical analyses of the way Columbus is presented in schools. Furthermore, we will rely on the analyses of Loewen<sup>549</sup>, Foster and Nicholls<sup>550</sup>, Anyon<sup>551</sup>, Brindle and Arnot<sup>552</sup>.

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<sup>546</sup> Op. Cit., p., 4.

<sup>547</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 5-6.

<sup>548</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>549</sup> Loewen, J. (1995) *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New Press.

<sup>550</sup> Foster, J. & Nicholls, J. (2003) Portrayal of America’s Role during World War II: An Analyzes of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA. *Study Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Studies Association*, Chicago, April, 21-25.

<sup>551</sup> Anyon, J. (1983) Workers, Labor and Economic History, and Textbook Content. In Michael Apple & Lois Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp., 37-60.

<sup>552</sup> Brindle, P. & Arnot, M. (1999) England Expects Every Man to Do his Duty: The Gendering of the Citizenship Textbook 1940-1996. *Oxford Review of Education*. 25 (1,2), pp., 103- 123.

We will close this argument by comparing Michael Apple's insight to Latour's<sup>553</sup> approach.

For centuries, Columbus has been portrayed as 'a discoverer', 'the' discoverer, a real hero for western civilization, and this is the message that dominates U.S. textbooks. However, as Zinn, Chomsky, Todorov, and hooks straightforwardly stress, this messages is a fallacy. In *Legitimacy in History*<sup>554</sup>, Chomsky refutes the Columbus hero concept, arguing that the U.S. was really a stage for genocide. Chomsky's words deserve to be highlighted here:

Here in the United States, we just committed genocide. Period. Pure genocide". Current estimates are that north of Rio Grande, there were about twelve to fifteen million Native Americans at the time Columbus landed; [however,] by the time Europeans reached the continental borders of the United States, there were about 200,000 [which means] mass genocide<sup>555</sup>.

The shocking reality Chomsky reveals is "that throughout American history this genocide has been accepted has perfectly legitimate"<sup>556</sup>, notwithstanding the fact that Columbus "was a mass murderer himself"<sup>557</sup>. It is precisely this critical challenging of the legitimacy of history that one can trace in both Zinn's and hook's perspectives. However while for Chomsky<sup>558</sup> it constitutes a process of historical engineering, for Zinn and hooks we are embedded in a process of obliteration<sup>559</sup> and a process that tends to perpetuate "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy"<sup>560</sup>.

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<sup>553</sup> Latour, B. (1999) *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. London: Harvard University Press.

<sup>554</sup> Chomsky, N. (2002) *Legitimacy in History*. In P. Mitchell and J. Schoeffel (Eds) *Understanding Power. The Indispensable Chomsky*. New York: The New Press, pp., 135-137.

<sup>555</sup> Op. Cit., p., 135.

<sup>556</sup> Op. Cit., p., 136.

<sup>557</sup> Op. Cit., p., 136.

<sup>558</sup> Chomsky, N. (1992) *Chronicles of Dissent: Interviews with David Barsamian - Noam Chomsky*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, pp., 75-88.

<sup>559</sup> Zinn, H. (1999) *Reflections on History*. In H. Zinn. *The Future of History. Interviews with David Barsamian*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, pp., 1-9, p., 3.

<sup>560</sup> hooks, b. (1994) *Outlaw Culture. Resisting Representations*. New York: Routledge, p., 197.

Zinn views the American past as a gendered history, a history mostly ‘done’ by rich white men. As he maintains, U.S. history is a process of “sort of leaving ‘it’ out”, an insidious process of obliteration in which the schools are not innocents<sup>561</sup>. As Zinn highlights, one can notice this process of obliteration in the way textbooks have portrayed the Vietnam War. To Zinn, this is a “central event for our generation in the US [since] as I’ve often commented, we only dropped seven million tons of bombs on 35 million people”<sup>562</sup>, and we only have two insipid paragraphs in the textbooks on the war in Vietnam. It is this process of obliteration that Zinn identifies in the way the Columbus legacy has been reproduced, not only in society-at-large, but also within schooling.

As Zinn highlights, Columbus’s history is a history of “masculine conquest”<sup>563</sup>. Despite the fact that in the indigenous people greeted Columbus and his armada in a friendly way (as one can document from Columbus’s writing: “they are the best people in the world and above all the gentlest – without knowledge of what is evil – nor do they murder or steal ... they love their neighbors as themselves and they have the sweetest talk in the world ... always laughing [they] are very simple and honest and exceedingly liberal with all they have, none of them refusing anything he may possess when he is asked for it”<sup>564</sup>), this attitude was perverted (since Columbus saw the Indians “not as hospitable hosts, but as servants [they] could subjugate [and] make them do whatever we want”<sup>565</sup>). Furthermore, the native Indians could not escape the cruel process of genocide, murder, rape of the women and children who were “thrown to dogs to be devoured”<sup>566</sup>. As one can draw from Zinn’s words, glorifying Columbus is nonsense since Columbus’s legacy is one of conquering and subjugation of native people. In fact, the very idea of conquering and subjugation suggests an assumption of inferiority of the native Indians. Thus, Columbus’s history is a history based on a racist and a gendered rationale, one that perpetrated mass genocide. Moreover, and based on Todorov’s analyzes it is quite clear the eugenic arrogance showed by Columbus in his contact with the Indians. According to Todorov, that based his analyzes on a study

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<sup>561</sup> Zinn, H. (1999) You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Terrain. In H. Zinn. *The Future of History. Interviews with David Barsamian*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, pp., 47-75.

<sup>562</sup> Zinn, H. (1999) Reflections on History. In H. Zinn. *The Future of History. Interviews with David Barsamian*. Monroe: Common Courage Press, pp., 1-9, p., 3.

<sup>563</sup> Zinn, H. (2001) *On History*. New York: Seven Stories Press, p., 102.

<sup>564</sup> Columbus, *Apud* Zinn, H. (2001) *On History*. New York: Seven Stories Press, p., 99.

<sup>565</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 99.

<sup>566</sup> Las Casas, *Apud* Zinn, H. (2001) *On History*. New York: Seven Stories Press, p., 101.

conduct by Bernaldez over Columbus letters the Indians were portrayed by Columbus as “although physically naked [they] closer to men than to animals”<sup>567</sup> – one in fact should not minimize the very ‘ideological’ meaning of the word ‘although’ here. Oddly enough Columbus was even incapable of recognizing a new diversity of languages expressed by the Indians and accepting them as real languages (obviously quite different from Latin, Spanish or Portuguese). Thus, “already deprived of language [according to Columbus they are also] deprived of all cultural property [by] the absence of costumes, rites, religion”<sup>568</sup>. This particular race-gender vision of Columbus’s legacy is also made explicit in hooks’ approach.

According to hooks, “the nation’s collective refusal to acknowledge institutionalized white supremacy is given deep and profound expression in the contemporary zeal to reclaim the myth of Christopher Columbus as patriotic icon”<sup>569</sup>. As she bluntly remarks, “embedded in the nation’s insistence that its citizens celebrate Columbus’s ‘discovery’ of America is a hidden challenge, a call for patriotic among us to reaffirm a national commitment to imperialism and white supremacy”<sup>570</sup>. According to hooks, this fallacious message is implanted with the classroom. The critical insight of her thought deserves to be quoted at length:

When I recall learning about Columbus from grade school on, what stands out is the way we were taught to believe that the will to dominate and conquer folks who are different from ourselves is natural, not culturally specific. We were taught that the Indians would have conquered and dominated the white explorers if they could have but they were simply not strong or smart enough. Embedded in all these teachings was the assumption that it was the whiteness of these explorers in the ‘New World’ that gave them greater power. The word ‘whiteness’ was never used. The key word, the one that was synonymous with whiteness, was ‘civilization’. Hence, we were made to understand at a young age that whatever cruelties were done to the indigenous peoples of this country, the ‘Indians’, was necessary to bring the great gift of civilization. Domination, it become clear in our young minds, was central to the project of

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<sup>567</sup> Bernaldez, *Apud*, Todorov, T. (1984) *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other*. Norman: University of California Press, p., 35.

<sup>568</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 34-35.

<sup>569</sup> hooks, b. (1994) *Outlaw Culture. Resisting Representations*. New York: Routledge, p., 198.

<sup>570</sup> Op. Cit., p., 198.

civilization. And if civilization was good and necessary despite the costs, then that had to mean domination was equally good<sup>571</sup>.

According to hooks, Columbus's history is one of murder, human atrocities, rape of indigenous woman, and it is precisely this horror that one should not forget and that one "must reinvoke as [we] critically interrogate the past and rethink the meaning of Columbus"<sup>572</sup>. hooks continues by arguing that "in our cultural retelling of history we must connect Columbus's legacy with the institutionalization of patriarchy and the culture of sexist masculinity that upholds male domination of females in daily life; [that is to say] the cultural romanticization of Columbus's imperialist legacy includes a romanticization of rape"<sup>573</sup>. In fact, as she bluntly asserts, "white colonizers who raped and physically brutalized native woman yet who recorded these deeds as the perks of victory acted as though women of color were objects, not the subjects of history"<sup>574</sup>. It is in this context that hook reminds us that "any critical interrogation of the Columbus legacy that does not call attention to the white supremacist patriarchal mind-set that condoned the rape and brutalization of native females is only a partial analysis [since] it subsumes the rape and exploitation of native women by placing such acts solely within the framework of military conquest, the spoils of war"<sup>575</sup>. As one can see, whether it be 'historical engineering', a 'process of obliteration', or a process that prizes 'white supremacist capitalist patriarchy', the fact is that Chomsky, Zinn and hooks are questioning precisely the kind of knowledge that has become legitimate—the central concern in Michael Apple's intellectual process. In so doing, they are actually challenging the social and political legitimacy of particular segments of history. In fact, as Chomsky argues, "there can't be anything more illegitimate; [that is to say] the whole history of this country is illegitimate"<sup>576</sup>. Again, Chomsky's thought deserves to be quoted extensively,

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<sup>571</sup> Op. Cit., p., 199.

<sup>572</sup> Op. Cit., p., 202.

<sup>573</sup> Op. Cit., p., 203.

<sup>574</sup> Op. Cit., p., 203.

<sup>575</sup> Op. Cit., p., 203.

<sup>576</sup> Chomsky, N. (2002) Legitimacy in History. In Mitchell, P. and Schoeffel, J. (Eds) *Understanding Power. The Indispensable Chomsky*. New York: The New Press, pp., 135-137, p., 136.

A few thanksgivings ago, I took a walk with some friends and family in a National Park, and we came across a tombstone which had just been put in along the path. It said: 'Here lies an Indian woman, a Wampanoag, whose family and tribe gave of themselves and their land that this great nation might be born and grow'. Okay, 'gave of themselves and their land' – in fact, were murdered, scattered, dispersed, and we stole their land, that's what we're sitting on [...] Our forefathers stole about a third of Mexico in a war in which they claimed that Mexico attacked us, but if you look back it turns out that that 'attack' took place inside of Mexican territory. [...] And it goes on and on. So you know what can be legitimate?<sup>577</sup>

As one can see, Chomsky, Zinn, Todorov, and hooks, are claiming there is an intentional fallacy based upon the erroneous portrayal of Columbus as a hero. In so doing, they basically assert that U.S. society is based on a secular lie, a lie that has been reproduced in the school curriculum, through its textbooks, as one can notice in the works of Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*<sup>578</sup> and of Foster and Nicholls's *Portrayal of America's Role During World War II: An Analysis of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA*<sup>579</sup>. In fact, Loewen, a sociologist who spent two years at the Smithsonian Institute surveying twelve leading high school textbooks of American History, also challenges the way Columbus has been presented in schools *via* textbooks. As he documents, 1642 is a date included in the twelve textbooks surveyed. However, he notes that "they leave out virtually everything that is important to know about Columbus and the European exploration of the Americans"<sup>580</sup>. In fact, as Loewen stresses, Columbus's legacy is so broad and pivotal that mainstream "historians use him to divide the past into epochs, making the Americas before 1642 'pre-Columbian'"<sup>581</sup>. Notwithstanding Columbus's insidious motivation, the fact is that "textbooks downplay the pursuit of wealth as a motive for coming to the Americas"<sup>582</sup>. Following the same line of thought portrayed by Chomsky, Zinn, hooks, and Michael Apple, Loewen argues

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<sup>577</sup> Op. Cit., p., 136.

<sup>578</sup> Loewen, J. (1995) *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New Press.

<sup>579</sup> Foster, J. & Nicholls, J. (2003) *Portrayal of America's Role during World War II: An Analysis of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA. Study Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Studies Association*, Chicago, April, 21-15.

<sup>580</sup> Loewen, J. (1995) *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your High School History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New Press, p., 29.

<sup>581</sup> Op. Cit., p., 29.

<sup>582</sup> Op. Cit., p., 30.

that “the way American history textbooks treat Columbus reinforces the tendency not to think about the process of domination [when in fact] the traditional picture of Columbus landing on the American shore shows him dominating immediately”. Actually, as Loewen highlights, “Columbus claimed everything he saw right off the boat”<sup>583</sup>. However, “when textbooks celebrate this process, they imply that taking the land and dominating the Indians was inevitable if not natural”<sup>584</sup>. Despite being painful, the fact is that “Columbus introduced two phenomena that revolutionized race relations and transformed the modern world [through] the taking of land, wealth, and labor from indigenous peoples, leading to their near extermination, and the transatlantic slave trade, which created a racial underclass”<sup>585</sup>. Columbus’s mark within the Americas is, in essence, one of murder, exploitation, and rape, in a word, genocide.

Another interesting perspective that warns us about the discrepancies and inaccuracies in textbooks comes from Foster and Nicholls’s research. The authors, driven by a theoretical conception based on the Williamsian political notion that textbooks emerge from a selective tradition, embrace an analysis which tries to address the following question: “how do nations today—England, Japan, Sweden, and the US—portray the role of the United States in the Second World War?”<sup>586</sup> Not surprisingly, the discrepancies among the textbooks were massive. While “unequivocally the US textbooks portray American entry into the war [as] decisive [and] the emphasis is given to US military commanders, battles in which the United States were chief protagonists, and the ideals for which US soldiers allegedly fought”<sup>587</sup>, a different perspective is produced in the textbook messages about England, Japan and Sweden. As for England, “while acknowledging the significant role of the United States during World War II, English textbooks do not portray the US contribution as more significant than those of the British Empire or the USSR”<sup>588</sup>. In fact, as the study concludes, “concentrated focus is given to the British war effort prior to US entry and to the defeat of Hitler’s army in the Eastern front by the forces of the Soviet Union”<sup>589</sup>. Actually, and this is of utter

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<sup>583</sup> Op. Cit., p., 35

<sup>584</sup> Op. Cit., p., 35.

<sup>585</sup> Op. Cit., p., 50.

<sup>586</sup> Foster, J. & Nicholls, J. (2003) Portrayal of America’s Role During World War II: An Analysis of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA. *Study Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Studies Association*, Chicago, April, 21-25, p., 3.

<sup>587</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

<sup>588</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

<sup>589</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

importance, the US participation in World War II is seen by English textbooks as “the ‘allied’ effort, [a] joint venture involving equal partners, and not one dominated by the United States”<sup>590</sup>. The Japanese textbooks shift the theater of war from Europe to the Pacific. War in Europe is presented as a marginal issue and the “coverage of the war centers on events in the Pacific”. Not surprisingly, the events associated with Pearl Harbor are highlighted and “in contrast to US textbooks, the United States does not appear as an innocent victim of a ‘surprise attack’ [rather] Japanese textbooks carefully explain how US-Japanese antagonism prior to events in December 1941 almost rendered war inevitable”<sup>591</sup>. Finally, for Swedish textbooks, the focus is directed to the war in Europe and North Africa, and like in the English textbooks not only “the US is portrayed as playing a supportive rather than a leading role in events”, but also a “great emphasis is placed on the war prior to the US entry, particularly on the Eastern front”<sup>592</sup>. In fact Foster and Nicholls’s *Portrayal of America’s Role During World War II: An Analysis of School History Textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the USA*<sup>593</sup>, provides clear evidence of the discrepancies that one can identify in textbooks, and also that specific groups in society use textbooks and school curriculum to perpetuate particular kinds of messages, ones that hooks notes perpetuate “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy”<sup>594</sup>. In addition, one might say, that the way school content has been portrayed collides abruptly with what Leite calls “schools curricularly intelligent”<sup>595</sup>, that is to say, schools that promotes un-reductive curriculum practices, developing cognitive, affective and social skills and creativity.

We have been trying to unveil the way textbooks and what Michael Apple calls ‘a new version of text’, namely Channel One, operate within the curriculum platform, lending a hand in perpetuating a history that is bereft of truth, and assists in (re)producing a particular kind of identity as Torres Santomé<sup>596</sup> reminds us, the so called official culture in the vast majority of western countries that is perpetuated

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<sup>590</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

<sup>591</sup> Op. Cit., p., 27.

<sup>592</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 27-28.

<sup>593</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>594</sup> hooks, b. (1994) *Outlaw Culture. Resisting Representations*. New York: Routledge, p., 197.

<sup>595</sup> Leite, C. (2002) A Figura do ‘Amigo Crítico’ no Desenvolvimento de Escolas Curricularmente Inteligentes. *V Congresso da Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências da Educação. O Particular e o Global no Virar do Milénio*. Algarve: Universidade do Algarve, pp., 95-100. Vide also Leite, C. (2003) *Para uma Escola Curricularmente Inteligente*. Porto: Edições ASA.

<sup>596</sup> Torres Santomé, J. (1996). The Presence of Different Cultures in Schools: Possibilities of Dialogue and Action. *Curriculum Studies*, 4(1), pp. 25-41.



through a common curriculum scarcely validates specific knowledge portrayed by a masculine world. As the Galego scholar<sup>597</sup> highlights, a brief glance over the textbooks allows one to perceive disfiguration, silence, and occultation of the working class. Torres Santomé<sup>598</sup>, much the same as hooks, argues that textbooks promulgated a biased vision of society that prizes a white middle class heterosexual blond male. It is in this context that both Anyon's *Workers, Labor and Economic History, and Textbook Content*<sup>599</sup>, and Brindle and Arnot's *England Expects Every Man to Do his Duty: The Gendering of the Citizenship Textbook 1940-1996*<sup>600</sup> exhibit their pertinence. In an empirical study of seventeen well-known secondary school 'approved for use' U.S. history textbooks, Anyon argues that the content expressed in the textbooks "despite the claim of objectivity serve[s] the interests of some groups in society over others"<sup>601</sup>. As the author stresses, a mark of US textbooks is their "omissions, stereotypes and distortions"<sup>602</sup> with regards to Native Americans, blacks and woman, "which reflect the relative powerlessness of these groups"<sup>603</sup>. Thus, as Anyon argues "the school curriculum has contributed to the formation of attitudes that make it easier for those powerful groups whose knowledge is legitimized by school studies to manage and control society"<sup>604</sup>. That is to say, "textbooks not only express the dominant group's ideologies, but also help to form attitudes in support of their social position"<sup>605</sup>. In the same line of analysis although more focused on the gender issues, Brindle and Arnot identified three textbooks frameworks; these include "exclusionary, inclusionary and critical engagement"<sup>606</sup>. The authors claim the exclusionary is the most common approach and "exclude[s] both the private sphere and woman from its construction of the political domain"<sup>607</sup>. In this set of textbooks, there is clearly "general inattention and lack of interest in the position of women; [actually] it is not unusual for women to

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<sup>597</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>598</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>599</sup> Anyon, J. (1983) *Workers, Labor and Economic History, and Textbook Content*. In Michael Apple & Lois Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp., 37-60.

<sup>600</sup> Brindle, P. & Arnot, M. (1999) *England Expects Every Man to Do his Duty: The Gendering of the Citizenship Textbook 1940-1996*. *Oxford Review of Education*. 25 (1,2), pp., 103- 123.

<sup>601</sup> Anyon, J. (1983) *Workers, Labor and Economic History, and Textbook Content*. In Michael Apple & Lois Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp., 37-60, p., 37.

<sup>602</sup> Op. Cit., p., 49.

<sup>603</sup> Op. Cit., p., 49.

<sup>604</sup> Op. Cit., p., 49.

<sup>605</sup> Op. Cit., p., 49.

<sup>606</sup> Brindle, P. & Arnot, M. (1999) *England Expects Every Man to Do his Duty: The Gendering of the Citizenship Textbook 1940-1996*. *Oxford Review of Education*. 25 (1,2), pp., 103- 123, p., 108.

<sup>607</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108.

receive no attention at all”<sup>608</sup>. A very small group of textbooks “sought to include woman and the private sphere in various different ways”<sup>609</sup>. That is to say, a small minority of texts sought to include representations of women as citizens, however (with one exception) none of them portrayed women “within the polity of active [agents]”<sup>610</sup>. In this kind of textbooks, women are presented as mere ‘add ons’. And finally, there are textbooks with a critical engagement approach in which the women highlighted are both in the private and public spheres.

However in considering the way Michel Apple explicates the intricate issues around textbooks and Channel One, not only Grossberg and his colleagues and Hall’s perspectives, but also Chomsky, Zinn, hooks, Loewen, Foster and Nicholls, Anyon, and Brindle and Arnot’s approaches undeniably strengthen the claim portrayed by Michael Apple over the destructive role of the said texts. However, despite the similarities between the set of approaches that we used, there are also clear differences, say, between Chomsky and Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical positions. In fact Michael Apple’s approach, as already clarified, could not be considered as radical as Chomsky’s approach. Actually, one would be naive not to notice that Michael Apple avoided taking that position. In our view, Michael’s approach is much more similar to Zinn’s and hooks’s perspectives. At no point in his work is there any mention of that fact that U.S. history is grounded in a set of well-orchestrated lies. However, we are not claiming that given this lack of ‘radicalism’ that Chomsky and Michael Apple hold antagonistic perspectives. When asked about this absence, Michael Apple steered away from this kind of radical position towards textbooks.

Yes, I agree with the issue that you just raised. You have Chomsky in politics, Zinn in history, [Michael] Apple in curriculum and school knowledge. We all are asking similar kinds of questions. However, I am assuming that [curriculum knowledge] is selective with a vengeance. In other words, [curriculum knowledge] is not a simple selection: It is a selection that reproduces dominance and subordination which is what they are claiming as well. You have to understand that well before Zinn wrote a piece of history of the United States [particularly on Columbus], all of that was known and was in the academic literature, and I read a lot of academic work about that, I read a lot of academic history. However Zinn is brilliant because he writes for the popular

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<sup>608</sup> Op. Cit., p., 110.

<sup>609</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108.

<sup>610</sup> Op. Cit., p., 112.

press. But we were already protesting Columbus Day in the 60s before he wrote the book stressing the Columbus legacy as a lie. People already had assumed that before Columbus got here, there were artifacts of the Vikings in Newfoundland. We knew that. There had also been possible findings of the Chinese on the West Coast and of Africans on the East Coast of Latin America. That is, many people knew that Columbus probably wasn't the first. So all of these ideas were just circulating and I had that in the background of my mind. Anyone who was critical in education knew all that. We didn't have a coherent framework, the sort of narratives that Zinn gave us, but all that was known before Zinn pulled it all together<sup>611</sup>.

As one can see, the overlaps between Michael Apple's perspective and Chomsky's and Zinn's approaches are clear. However as we maintain, despite the similarities, there are also important differences between them. As we mentioned above, unlike Chomsky, Zinn or Loewen, Michael Apple does not base his analyses of textbook content on loaded words such as 'lie'. When asked about his difference, Michael Apple concurred with our reading,

I agree. I think you right. Remember what I am, and I think there's a reason for that. What's the claim of phenomenological sociology of knowledge? That truth is a construction, and I am trying hard not to talk about false consciousness. If something is counted as true by particular people it is true in its consequences. So yes, there are certain things that are lies, but I find that simply calling things lies is too simple. Why would people believe lies. The idea in my mind is people are sense-making apparatuses. The task is to understand those sense-making apparatuses. Otherwise you're left with this as always true because I believe it. This is always false because I believe its opposite. This creates a situation in which there are going to be enemies, and I'm trying hard not to fall back into those traps, and I'm trying to walk a very difficult line here to avoid simply relativizing the notion of truth. Let me give an example. When some people in Poland say Michael Apple is the first post-modernist, in some ways that's correct. What I am saying is that truth is dependent on the glasses you put on, and it is dependent on your social location. So the selective tradition takes the visions of truth of particular people and for them it is true, it is not a lie and they act on its consequences; the idea of the selective tradition is exactly that. It is not all of truth and in fact it may be a lie, but to call what you disagree with a lie is actually to be very uncomplicated. Not all stories are true. I cannot solve that but I know what the problem is. So on the one hand there are certain things that are lies. Columbus didn't

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<sup>611</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 42* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

discover America; that's a lie. However, actually it has some insight, and that's why they write it. The more complicated things are not simply lies. You think about why I have done that, think about how that leads to my discussion about good sense and bad sense. I do not want to go back into notions of false consciousness. I am now much more elegant. However, there are some statements, say, in *Ideology and Curriculum*, where you can basically say, look people, that's just a lie, it's wrong. An example would be when I talk about curricular history. Your vision of curricular history is wrong, it's just wrong, I can't believe in popular eugenics, it's class-based, it's anti-labor and anti-union, anti-immigrant, that's the real history. What you're saying is wrong. I don't want to say it's a lie because that involves some conscious issues, but it's wrong, and I'm making clear statements between right and wrong here. That's the real history. I don't want to get it reduced to lies<sup>612</sup>.

Although one would be naïve not to accept significant overlaps among the arguments raised by Michael Apple and those by the scholars mentioned just above on the textbook's role within schooling, in fact, we find that Michael Apple's analyses becomes even more powerful when articulated with Latour's position. In Latour's *Pandora's Hope*<sup>613</sup>, he asked, "Where were microbes before Pasteur?" Latour based his approach in what he calls 'three trials'; namely "(a) the thing itself, soon to be called ferment, (b) the story told by Pasteur to his colleagues at the Academy of Science, and (c) the reactions of Pasteur's interlocutors to what is so far only a story found in a written text"<sup>614</sup>, three trials that, according to Latour, should be "first distinguished and then aligned with one another"<sup>615</sup>. However as Latour highlights, "despite what the metaphor of 'trials' implies, phenomena are not 'out there' waiting for the researcher to access them"<sup>616</sup>. That is to say, "lactic acid ferments have to 'made visible' by Pasteur's work"<sup>617</sup>. Wisely Latour pushes the reader for a cautious understanding. That is "the optical metaphor may account for the visible but not for the 'making' something visible; [in other words] the industrial metaphor may explain why something is 'made', but not why it has thus become visible"<sup>618</sup>.

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<sup>612</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>613</sup> Latour, B. (1999) *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. London: Harvard University Press.

<sup>614</sup> Op. Cit., p., 122.

<sup>615</sup> Op. Cit., p., 122.

<sup>616</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>617</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

<sup>618</sup> Op. Cit., p., 139.

Thus, before the apparently simple question: ‘Did ferments exist before Pasteur made them?’, the answer must be ‘no’, they did not exist before he came along”<sup>619</sup>. It is quite important to understand that the complexity of such a question does not “reside in the ‘historicity’ of ferments but in the little expression ‘to make up’”<sup>620</sup>. Thus, as Latour argues, “if we meant by ‘historicity’ merely that our contemporary ‘representation’ of microorganisms dates from the mid-nineteenth century”<sup>621</sup> the concern is trivial. Conversely, if “we meant by ‘historicity’ merely that the ferments ‘evolve over time’ like the infamous cases of the flu virus or HIV, there would not be difficult either”<sup>622</sup>. As for the former case it “entails that we should be able to say that not only the microbes-for-us-humans changed in the 1850’s, but also the microbes-for-themselves [and] their encounter with Pasteur changed them as well; [in other words] Pasteur, so to speak, ‘happened’ to them”<sup>623</sup>. For the latter, “like that of all living species [...] the historicity of a ferment would be firmly rooted in nature [and] instead of being static, phenomena would be defined as dynamic”<sup>624</sup>. Clearly according to Latour’s analysis, the question ‘did ferments exist (or not) before Pasteur?’ could really signify two distinctive things, depending on the articulation: human-non-human and subjectivity-objectivity.

Let us pause here and question what one can draw from Latour’s analyses? To be more precise, what is the connection between Latour’s approach and Michael Apple’s scrutiny over (school and curriculum) knowledge? In comparing these two approaches, we think Michael Apple’s insight becomes even more powerful. Notwithstanding the fact that one can find overlapping nuances between Michael Apple’s and Latour’s approaches (for Michael Apple, as for Latour, ‘reality’ is not out there waiting to be discovered, or as Michael Apple commented, reality “doesn’t stalk around with a label”<sup>625</sup>), the fact is that for Latour ‘microbes’, ‘phenomena’ ‘reality’ or ‘knowledge’ only exist if one theorizes them. Accepting this could lead to a dangerous trap or intellectual ambush, since, if one does not theorize, say, poverty, segregation, racism, sexism, genderism, starvation, and so forth, it means that they do not exist. To put it

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<sup>619</sup> Op. Cit., p., 145.

<sup>620</sup> Op. Cit., p., 145.

<sup>621</sup> Op. Cit., p., 145.

<sup>622</sup> Op. Cit., p., 146.

<sup>623</sup> Op. Cit., p., 146.

<sup>624</sup> Op. Cit., p., 146.

<sup>625</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 43.

more bluntly, if these 'particular' painful social sagas do not 'happen' to someone, to use Latour's own words, this does not mean that they have no 'reality'. It is precisely here, where Michael Apple's approach proves more powerful. The very fact that textbook curriculum knowledge valorizes specific kinds of social 'phenomena', 'reality', or 'knowledge', while distorting and even obliterating many others does not mean that those 'many others' do not exist. Unfortunately, for a vast majority of the human population, realities such as poverty, starvation, racism, and sexism are very real underpinnings of their daily lives. As we mentioned previously, for Michael Apple, reality is a social construction and the real issue is trying to understand who participates in the construction of such realities. By being knowledgeable about this particular argument, one will be able to understand in a deep sense, how realities such as HIV, or the floods in Latin America (as Michael Apple<sup>626</sup> reminds us) and Southern Africa are social constructions, not only in the way they 'happened', but also (and this is of utter importance) the way the dominant societal power articulates the political, economic and cultural mechanisms that deal with and address those realities. Notwithstanding the fact that, say, epidemics should be seen as a dynamic phenomena as Latour points out, the issue is to interrogate much as we possibly can not only how it is 'made up' but who is being targeted and who gets the benefits from such a reality. One would be naïve to minimize (or even ignore) the relation of pollution damaging the ecosystem and floods (which destroys the premise of 'natural disasters') and not consider who those floods target, and what kind of policies are put in place to address these dramatic problems. Oddly enough, for both Michael Apple and Latour a key concern is how 'phenomena', 'reality' and 'knowledge' are made up. For Michael Apple, clearly, 'phenomena', 'reality', and 'knowledge' are social constructions 'overdetermined' by economic, cultural, ideological, and political practices, yet based on a selective tradition. For him the issue is trying to see who benefits from 'particular' social constructions. In fact, one of Michael Apple's central questions is who benefits if we believe in specific social constructions. To make it short, and to dig a bit deeper within Michael Apple's critical progressive theories of curriculum construction, it is important to think about why racism 'happened' (to use Latour's terminology), say, to Paul (from *Official Knowledge*) in such humiliating ways but 'happened' in quite different forms for many of Paul's peers.

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<sup>626</sup> Op. Cit.

As we observed earlier with regard to the peace rally posters, the issue is to perceive not only why the invasion of Iraq ‘happened’, but also why mainstream media express particular kinds of arguments while obliterating so many others. We must ask why particular kinds of arguments ‘happen’ to be prized, not only by the mainstream media, but also by the textbook’s content. Moreover, why are messages such as those we observed at the rally absent from the mainstream media, which presented the war as something inevitable, and not as an invasion. Why has the mainstream media not denounced the ‘motive for the war’ (there was no such thing as weapons of mass destruction till now) and shifted the focus to Laci Peterson’s murder?<sup>627</sup> It is precisely this kind of ‘happening’, which makes Michael Apple question who really benefits from them. The same concerns are true for textbooks. According to Michael Apple, the issue is to understand who benefits from the fact that particular views of reality are prized while too many others are continuously silenced. Why do particular ‘happenings’ never receive notable space within the textbook content, and when they do, why is it something that is added on and often distorted. To make it short, why do specific ‘happenings’ (one’s that comprise the daily life of so many individuals) only occur to particular ‘minorities’, and why are they absent or distorted within the textbook content? These questions remind us of Jenks’s approach towards the ‘making’ of (an unequal) social reality. As he stresses, “we should attempt to reject the assumption that the individual as a social being has in some way been placed into society, that consists of a pre-established static set of pattern relations, which he then comes to know [or to use Latour’s terminology, ‘happens’ to him/her] by virtue of his common membership, that is, through the process of socialization”<sup>628</sup>. Quite conversely “we should pose as our problematic concern the possibility that the individual, through the on-going process of ‘knowing’, or being-in-the-world, has constructed and continues to construct for himself in concert with others, a ‘sense’ of his social existence and his social environment as patterned and ordered”<sup>629</sup>. To make it short, as Jenks argues, the task is “not to make

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<sup>627</sup> Laci Peterson disappeared from home at the end of last year. She was pregnant. Both her body, and the ‘unborn child’ were founded in a lake more than a half year after her disappearance. Her husband -Scott Peterson - has been arrested and charged as the murderer of Laci and their son. The case is currently on court and in the US, unfortunately, people are before another “soap opera”, one which the media ‘fabricate’ its own court. Coincidentally or not, the media headlines and prime times shifted substantively from the War on Iraq, to the Laci Peterson’s case.

<sup>628</sup> Jenks, C. (1977) Introduction. In C. Jenks (ed) *Rationality, Education and the Social Organization of Knowledge. Papers for a Reflexive Sociology of Education*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp., 1-8, p., 2.

<sup>629</sup> Op. Cit., p., 2.

statements about the 'real' forms of the world, but rather examine the meanings and the possibilities provided by these forms as constructed within a particular social order"<sup>630</sup>.

In the preceding discussion, we have attempted to accomplish a set of complex purposes. First we tried to lay out Michael Apple's argument concerning curriculum knowledge. In so doing, we were able to document that, according to Michael Apple, curriculum knowledge is deeply grounded both in the textbooks and also in a new version of text, Channel One. Second, we also tried to clarify how Michael Apple builds his case on textbooks and Channel One. In so doing, we documented the ideas that underpin Michael Apple's visions of curriculum knowledge as a regulated compromised commodity, and we dared 'to invite' for our scrutiny other critical approaches (Grossberg and his colleagues, Hall, Chomsky, Zinn, hooks, Loewen, Foster and Nicholls, Anyon, Brindle and Arnot, Torres Santomé, and Latour) with the aim of making Michael Apple's political and pedagogical arguments more powerful, but also to unveil and document overtly that as we keep interrogating Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control), its complexity *Applean* 'leitmotiv' becomes more apparent. At this particular point of our discussion, it seems clear that Michael Apple's curriculum notion is not only limited to a power and social control device, but should be seen as a regulated compromised commodity which (and this is rather crucial) participates dynamically in the construction of political, economic and cultural identities. To be more precise, at this particular point of our work, Michael Apple's curriculum notion is one of identity construction. This kind of 'conclusion', among many others, that we keep 'stumbling' upon allows us to advance here that Michael Apple, while not precisely a radical critical political and pedagogical author such as Chomsky (with regards this particular issue), is in a way a "founder of discursivit[ies]"<sup>631</sup>, to use Foucault's terminology. We will return to this issue in the final chapter. Challenged by this concern, Michael Apple argues that he should not be perceived as the one who staked a claim or marked the territory. However, as he straightforwardly stresses, identity has been one of the key issues in his work:

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<sup>630</sup> Op. Cit., pp, 2-3.

<sup>631</sup> Foucault, M. (1979) What is an Author? In J. Harari (ed) *Textual Strategies. Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. New York: Cornell University Press, pp., 141-160, p., 154.



You're right. Let us take as an example *Cultural Politics and Education*. Most identity work is bourgeois; it is about individuals. That is wrong. And while it's very powerful and it's a major advance, it assumes that work on identity is always progressive. I have done a lot of work on identity, a huge amount, but I am interested in the formation of hegemonic identity because I look at the balance of power and people, and the formation of counter-hegemonic identities. In fact, the whole section on hidden curriculum is about counter-hegemonic identity. The analysis using, say, Willis and language issues and Creole was about identity, well before any of this identity work was talked about<sup>632</sup>.

Before we end this section, and following the same strategy used in the previous section, we want to note a few silences or concerns in the way Michael Apple builds his arguments on curriculum knowledge that could be rather confusing for the reader, some of which will probably need to be dealt with by Michael Apple in the near future. One of our concerns with Michael Apple's approach towards curriculum knowledge is the subsumed 'conflict' between form vs. content. Michael Apple's political and pedagogical work builds space for this reasonable and realistic claim that prizes the content over the form. This is a very sensible claim, but one could argue it is also quite weak. We are not claiming here that Michael Apple ignores the curriculum form. In fact such a claim would be a blatant misreading of Michael Apple's perspective, since in both *Ideology and Curriculum* and *Teachers and Texts*, (and a good deal of work on curriculum form is found in *Education and Power*) one can identify how Michael Apple tries to critique curriculum form. In the former book, one can notice the claim that child-centered curriculum might lead to social reproduction, and in the latter, which dissects the political economy of the textbooks, he finds textbooks to be part of a prepackaged curriculum strategy commodity. Thus, it seems Michael Apple is pushing for the reorganization of form.

However we maintain that Michael Apple is more concerned with issues of curriculum content, traceable by submitting his work to a surgical analysis. This *Appleian* dilemma (one that is also identifiable within a particular curricular progressive tradition) pushed us to a particular critical 'window', one that constructed the following concern: how can one change the curriculum content without changing the curriculum

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<sup>632</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 43* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

form? That is to say, is it possible to claim radical critical curriculum content within a 'traditional' curriculum form?

In fact, the 'now' famous teacher's concern *What Do I Do on Monday* is deeply rooted both in the content and the form. To be more precise, what we are claiming is that whereas a Michael Apple reader knows that one of his major concerns is to denounce (and thus deconstruct) curriculum knowledge as a selective tradition, the fact is that that a Michael Apple reader cannot figure out clearly what his political and pedagogical position towards form is, despite the fact that 'form' should not be an absent issue. One of our intuitions concerning the issue of curriculum form is that unavoidable 'technicality' surrounds such an issue. However, this 'technicality' is also at the very root of teachers' and students' daily classrooms lives and, in fact, interferes quite dynamically in the way curriculum content unfolds. Irrefutably Michael Apple's arguments about curriculum forms are not as clearly articulated as his arguments on curriculum content.

Challenged by this concern Michael Apple does not hesitate to respond:

To understand this historically, to understand my writing, you have to understand the context of when they were written. In the 60s and early 70s, the major curriculum artifacts were concerned with the form. The content was something government-mandated; it was in every school. Also many universities had government-funded projects to create mathematics, history, and even the arts in pre-packaged forms. So when I talk about disciplinary issues and challenge it, you have to understand that the curriculum field has now been marginalized. There's nothing to do. It's already done. So you have to understand that the emphasis on disciplinary form as the dominant form is historical. That's what was there, that's what we're fighting against. Remember I also have in *Ideology and Curriculum* a very damning discussion of child-centered curriculum—that it leads to social reproduction. So what I'm saying is there's no one answer, but if the task is to be critical of every form of curriculum, and since I am concerned with social problems, the wisest model is unit planning, because I want the curriculum to focus on social problems. You are right that I never articulated this issue. I guess my point would be the following: I want a commitment towards core-and social problems-centered issue unit planning as a practice, but without a statement that says discipline-centered curriculum is always wrong. I would never want to totally dismiss disciplinary material. Well I wasn't ready to make that statement then. I become more apt to look at forms as a powerful issue in *Education and Power* than in *Ideology and Curriculum* and the reason is that I'd then read more carefully and I agreed that the form

that organizes knowledge together is profoundly important. However, I did not agree with Bernstein and many others who said that form was more important. I am a curriculum person and content is crucial to me. I honestly think that the debate over the form gets so involved in the technical issues of curriculum making, that it forgets the question of whose knowledge. Too often it's always about organizing materials. I didn't want to fall back into the trap of looking at form only because that leads to the idea that if you get form, content takes care of itself, and part of my argument throughout all of these books was that content counts. Again it seems to me that you're correct. I'm dealing with content and form. However content is more powerful<sup>633</sup>.

As one can clearly see, Michael Apple concurs with our concerns. That is to say, the imbalance between attention to curriculum form *vs.* curriculum content is found in his work. In fact, Michael Apple recognizes the quite natural difficulties that accompany any attempts to create 'the form' for a radical critical curriculum which seeks a democratic and just pedagogical practice. On the other hand, Michael Apple explicitly recognizes that the best way to do curriculum is by using the integrative approach.

It is precisely in the context of this issue that we were driven to another concern in Michael Apple's work. That is, albeit one should not ignore Michael Apple's piece *If Teacher Assessment is the Answer, What is the Question*<sup>634</sup>, the fact is that the evaluation issue, a corner stone in any curriculum process, is not addressed in his work. While Michael Apple does raise concerns about the process of evaluation, the fact is that evaluation itself and ample theoretical analyses of evaluation as a political regulatory tool are seemingly absent from his work. When confronted with this claim, Michael Apple argued the following:

Yes. In the article that you just mentioned, *If Teacher Assessment is the Answer, What is the Question*, I do deal with evaluation. I did not include it in the books because it is not sophisticated enough; it is a popular piece. It's been reprinted in Greece twice, and reprinted in Brazil and reprinted in Spain; it's been reprinted in Japanese and Korean. It's become a very famous piece outside of the United States, and in the United States, it's published in a law journal actually, a bizarre kind of thing. However, someday I will put together a book of my

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<sup>633</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 42* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>634</sup> Apple, Michael (1997) *If Teacher Assessment is the Answer, What is the Question? The Long Term View*, 3 (4), pp., 50-55.

popular theses. It is not long enough, it is not substantive enough, it is not theorized, but it is very concrete and I think very serious. But, it was my attempt to fill that hole, because I recognized that I hadn't talked about that. So you will forgive me for saying this, but you know that I write much more than my books and I can't do everything in the books<sup>635</sup>.

While we agree that "he can't do everything in the books"<sup>636</sup>, (and despite the fact, that one should flag that, say in *Power, Meaning and Identity*<sup>637</sup>, Michael Apple opens some space for the 'social evaluation of curriculum') the fact is that evaluation policies have to be seen as one of the most significant curriculum devices that could undercut any social attempt of curriculum democratization. As all teachers know well, too many really democratic curriculum practices are jeopardized or never take place given the evaluation mechanisms, which attempt to correct system 'malfunctions'. Thus, for teachers concerned with a just and democratic curriculum practice, traditional evaluation policies and practices are often nightmares.

A third concern is yet another puzzling silence that one stumbles upon in Michael Apple's political and pedagogical 'journey'. It is an irrefutable fact that Michael Apple's pen does not hesitate to denounce social inequalities, economic and cultural segregation, and the miserable life of millions of individuals all over the world, and the way schools, in general, and curriculum, in particular, are not 'innocent' in that painful societal saga. Throughout Michael Apple's work are claims for the way particular identities are persistently marginalized, or even obliterated from the 'core' and pushed to the margins. Over and over, one reads ideologically gendered, raced and classed words such as Latino, Latina, Chicano, Chicana, Women, people of color, African-American, words that one might claim are the buzz graphemes within Michael Apple's political and pedagogical struggle. However, and without any intention of minimizing this well achieved political and pedagogical strategy, it is precisely the presence of these, what we call 'buzz graphemes', within Michael Apple's work that made us notice a startling absence. While arguing for real social justice and against ways the less advantaged have been systematically silenced with our societies, while highlighting

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<sup>635</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 42* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>636</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>637</sup> Apple, Michael (1999) *Power, Meaning and Identity. Essays in Critical Educational Studies*. New York: Peter Lang.

particular ideologically gendered, raced and classed identities such as Latino, Latina, Chicano, Chicana, Women, people of color, African-American, in fact, Michael Apple never addresses Native American concerns. Let me pause for a bit here, since this is a very delicate issue. Despite the fact that one should not minimize or ‘domesticate’ the painful levels of exploitation and segregation that, say, black people have experienced within the U.S., there is irrefutable and overwhelming evidence that during the U.S. Civil War too many Native Americans were indeed killed by ‘black bullets’. This particular historical event bears testimony that individuals can act within apparently paradoxical subject positions such as dominated vs. dominant (which is not the aim of our research). The fact is, Michael Apple’s silence towards Native Americans within his political and pedagogical scope is, somehow odd. Moreover, this particular concern becomes even harder to understand if one takes into account that Michael Apple is a member of the ‘International Research Institute on Maori and Indigenous Education’ in New Zealand. Questioned about this ‘contradiction’, Michael Apple acknowledges the omission:

Yes. This is a criticism that I willingly accept, and I think it is accurate. Growing up in urban areas, certain groups of people were on my mind constantly. Black and brown could just be commonsensical. When I got here [i.e. UW-Madison], I worked with people from the reservation and I worked with Native American activists so I was a consultant on some of the Native American law work that was going on at the law school over getting Native American treaty rights that had been abridged. But I didn’t write about it, and it’s interesting and I think it is a justifiable criticism that I did not integrate that into my analysis. Later on, it became clear to me how important that was, and then I began to talk about that in *Educating the Right Way*. So certain dynamics get politicized for me, and I have to take them very, very seriously. So I take it as a serious and legitimate criticism the absent presence of indigenous people, in my work. I guess I will have to do something about that<sup>638</sup>.

This particular concern opens the door for us to rethink other silences or absences within Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical work. Thus, and despite the fact that one can never write about everything, it is difficult to understand the lack of attention

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<sup>638</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 46* recorded in office “e” of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

given to queer perspectives and approaches in Michael Apple's work. We are not making the claim here that Michael Apple is not sensitive to the importance of queer approaches in helping to expose specific social biases. However, one has to admit that this absence is even more difficult to understand, since Michael Apple "grew up with [an] uncle who was gay, and he "used to spend summers with [his] uncle who was an opera singer and [he used to go] to the Metropolitan Opera with him all the time, and [he] loved him dearly"<sup>639</sup>. In the context of our concern, Michael Apple commented:

That is again a justifiable criticism, it's a paradox, and I have no excuse for that. I do not think there is an excuse; it is a justifiable criticism. However, you should not ignore the fact that I am now interacting over a 10-year period with groups of people where race is defined as indigeneity and because I'm working with them directly and they're drawing heavily on my work, this becomes increasingly powerful. But, I don't want it to show up as just an add-on to the list. Queers [plus] Native Americans [plus], African Americans, etc., etc., etc. That to me is totally inadequate. So on the stuff that I do for instance in *Educating the Right Way* where I look at research in New Zealand and say who is getting helped and hurt here, it's not just working class people, it's nodes. The reason that I was so taken with BAEO<sup>640</sup> was not about BAEO. It's because way before BAEO, Maori activists were using the equivalent of vouchers in New Zealand to build schools and I'm working with them on building and justifying those schools. So it is this odd combination of being influenced by groups, not wanting it to be just an add-on, and letting it influence the larger research agenda, which I think is the more serious act. You don't just name it by the way there's another group we can add, but in what way does it change the way you would look at neo-liberal reform? I guess that doesn't evacuate the criticism of the paradox, you know, so it's transforming my fundamental questions and I'm much more involved in thinking about the agency of oppressed people and I'm using these things for their own purposes. Nevertheless, I am not finding a way to talk about that concretely in my books other than changing the way I think about issues. That is again a justifiable criticism. I do not think there is an excuse<sup>641</sup>.

Another concern that we think it is important to note is the way Michael Apple builds specific arguments, about less advantaged individuals. Notably Michael Apple (without

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<sup>639</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 47* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>640</sup> BAEO - Black Alliance for Educational Options.

<sup>641</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 46* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

any essentialist intentions) does not hesitate to produce arguments on issues that connect with the dynamics of class, race, and gender. However, and especially for someone cannot detach himself from his African background (one in which ethnicity is prioritized over race), it is difficult to understand why Michael Apple anchored some of his arguments within race dynamics and not within ethnicity dynamics, which arguably underpin some of the major race problematics. He responded as follows:

For two reasons and this comes from biography. The fault line in the United States that I grew up with, besides class, was race, and it wasn't about ethnicity. It was white, brown, and black, in Paterson, New Jersey, a textile mill city, a heavy industry city. It was about low paid, low skilled—at least officially—labor, with people coming up from the South working in the mills, and with about 40% of the people being African American. I was in a school as a child that was largely African American. I was in a high school where the majority of students were African American, and the minority were White-European Americans. So questions of ethnicity are not in my face. As you know, as a high school student, I was deeply involved politically. I was publicity director for the Paterson chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality when white people were still deeply involved, before, for reasons that I agree with, it had to become an all-black organization to find its strengths. So these weren't subtle issues, that is this raised the color line in cities that were still segregated, where overt discrimination was powerful, where there were still advertisements and newspapers that said 'white person wanted'. Where there would be whole parts of the city which refused to rent to black people. Within African communities, that issue of maintaining particular tribal traditions and ethnic traditions may occur with some linguistic issues and foods and things like that, but by and large African Americans are together. This insight is also based on personal experiences which were then substantiated again with my black son. The second has to do with the way ethnicity is dealt with in the United States. We're supposedly all "ethnic". If you lived here, you would be Mozambiquan-American. And I would be Russian-American or Polish-American and somebody else would be German-American or Italian-American, and we're all the same as African-American, or Native Americans, it's all ethnicity. Well I do not agree with that. I think is the academic way of saying that ethnicity does not equal race, that to be Right and ethnic and to put the hyphen after your name on Italian-American is to argue for, (and has some positive moments) a logical equivalent that has no basis in real history, and I argued for this in *Official Knowledge* as well as in other books. To say that we are all immigrants, hence all hyphenated, therefore all equal, is to say that the middle passage where millions of people never made it to the shore, or the giving of smallpox-infected blankets as part of official U.S. policy to indigenous people, that that's the same as coming in shitty conditions to go work in the mills of New York. That's not the same. Both of the first two are murder. There's a real difference between murder and enslavement and

genocide for native people and the hard and difficult conditions some people faced. So even though Jews suffered massively and at some points murderously and were called black, and Irish suffered massively, sometimes murderously, were called black, (there were books on how the Irish become white) it's still not the same as 400 years of enslavement<sup>642</sup>.

Although we concur with some of the arguments that Michael Apple raises—the flamboyant grand narrative that 'we are all immigrants' should be dismissed, since it is nothing more than an ostentatious humanism, which erases the real history—the fact is, we are not sure if minimizing (or even erasing) ethnic dynamics in order to fight a 'common enemy' is in fact dealing with or solving ethnicity interfaces. Macedo and Bartolomé's research can help us great deal here. As they argue, we need to understand "how ethnicity and race interpenetrate each other"<sup>643</sup> and in so doing we will be able to 'rescue' ethnicity from falling in a tribalistic concept, one that is profoundly powerful amongst segregationist policies. As for (Southern) Africa—and we can not erase our background—the idea within the millions of black individuals and communities that 'we all are black' is not a neutral or pacific position. And it is precisely this concern that pushes us to another complex one, which is the way Michael Apple builds on language to juxtapose and confront specific identities, which, in our view, raises some worries. Again, although we concur with Michael Apple that one should be aware that 'we' are not all the 'same' immigrants, the fact is, it is quite puzzling to understand the base upon which Michael Apple addresses some identity categories using graphemes such as Latino, Latina, Chicano, Chicana, People of Color, and African-Americans, and other identity categories using the grapheme White. Actually Michael Apple uses graphemes such as Black and African-American (although he prefers the latter) to address a particular identity category. Probably, to do justice to history, the only non-hyphenized identities in what is now the U.S. are the identities that are coined as Native-Americans. In essence, what we are claiming here is the invariability and also the 'imbalance' in identity categories that Michael Apple utilizes to critique segregation issues. We know that one cannot reduce everything to language, and we think that the reader will understand that that is not the issue here. The issue is that by the 'graphem[i]zation' of a

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<sup>642</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 47* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>643</sup> Macedo, D., and Bartolomé, L. (2001) *Dancing With Bigotry. Beyond the Politics of Tolerance*. New York: Palgrave, p., 3.



specific identifying category such as 'White' and not 'European-American', juxtaposed and confronted with 'African-American, we wonder if Michael Apple is not really falling (unconsciously) into a dangerous segregation trap. In order to justifiably deal with one painful secular segregation issue, he unintentionally constructs another one. After all the very issue of 'hiphenizice' particular categories, say, African-American, drives us to a puzzling position. That is only 'white' does not need any pre-fix (or pre-'epithet') to function as a social category. In a way 'hyphenizing' could be seen as a need to add something that 'is not there'; it seems that without the 'prefix' they could not function as a social category. Challenged by this perspective Michael Apple commented as follows:

You have to understand that word changes are not simply word changes, they're changes in political consciousness for the society as well as me. So remember the history of these words are like colored people, to Negroes, to Black, to African Americans, and that has a long political history and usually Black and African Americans are now used often simultaneously. So there are Black Studies programs, but there are also African American Studies programs. Here it is called African American Studies and I tend to use them interchangeably but increasingly want to say African American, in recognition of the material I've been taught. Black people who say they're African American want to specify that to be African American is to be somewhat different than Afro-Caribbean, or Afro-Brazilian. They are all black but there is something specific about being African American, so that's the sort of issue that's on my mind. The question of Latino/Latina and Chicano/Chicana is a recognition of the change in politics of a non-essentializing politics. The traditional word was Hispanic. That is identity politics. Fijians are not the same as Samoans are not the same as people from elsewhere, Carroll Islands, Norfolk Islands, etc. So increasingly people wish to name themselves and people who are from Mexico are different from the people from Argentina. They're not the same as people from Brazil or Guatemala. So I have tried to recognize that by using a more complicated word, this counts as a way to recognize a non-essentialist position that, for instance, e that Chicanos and Chicanas are not mergeable into everybody from Latin America. Now the issue about White vs. European Americans, that's a complicated issue and I don't think it's rational. I'm not making these choices consciously. I will sometimes increasingly talk about European Americans; in some of the new books I've talked about that. However, there's a lot of material on the politics of whiteness and white folks who live places other than Europe that has influenced me as well. An example would be in Mozambique. Though you're being here means that you're not quite white, but you're very white in a context of a largely black society. So because I've done increasingly more amount of work on the issue of whiteness as a dominant category, sometimes I'll use white and sometimes I'll use European American. It's not always a conscious choice in that it depends

on what I'm talking about as to what word comes out. If I'm talking about whiteness, I tend to use white, and not European Americans. But it's not a thing where I've got a word list and I'm saying well in this context I consciously will use European Americans and in this context I'll consciously use white, or in this context I'll consciously use black and in this context I'll consciously use African American. It's more complicated than that. There's no decision rule that I have in my head about that, but those are the tensions that I'm trying to speak to<sup>644</sup>.

Before we end our analyses in this section, we will note yet another 'contradiction' within Michael Apple's radical critical progressive curriculum work. As we scrutinized at length in chapter two, Michael Apple not only has a "very strong union background [since he] comes from a union family"<sup>645</sup>, but he also was Vice-president and President of a Teachers Union in New Jersey. As one can easily see from one of our 'informal' conversations, in his mind there is an undeniable connection between workers and unions<sup>646</sup>. However, it is quite difficult for one to understand, why, despite such a political and pedagogical learning experience which Michael Apple describes as his Unionism period<sup>647</sup>, Unionism is profoundly absent within Michael Apple's arguments on the curriculum and the politics of knowledge. Moreover, this silence becomes more puzzling, considering he was once arrested in South Korea and one of the reasons was his support for an independent Korean Teacher Union. We are not claiming here that Michael Apple has turned his back on issues of activism and Unionism. In fact that would be a simplistic argument, and a misreading of his major arguments. After all, in one of his co-authored articles (with Jae-Ho Ko)<sup>648</sup>, Michael Apple does deal with Unionism, however it is within the South Korean context. Our concern becomes even more important (we think) since Unionism is not 'obsolete ammunition' in his struggle against the political turn to the right. It is just not 'there'. We are trying to understand this political and pedagogical discontinuity, this distance and detachment towards Unionism, which we are quite sure might be a strategy to avoid challenging particular kinds of approaches used by the Unions. It seems Michael Apple does not see

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<sup>644</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 46*, recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>645</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 16*, recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>646</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>647</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>648</sup> Ko, Jae-Ho and Apple, Michael (1999) Teachers, Politics and Democracy: The Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union and the Struggle for Independence. *Educational and Social Justice*, 2 (1), pp., 67-73.

Union(ism) as a contemporary ‘apparatus’ that could help him derail the ‘conservative reign’. Michael Apple acknowledged the legitimacy of our concerns, and the reasons for such problematic silence.

Yes. I agree with you. I think that is a legitimate criticism. I had written something quite substantive with a friend and colleague of mine about the struggles to form Korean teachers’ unions because I participated in that. It’s quite a nice piece in a journal called *Education and Social Justice*. However, you are quite right. In terms of the U.S. I haven’t written a lot about that. Actually, I’ve not thought about this before. I have had very complicated relationships with the unions. As an example, I want to defend teachers unions but if I were to have written something very serious, during the last 20 years, I would have had to attack parts of what they have stood for in terms of educational policy. Let me give two examples. Albert Shanker was the president of the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) and that’s the most laborist of the teacher unions. The NEA (National Education Association) tended to be more conservative historically, had administrators in it until they stopped doing that, and it was an association, not a union. Albert Shanker, one of the leaders of the social democrat party, was a traditional social democrat who became a neo-conservative. At that time there were serious attempts by Jewish teachers and black communities to gain control of curriculum and teaching and control of schools in New York. Shanker was from New York and the first president of the New York, the biggest affiliate of the union. He felt that we couldn’t do this. He was concerned with meritocracy. Because for Jews, to make it in the system, and in New York, the path to mobility for people who were of Jewish heritage was teaching or social work. So he felt that this was a dismissal of merit and it would lead to more anti-Semitism. This was not stupid; there are some elements of good sense in there. But Shanker became then sort of a Hirsch supporter, seriously. So Hirsch’s first material on education was published in the *American Educator*, the AFT journal. I’d have had to go after Shanker and I have to engage in some public conversations that were not so pleasant. I’d have had to go after him and I’d have had to go after the union at a time when unions were being attacked massively. I’d also have had to call the union, and its defense of teacher autonomy, racist. That is the contradiction—to defend teacher autonomy could in fact lead to positioning yourself as the expert at the very same time when social movements from below, among black and brown people, for example, were saying that we want to limit your autonomy so that we have a voice. The claim from below was that “We must participate”, and I fully support that. But I also fully support teachers’ rights and I have to write very coherently about that contradiction and I’d have to take sides. I don’t know how to adjudicate among those sides easily. It’s a very tough issue. What I want is a defense of teacher professionalism, but not at the expense of other oppressed groups. I must admit right now that I don’t know what the

answer is yet on that. I know vaguely what it looks like, and I can talk about it in practice, but I can't theorize it yet. Your criticism is accurate<sup>649</sup>.

We have been trying to lay out Michael Apple's arguments and the way he builds his case for curriculum knowledge as a set of regulated compromises 'dancing' between 'consumerism' and 'commodity-ism'. In so doing we also notice how Michael Apple's line of thought (curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control) slowly becomes more and more complicated, sophisticated, and thus strong. Based on this evidence, we agree with Michael Apple that curriculum is not a weak tool of power and social control (as we noted previously, an approach already visible in the works of Dewey, Bode, Riggs, Counts, and Brameld), but rather a powerful mechanism that 'tunes up' and perpetuates a particular assemblage of knowledge which should be seen as a result of political, economic and cultural compromises, mirroring a myriad of struggles. Thus and as we had the opportunity to analyze elsewhere<sup>650</sup>, under Michael Apple's political scrutiny of curriculum knowledge, curriculum becomes not only a mechanism of power and social control, but also a perfect 'human artifact', an assemblage of compromised knowledge, a facsimile of a myriad of struggles, confrontations and concessions. We also highlighted that as we keep diving into Michael Apple's 'leitmotiv', the denser it becomes. We also claim that by arguing curriculum knowledge is a set of regulated practices that 'treats' and 'sells' individuals as consumers and commodities, Michael Apple was in fact arguing for the construction of particular identities and, in so doing, he marked curriculum also as a device for the construction of political, economic and cultural identities. As we already mentioned, for Michael Apple, the curriculum notion is one of identity. This particular curricular conception will become more accurate when we analyze Michael Apple's arguments of the conservative epoch and its impact on education, in general, and curriculum, in particular, arguments that we intend to pursue in the next section.

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<sup>649</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 47*, recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>650</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA.

### 5.6. 'Saying the Unsayable': The Struggle Over Commonsense

As noted recurrently throughout this work, with particular emphasis in this chapter, one of Michael Apple's central concerns since the mid 1980's is what he names as 'the right turn' within education, despite the fact that already in 1979's *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>651</sup>, the author showed his concerns for rightist policy trends. In this work, he argued that the kind of economic system in which schools (did) operate "is organized in such a way that it can create only a certain amount of jobs and still maintain high profit levels for corporations"<sup>652</sup>. Thus, one would be clearly naïve in overlooking that already at the beginning of his work, Michael Apple was making the claim that the relation between a just vs. unjust society (was) is deeply connected to market mechanisms and their needs.

This particular concern should be understood under the same line of thought of curriculum as a mechanism of power and social control, a leitmotiv that, as we discussed in the previous section, becomes much more complex and powerful when Michael Apple engaged himself in a truthful analyses of curriculum content, disparaging what he calls official-legitimate knowledge, both as a commodity and as a compromised, politically segregated assemblage. That is to say, he ends up complexifying his own leitmotiv. To be more precise, and according to Michael Apple's lenses and theoretical 'artillery' on curriculum content—one that we fully sympathize with—curriculum should be perceived, not only as a political device that helps promulgate unequal power relations and social control, but also as a process of political, economic and cultural struggles that result in a specific political compromise, which in our neoliberal era, turns it into a commodity. It is an intricate process profoundly connected with the (re)production of identities.

Our aim in this particular section is to analyze Michael Apple's challenges to the 'rightist contemporary trend'. Again, as we keep arguing, there are many ways through which one could critically analyze Michael Apple's positions and arguments against the current "right turn" within education. One way, quite insightful we believe, is to dig

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<sup>651</sup> Apple, Michael (1979) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

<sup>652</sup> Op. Cit., p., 36.

through reasons why the 'right' has been able to establish itself as a powerful hegemonic platform. Michael Apple argues that one reason the right has gained such a victory is because their policies interfere commonsensically within the common sense (I apologize for the pleonasm) by changing the very meaning of key social concepts. Furthermore, the media helps uphold those policies by interfering dynamically within the commonsense

Before we start our analyses of the way the commonsense is under a non-stop process of adulterine meanings, and around the role that the media plays in the meaning-making process, it will be wise to clarify what one might call the cartography put forward by Michael Apple of the contradictory social groups which are the 'enzymes' of this 'right turn'.

Actually, as we had the opportunity to mention elsewhere<sup>653</sup>, analyzing the New Right policies and their impact within education, requires deep awareness of their very 'text' and 'context'. We must highlight here that we are not making the claim that 'text' and 'context' should be perceived as two separate political spheres, in which one determines the other. Conversely, they are overdetermined and we are using this terminology simply as a form of systematization.

Understanding accurately the emergence and consequent consolidation of the New Right policies within education implies that one pay close attention to what one could call the economic and political maternity of these policies. The New Right political, economic, and cultural framework did not come 'out of the blue', and it would injudicious to see them as a kind of 'magic wand' political phenomena. That is to say, a truthful analysis of their emergence and the effects of the new right policies, in this particular case, within education, in general, and curriculum, in particular, implies that one must be aware of the emergence of *Reaganism-Bushism* and *Thatcherism-Majorism* in the United States and England, considered by many scholars as the high point of the 'right turn'. Given the pertinence of the issue at stake here, and before we discuss Michael Apple's 'cartography', it is important to consider the economic and political platforms for the New Right policies as emerging from *Reganism* and *Thatcherism*. In

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<sup>653</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) El Currículo Como Práctica de Significaciones. *Kikiriki*, Cooperação Educativa, nº 62-63, pp., 8-16.; Paraskeva, J. (2001) Text and Context of Curriculum Integration in Portugal. *American Education Studies Association*. Miami; Paraskeva, J. (2002) Curriculum.com: A Extrema-Unção (neoliberal) à Escolarização Pública. *Educação & Realidade*, 26 (1), pp., 59-92.

order to do that, we will anchor our analyses in House's, Hall's and Michael Apple's approaches.

As House highlights, the 1980's "will be known as the Reagan decade"<sup>654</sup>. According to him, the conservative 'right turn' in the 1980's should be understood as a well-built reaction to the prevailing "liberal economic view of education [a view that holds] that if one increases the educational achievement of students, even poor students from minority backgrounds, they will eventually secure better jobs, advance themselves socially, and help the economy"<sup>655</sup>. This political argument was thoroughly distorted during the 1980's, and conservatives challenged the consequentiality of human capital, claiming poor education as the main cause that led students to unemployment. As House highlights, "students come to be seen as not simply uneducated, but as undisciplined—the fault of educators, the students themselves, their families, and lax government policies—and this new vision led to quite different educational policies"<sup>656</sup>. Persisting with his interesting argument against *Reaganism*, House highlights Murray's *Losing Ground: America Social Policy 1950-1980*<sup>657</sup>, as the most influential social policy work of the 1980's. Scrutinizing Murray's approach, House argues that, according to Murray, the cause of societal and educational decline and chaos could be reduced to the simple fact "that government programs had given the poor too much, [and the key to this 'saga'] was to scrap the entire welfare and income-support structure for working-age persons, so that the only alternative was the job market"<sup>658</sup>. As House straightforwardly pointed out, for Murray the prescription to the social dilemma was quite simple: "Do not study, and we will throw you out; commit crimes, and we will put you in jail; do not work, and we will make sure your existence is so uncomfortable that any job will be preferable to it"<sup>659</sup>.

It is within this context that *Reaganism* should be perceived and politically contextualized. As House argues, "the Reagan administration pursued economic policies that reduced taxes and greatly increased expenditures on the military, thus

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<sup>654</sup> House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 13.

<sup>655</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>656</sup> Op. Cit., p., 14.

<sup>657</sup> Murray, Apud House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 13.

<sup>658</sup> Op. Cit., p., 14.

<sup>659</sup> Op. Cit., p., 14.

incurring the largest national debt in history [let alone the undeniable evidence that] inequality of income and wealth among Americans increased dramatically”<sup>660</sup>. The dimensions of this inequality are quite clear in Philips’ study:

By several measurements, the United States in the late twentieth century led all other major industrial nations in the gap dividing the upper fifth of the population from the lower—in the disparity between top and bottom. In 1981, the top 1 percent of taxpayers had 8.1% of total reported income; by 1986 they had 14.7%. From 1977 to 1987, the top 1 percent of family after-tax income went from \$174,498 to \$303, 900, a 74.2% increase. The bottom 10 percent went from \$3,528 to \$3,157, a 10.5% decrease. This trend continued. By 1989, the average income of the upper 1 percent was 559,000, and by 1993 \$800,000 compared with \$8,400 for the bottom fifth.<sup>661</sup>

Proceeding with his analysis and drawing from Philips’ research, House argues that “four Regan policies accounted for much of the shift in income distribution”, namely, “tax rate reduction, federal budget management, deregulation, and monetary and debt policy”. This economic policy framework conceived and implemented during the Reagan reign would dramatically affect the educational sphere. As we just mentioned, the conservative ‘right turn’ instigated by the Reagan reign ‘started’ as a straightforward reaction against the Liberal educational tradition. Whereas Liberals were seeking to “increase educational spending”<sup>662</sup> since they thought (and defended) that “improved education leads to improved job skills, employment, and a wealthy economy, including international competitiveness”<sup>663</sup>, the conservatives maintained that “inadequate education (meaning Liberal education) led to poor job skills, which led to unemployability and unemployment, which led to low wages and poverty, which led to welfare, family dissolution, and crime, and to a declining of national economy”. That is to say, “the failure of education resulted in defective students who could not or did not

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<sup>660</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 14-15.

<sup>661</sup> Philips, *Apud*, House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 13.

<sup>662</sup> House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 19.

<sup>663</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.



want to work”<sup>664</sup>, and their failure “was not the fault of the society or the economic structure, but of themselves, their families, and the educational system”<sup>665</sup>.

Among a myriad of political conservative strategies to ‘rescue’ the educational system from the chaos, one can identify that “little money was available from the federal government”<sup>666</sup>, and also that there was an emergence of “commonsense remedies, for example, cultural literacy, accountability through testing, new graduation and teacher certification requirements, and vouchers or schools of choice”<sup>667</sup>. Drawing from Clark and Astuto’s analyses, House states, “the federal educational agenda during the Reagan years turned from equity access, social welfare, the common school, regulations and federal intervention to excellence and performance standards, ability and selectivity, productivity, parental choice and institutional competition, deregulation, and state and local initiatives”<sup>668</sup>. He sums up by stating that since “liberal indulgence had resulted in the destruction of the curriculum in public schools and universities under pressure from minority groups”<sup>669</sup>, the conservative ‘right turn’ within educational, in general and curriculum, in particular in the United States led by the Reagan imprimatur was deeply anchored in “institutional competition, individual competition, performance standards, harder content, parental choice, and character building”<sup>670</sup>. Quite unsurprisingly, during *Reaganism*, people demanded a “return to the classic works that formed the intellectual core of Western civilization”, and claimed that “students and teachers could be held accountable by imposition of new tests and standards of excellence”. Clear evidence of the impact of *Reaganism* discourse within U.S. schooling was the fact that 47 states adhered to testing students through “national testing as a means by which national goals could be achieved”<sup>671</sup>, and 37 states started to test teachers. As history already documents (“on Reagan’s last day in office, it had a debt to foreigners of \$500 billion [compared] to the 1980’s \$166 billion”<sup>672</sup>) *Reaganism* would end up being a disastrous political strategy. As House argues, “improving the work force requires more than

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<sup>664</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>665</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>666</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>667</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>668</sup> Clark and Astuto, *Apud* House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won’t Improve America’s Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 19.

<sup>669</sup> House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won’t Improve America’s Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 20.

<sup>670</sup> Op. Cit., p., 20.

<sup>671</sup> Op. Cit., p., 21.

<sup>672</sup> Philip, *Apud*, House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won’t Improve America’s Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 18.

pressuring teachers and students [for] education is an important factor in productivity but not the dominant factor and certainly not the sole factor”<sup>673</sup>. Thus the “scenario in which poor education led to unemployment and poverty and then to welfare and crime is demonstrably incorrect [since] education can and should be made better, but its deterioration is not the root of our social problems”<sup>674</sup>.

In crossing the Atlantic, we will have an opportunity to perceive from Hall’s analyses that *Thatcherism* aligned itself with the same economic views and political steps that undergirded *Reaganism*. Characterizing the political context in England before the ‘uprise’ of the conservative ‘right turn’ during the 1980’s, Hall describes how both the Right and the Left adopted a particular consensus over specific issues which assured a kind of social stability. As he argues,

The Right—marginalizing their more reactionary and free-market elements—settled for the welfare state, comprehensive education, the Keynesian management of economic policy, and the commitment to full employment as terms of peaceful compromise between capital and labor. In return, the Left accepted to work broadly within the terms of modified capitalism and within the Western bloc sphere of strategic influence. Despite the many real differences of emphasis and a number of bitter political and industrial struggles, which marked the political scene from time to time, the situation was characterized by a profound, underlying consensus or compromise on the fundamental social and economic framework within which conflicts were, for the moment, ‘settled’ or contained<sup>675</sup>.

However as Hall reiterates straightforwardly “the underlying conditions for this stabilization did not exist”<sup>676</sup> since, as he argues, “the British economy and the whole industrial structure were too weak, too tied to a traditional worldwide imperial financial role, too undermodernized, ‘backward’ and undercapitalized to generate the huge surplus required both to sustain the capital accumulation and profitability process and

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<sup>673</sup> House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University, p., 24.

<sup>674</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>675</sup> Hall, S. (1988) The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among Theorists. In. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp., 35-57. p., 36.

<sup>676</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

cream off enough to finance the welfare state, high wages, and improved conditions for the less well-off—the only terms on which the historic compromise could operate”<sup>677</sup>. Thus be it in the economic sphere of “wages, production, strikes, industrial conflict, union militancy, and so on”<sup>678</sup>, or in the emergent areas of social life including “crime, permissiveness, race, moral and social values, traditional social roles and mores”<sup>679</sup>, the society fell into a crisis which inaugurated a complex phase of conflicts “that frequently accompany[y] the struggles for the formation of a new hegemonic stage”. According to Hall, this was the key moment for the conservative ‘right turn’, led by Thatcher, a political ‘turn’ that as we mentioned previously and as stressed by Hall, did not “materialize out of thin air”<sup>680</sup>. In fact, according to Hall, it was a particular political conjuncture in Britain that marked the emergence of the New Right, an emergence that occurred firstly within the “Conservative party, and then in two successive governments of Mrs. Thatcher and the political philosophy (*Thatcherism*) that she represents”<sup>681</sup>.

As Hall points out, the two historical missions that underpinned Thatcher’s political strategy could better characterize *Thatcherism*. Its first historical mission “was not to bend and subvert but to contest and disperse the social democratic corporatist consensus that had dominated the political scene since the end of the Second World War and to disorganize the common sense—the political taken-for granted—the British postwar political settlement”<sup>682</sup>. Its second historical mission “was to reverse the dominant trends in British society [which on] matters of policy, this meant reversing the trend to state-subsidized welfare, breaking the curve of public spending and the public sector, restoring the private enterprise and the imperatives of the free market and of free-market forces, rolling back the tide of the state intervention, underpinning profitability, keeping wages in check, and breaking the power the working class had come to exercise in society via trade unions, in economic and political life”<sup>683</sup>.

In essence, as Hall argues, the mission of *Thatcherism* was to reconstruct, not only “an alternative ideological bloc of a distinctively neoliberal, free-market, possessive individualist kind [and] to transform the underpinning ideologies of the Keynesian state

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<sup>677</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

<sup>678</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

<sup>679</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

<sup>680</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

<sup>681</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 35-36.

<sup>682</sup> OP. Cit., p., 39.

<sup>683</sup> Op. Cit., p., 39.

and thus disorganize the power bloc, by now habituated to Keynesian recipes for dealing with crises in the economic life”<sup>684</sup>, but also “to break the incremental curve of the working class power and bargaining strength, reversing the balance of power and restoring the prerogatives of management , capital, and control”<sup>685</sup>. Based on the belief in a free market and a strong state, *Thatcherism* conceived its strategy anchored in a narrow economic view, and the real aim was “to reconstruct social life as a whole around a return to the old values—the philosophies of tradition, Englishness, respectability, patriarchalism, family, and nation”<sup>686</sup>. In so doing *Thatcherism* ended up rebuilding the commonsense, but changing the meanings of particular central social concepts which underpin a just society, an issue that we will return to later in this section. Hall reminds us that *Thatcherism* “succeeded in reversing or putting into reverse gear many postwar historic trends [by changing] the currency of political thought and argument”<sup>687</sup>.

As one can clearly see from House’s<sup>688</sup> and Hall’s<sup>689</sup> scrutiny, the similarities between *Reaganism* and *Thatcherism* are quite palpable and unmistakable. In both political and economic approaches, we can identify a symbiosis between neoliberal and neoconservative drives and arguments. Michael Apple<sup>690</sup> overtly identifies the influences of both *Reaganism* and *Thatcherism*, as catalyst periods for the ‘establishment’ of new right policies. Likewise, Michael Apple highlights *Reaganism* and *Thatcherism* success as political frameworks (or ideological ‘maternities’ so to speak) that build the path for the contemporary ‘right turn’. It is in this context that Michael Apple, drawing from a myriad of approaches<sup>691</sup>, argues for the need to consider these policies in a larger context.

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<sup>684</sup> Op. Cit., p., 39.

<sup>685</sup> Op. Cit., p., 39.

<sup>686</sup> Op. Cit., p., 39.

<sup>687</sup> Op. Cit., p., 40.

<sup>688</sup> House, E. (1998) *Schools for \$sale. Why Free Markets Won't Improve America's Schools, And What Will*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University.

<sup>689</sup> Hall, S. (1988) The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among Theorists. In. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp., 35-57.

<sup>690</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>691</sup> Clark & Astuto; Piven & Cloward; Raskin; Hall & Jacques *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

The ‘success’ of the policies of the Reagan administration. Like that of *Thatcherism* and then Major in Britain, should not simply be evaluated in electoral terms. They also need to be judged by their success in disorganizing other more progressive groups, in shifting the terms of political, economic, and cultural debate on to the terrain favored by capital and the Right<sup>692</sup>; [that is to say,] there can be no doubt that the current right-wing resurgence has accomplished no small amount in its attempt to construct the conditions that will put it in a hegemonic position<sup>693</sup>.

However, (and this is quite important), understanding this ‘right turn’ implies that one should be deeply aware of a particular political context that creates favorable and ‘flattering’ political conditions for this powerful emergence. As Michael Apple, drawing from Jessop’s insights, reminds us, one must question, “How is such an ideological vision legitimated and accepted”?<sup>694</sup> In an attempt to address this issue, Michael Apple, drawing from Hunter’s analyses, stresses the need to understand that the ‘rightist turn’ is not dissociated whatsoever from the crises that the social democratic accord achieved after World War II—one in “which the government increasingly became an arena for a focus on the conditions required for equality of opportunity”<sup>695</sup> – that was faced in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. Actually, as he argues, “the right-wing resurgence is not simply a reflection of the current crises; [rather], it is itself a response to that crises”<sup>696</sup>. Specific events in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, such as the struggle for racial and sexual equality and the struggle to end the Vietnam War not only produced a complex amalgam of turmoil, but also acted dynamically to disrupt particular key compromises between capital and labor, one in which the labor accepted the profit and market logic, and in so doing secured a minimum standard of living, and union rights. Before this, as Michael Apple<sup>697</sup> highlights, the ‘cultural center’ was damaged and quite naturally key concepts such as ‘family’, ‘community’, and ‘nation’ were profoundly altered. Not surprisingly one witnessed the recreation of a new ‘cultural mainstream’, one which fractured the common good, one which saw traditional

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<sup>692</sup> Hall & Jacques, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 20.

<sup>693</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 20.

<sup>694</sup> Jessop, *et. al.* *Apud* Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 23.

<sup>695</sup> Hunter, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 23.

<sup>696</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 23.

<sup>697</sup> *Op. Cit.*

social democratic state policies within education and health care as part of the problem and not the solution to deal with the social crises.

Actually, as Michael Apple argues, the process of rebuilding a 'new cultural mainstream' implied an overt detachment from old conservative orthodoxies. In fact, as he stresses, the building of this 'cultural center' was based on the principles of the currently renovated right that confronts the 'moral, existential, [and economic] chaos of the preceding decades', with a network of exceedingly well-organized and financially secure organizations incorporating 'an aggressive style, on outspoken religious and cultural traditionalism and a clear populist commitment'. In different words the project was aimed at constructing a 'new majority' that would 'dismantle the welfare state, legislate a return to traditional morality, and stem the tide of political and cultural dislocation which the 1960's and 1970's represented. Using a populist strategy (now in combination with an aggressive executive branch of the government) it marshaled an assault on 'liberalism and secular humanism' and linked that assault to what some observers have argued was 'an obsession with individual guilt and responsibility where social questions are concerned (crime, sex, education, poverty) with strong beliefs against strong intervention'<sup>698</sup>.

In short, one can see that Michael Apple traces the roots of the 'rightist turn' back to the *Reaganism*<sup>699</sup> and *Thatcherism* eras, but also unveils the reasons why and how the right was able to build itself as an hegemonic force. However and as we will see later on, both Fairclough<sup>700</sup> and Mouffe<sup>701</sup> provide us with another powerful analysis which in essence upgrades the complexity of the most current New Right forms. It is our aim now to examine the way Michael Apple lays out the cartography of the conservative 'right turn' in the United States, an analysis that, according to him, fits rather well in too many nations throughout the world. Notwithstanding the fact that Michael Apple

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<sup>698</sup> Op. Cit., p., 24.

<sup>699</sup> It is interesting to note specific claims over Reagan's role within Reaganism. Chomsky's analysis is a paradigmatic one in this regard. According to Chomsky, "for the first time, during the Reagan administration, the US did not really have a president. In all the books that have come out by people in the Reagan administration it is been extremely difficult to hide the fact that Reagan did not have the foggiest idea what was going on. [When] Reagan finished his job no reporter would dream of going out to see Reagan after that to ask him his opinion on anything – because everybody knows he has no opinion on anything". See Chomsky, N. (2002) Ronald Reagan and the Future of Democracy. In P. Mitchell and J. Schoeffel (eds) *Understanding Power. The Indispensable Chomsky*. New York: The New Press, pp., 53-64.

<sup>700</sup> Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labor, New Language?* London: Routledge.

<sup>701</sup> Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.

devotes a much deeper analysis to this particular issue in *Cultural Politics and Education*<sup>702</sup> and *Educating the 'Right' Way*<sup>703</sup>, it is clear that *Official Knowledge*<sup>704</sup> has enough data to allow us to construct the arguments that we are about to unveil. According to Michael Apple, the current New Right trend should be perceived as a non-monolithic bloc, able to build an intricate and powerful coalition incorporating antagonistic groups. Please do note that the word non-monolithic is crucial here. Thus the New Right should be seen as a conservative alliance that, within the United States context, includes four specific groups. The first group, the neoliberals, “represents dominant economic and political elites who are intent on ‘modernizing the economy and the institutions connected to it’”<sup>705</sup>. The second group, the neoconservatives “are economic and cultural conservatives who want a return to ‘high standards’, discipline, ‘real’ knowledge, and what is in essence a form of Social Darwinist competition”<sup>706</sup>. The third, according to Michael Apple, is “an increasingly active segment of authoritarian populists”<sup>707</sup>, a group that is “made up of largely white working-class and middle-class groups”<sup>708</sup>, and the fourth group is composed “of a fraction of the professional new middle class”<sup>709</sup>.

While the neoliberals, “usually in leadership of the alliance” exhibit absolute belief “that the markets will solve all of ‘our’ social problems, since the private is necessarily good and public is necessarily bad—hence, their strong support of vouchers and privatized choice plans”<sup>710</sup>, the neoconservatives “are fueled by a nostalgic and quite romanticized vision of the past [frequently] based on a fundamental misrecognition of the fact that what they might call the classics and ‘real’ knowledge gained that status as the result of intense past conflicts and often were themselves seen as equally dangerous culturally and just as morally destabilizing as any of the new elements of the curriculum and culture they now castigate”<sup>711</sup>. As Michael Apple argues, this complex coalition

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<sup>702</sup> Apple, Michael (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>703</sup> Apple, Michael (2001) *Educating the 'Right' Way: Markets, Standards, Good and Inequality*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>704</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>705</sup> Op. Cit., pp., xxiv – xxv.

<sup>706</sup> Op. Cit., pp., xxiv – xxv.

<sup>707</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>708</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>709</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>710</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>711</sup> Levine, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., – xxv.

becomes more powerful with the integration of the authoritarian populists and a specific fraction of the new middle class. The former is quite powerful in spheres such as education and in other spheres of politics and “provide[s] much of the support from below for neoliberal and neoconservative positions, since they see themselves as disenfranchised by the ‘secular humanism’ that supposedly now pervades public schooling”<sup>712</sup>. The latter displays a particular kind of ‘uncompromising’ faith in “techniques of accountability, efficiency, and management that are [in essence] their cultural capital”<sup>713</sup>, that overshadow their contradictory impulses towards the other elements of the alliance. By providing the “technical expertise that enables neoliberals and neoconservatives to put their respective agendas in place”<sup>714</sup>, they win a pivotal space within the alliance, continuously producing “managerial solutions to educational dilemmas”<sup>715</sup>. In fact, according to the New Right agenda, the only way to address ‘properly’ the crisis in a myriad of societal spheres, in general, and within education, in particular, is to expand the market dynamics to the educational field, and consequently reduce state intervention. Before proceeding with our analysis, it will be wise to note here a sort of continuity in Michael Apple’s cartography of the new Right turn, a continuity already visible in *Cultural Politics and Education*<sup>716</sup>. Since the second edition of *Official Knowledge*<sup>717</sup> came after *Cultural Politics in Education*<sup>718</sup>, Michael Apple felt the need to signal in the Preface to the second edition of *Official Knowledge*<sup>719</sup> something that was not part of the first edition<sup>720</sup> (which was published before *Cultural Politics in Education*<sup>721</sup>) that is the very base of his cartography. As one can see, the cartography was expanded to incorporate more contradictory groups, and is

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<sup>712</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., – xxv.

<sup>713</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>714</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>715</sup> Op. Cit., p., xxv.

<sup>716</sup> Apple, Michael (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>717</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>718</sup> Apple, Michael (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>719</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>720</sup> Apple, Michael (1993) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>721</sup> Apple, Michael (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.



not limited to an authoritarian populist drive as it was in the first edition of *Official Knowledge*<sup>722</sup>, an issue that we will return to in the next and final chapter.

As one can recognize clearly, among countless issues that both underpin and drive the New Rightists impulses, most important is their draconian claim that the chaotic reality that public schooling faces can be blamed on the Liberal tradition, but also (and this is of utter importance) the Progressive tradition. In the front line of these conveniently skewed positions, we highlight the works of Bennett<sup>723</sup>, Hirsh, and Ravitch, among others. While Ravitch's latest work *Left Back*<sup>724</sup> provides clear evidence of the way the new Rightists perceive and justify the crises of public schooling by blaming progressivism, the fact is that Hirsh's *The Schools We Need and We Don't Have Them*<sup>725</sup>, demonstrates what one could dare to call intellectual dishonesty. In a book awkwardly dedicated to Gramsci, Hirsh quixotically stresses that the chaos that permeates the very root of the U.S. school system is based on the fact that the system is anchored in a *Freirean* approach, a system that rejects "traditional teaching methods and subject matters [and objects] to the 'banking theory of schooling, [an approach that numbs] the critical faculties of students and [preserves] the oppressed class'"<sup>726</sup>, instead of following a *Gramscian* approach, one that maintains "that political progressivism demanded educational conservatism"<sup>727</sup>. While it is true that Gramsci defended the construction of working class 'organic intellectuals as a critical way to achieve power in a given society, the fact is that Gramsci by no means claimed that that process should be achieved through the obliteration of the working class culture. In fact, Gramsci made a call for the working class to master the mainstream culture (or as Hirsh wisely puts it, "to master the tools of power and authority"<sup>728</sup>), but in so doing, they also 'invade' that mainstream space with working class culture. Avoiding any kind of euphemisms, Gramsci never in any of his writings claimed that the price that the working class has to pay 'to apprehend' 'the' mainstream culture was the erasure of their own powerful working class cultural capacity. Moreover, such a skewed reading of Gramsci is even

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<sup>722</sup> Apple, Michael (1993) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge

<sup>723</sup> Bennett, W. (1992) *De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children*. New York: Summit Books.

<sup>724</sup> Ravitch, D. (2000) *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>725</sup> Hirsh, E.D. (1996) *The Schools We Need, and Why We Don't Have Them*. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>726</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>727</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>728</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

more unacceptable for someone whose background is in literature, as is the case for Hirsh. Those who have a literature background (and we do not claim here any sort of selectivity) know very well the interplay between languages and cultures; they rub against each other, provoking dramatic changes. As Gramsci felicitously remind us “the mere fact that the workers raise these questions and attempt to answer them means that the elements of an original proletarian civilization already exist, that there are already proletarian forces of production of cultural values”<sup>729</sup>. Clearly Hirsh is misreading Gramsci, to say the least. Even within the ‘so-called’ magnanimity of the ancient culture Hirsh’s claims fall a part. In fact, Baker’s<sup>730</sup> insight is useful here given his observation that while the Romans invaded the Greek empire, they were invaded by the Greek language and culture. And this is not an exception in history.

Moreover, in a school system profoundly ‘structured’ by the secular logic of efficiency that prizes an individualistic culture (as one had the opportunity to document in this work), one would be intellectually unfair to claim that that school system is an example of social havoc because it is harbored in an approach (e.g. *Freirean*) that claims precisely and radically otherwise. Hirsh’s analysis is unfair, not only with regards to Freire and Gramsci, but also with regards to the U.S. school system. However, in so doing, he achieved something (probably what he really wanted) that should not be minimized; he shifted responsibility from the efficiency models to a conveniently vague notion of progressivism identified as a monolithic political group and in doing so ‘constructs’ the disease and offers a prognosis.

Summarizing the main arguments of these New Rightist approaches towards public schooling, Michael Apple’s arguments teach us great deal here. Describing the current period in education as a period of reaction, Michael Apple argues that New Rightist attacks on public schooling are based in a ‘hurried’ vision of “our educational institutions (...) as failures”<sup>731</sup>:

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<sup>729</sup> Gramsci, A. (1985) Selections from cultural writings. In D. Forgacs & G. Nowell-Smith (eds.). *Antônio Gramsci - Selections from Cultural Writings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p., 41.

<sup>730</sup> Baker, S. E. (1978). *Teoria Política Grega, Pensamento Político*. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.

<sup>731</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 91.

High drop-out rates, a decline in ‘functional literacy’, a loss of standards and discipline, the failure to teach ‘real knowledge’, poor scores on standardized tests, and more—all of these are charges leveled at schools. And all of this, we are told, has led to the declining economic productivity, unemployment, poverty, a loss of international competitiveness, and so on. Return to a ‘common culture’, will make the schools more efficient, more competitive, more open to private initiative (‘Mammon’); this will solve our problems<sup>732</sup>.

Obviously, as Michael Apple argues, “behind this is an attack on egalitarianism norms and values”<sup>733</sup> and the dangerous fallacy that “too much democracy—culturally and politically [is] the major cause of ‘our’ declining economy and culture”<sup>734</sup>. The frenetic and less than thoughtful New Right claim over standards, competition, efficiency, and accountability, just to mention a few, not only destroys virulently any possibility to address issues such as inequality as a public asset, but also multiplies those very “savage inequalities” (or in a more corrosive way, to make specific inequalities ‘invisible’ as Ellison noted), rooted at the very marrow of society. As a result of this approach, we are witnessing a new version of the survival of the fittest.

Although one would be profoundly unaware to argue that Michael Apple does not recognize the crises at the very root of public schooling, the fact is that he deconstructs this chaotic stage by urging the reader to pay close attention to the changing perception of public schooling instigated by the impact of the New Rightists policies, resulting, among numberless issues, in “draconian cuts”. That is to say, public schooling, under the curse of the New Right framework, experienced substantial defunding. It is precisely in the line of this argument that Michael Apple denounces the materialization of political projects such as Channel One in public schools, a well-achieved example of the connection between New Right economic policies and the idea of public schooling. As he straightforwardly argues, “sharply diminished revenues and a loss of public support for schools”<sup>735</sup> are at the very root of the crises public schooling is facing, and not the allegedly progressive imprimatur of *Freireanism* as some of the key New Rightist demiurges within education are claiming.

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<sup>732</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>733</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>734</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>735</sup> Op. Cit., p., 92.

Drawing from Celis's perspective, Michel Apple stresses that the New Right's defunding social policies "create a situation in which federal and state aid to local school districts—never totally sufficient in many poor school districts—has been less and less able to keep up with the mandated programs such as classes for children with special needs or who speak languages other than English"<sup>736</sup>. The lethal implications of this strategy are visible, say in the way New Right policies have been able to draw multicultural curriculum policies based on English 'tout court' language while neglecting other linguistic forms<sup>737</sup>.

Furthermore this kind of social policy "has meant that for many schools it will be nearly impossible for them to comply with health and desegregation programs mandated by the state and federal governments, to say nothing of other needs"<sup>738</sup>. This lack of funding within public schooling should be partially contextualized, according to Michael Apple, within "the intensively competitive economic conditions faced by business and industry"<sup>739</sup>. That is to say, "their own imperative to cut the costs and reduce the budget (...) has led many companies to exert considerable pressure on states and local communities to give them sizable tax breaks"<sup>740</sup>, thereby cutting off financial investments on public schooling. As Michael Apple reminds us, albeit tax reduction policies should not be perceived as something new within a capitalist framework, the fact is "in an increasingly competitive situation in which companies find themselves in a context governed by capital flight in which states and communities are justifiably fearful that business will simply go elsewhere, such breaks have 'drastically grown'"<sup>741</sup>. The extraordinary annual deficit figure of \$34 billion in the Cleveland's school system speaks for itself of the harmful effects of the New Right social policies towards public education. Thus public schooling should be analyzed and understood as being in a middle of a large fiscal crisis, a fiscal crisis that allows a contract with Whittle

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<sup>736</sup> Celis, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 92.

<sup>737</sup> An interesting study over the English language role within the New Rightist hegemonic strategy can be found in Macedo, D. Dendrinos, B. & Gounari, P. (2003) *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

<sup>738</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 92.

<sup>739</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 92.

<sup>740</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 92.

<sup>741</sup> *Op.*, *Cit.*, p., 92.

Communication's Channel One to look attractive, a kind of fatal temptation to deal with a "kind of catastrophic situation"<sup>742</sup>, to use Raynold's terminology.

As we continue working through Michael Apple's line of thought, one gradually touches (and indeed senses) a superior level of complexity in his analyses. Under such strategic circumstances, curriculum is indeed much more than a mechanism of power and of social control, and becomes a 'human artifact' that shows not only the crucial need to understand it as a set of complex struggles and compromises, but also a set of struggles and compromises that act dynamically to perpetuate particular kinds of social and subject representations. Thus, one can see within Michael Apple's line of thought that curriculum is indeed an identity issue, but an issue that prizes particular kinds of identities while obliterating many others.

However, in the face of the frightening reality upheld by New Rightist policies, a simple question becomes unavoidable. That is, if new rightist social policies are so poisonous and lethal for the social fabric, why have they achieved an overwhelming victory? Why is that the New Right policies, in spite of their devastating effects on society, happen to be the dominant bloc currently? Again, looking at the issue through Michael Apple's lenses, one is able to address this complex question. According to Michael Apple's analysis, among numberless issues, one cannot detach New Rightist accomplishments from the politics of the common sense and the role that the media plays (be it the technological one or the 'conventional' one) in building a particular commonsensical framework. Notwithstanding its disastrous impact on less advantaged members of the population, the New Right managed to achieve support from that majority on the social perimeter? We will now turn our attention to the way Michael Apple builds his argument on this particular issue.

According to Michael Apple, one mistakenly takes for granted that "ideology is 'inscribed in' people simply because they are in a particular class position"<sup>743</sup>. As he argues, "ideology is seen as something that somehow makes its effects felt on people in the economy, in politics, in culture and education, and in the home, without too much

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<sup>742</sup> Raynolds, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 93.

<sup>743</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 15.

effort, [that is to say] it is simply there”<sup>744</sup>. If that is so, “the common-sense of people becomes commonsense naturally as they go about their lives, lives that are prestructured by their class position”<sup>745</sup>. Thus, “if you know someone’s location in the class structure, you know her/his set of political, economic, and cultural beliefs, and you don’t really have to inquire into how dominant beliefs become actually dominant”<sup>746</sup>. Drawing from Hall’s conceptual framework, Michael Apple challenges this reductive perspective and stresses that “it is usually not assumed that these ideas ‘should positively have to *win* ascendancy (rather being ascribed it) through a specific and contingent (in the sense of open-ended, not totally determined) process of ideological struggle”<sup>747</sup>. As one can perceive from Michael Apple’s argument, this commonsensical conventional approach towards ideology is totally inadequate if one were determined to understand the changes stirring within people’s common sense. In fact, as the author candidly remarks, we have witnessed, not only “a pattern of conflicts within dominant groups that has led to significant changes in their own positions”<sup>748</sup>, but also, and this is rather important, “how elements of ideologies of groups in dominance become truly popular”<sup>749</sup>. To be more precise, we are seeing a sort of a rupture, not only “in the acceptable beliefs of many segments of the public who historically have been less powerful”<sup>750</sup>, but also “that has been worked upon and expanded by economically and politically strong forces in the society”<sup>751</sup>. In fact, and connecting this complex process of ‘meaning changing’ to the educational sphere, Michael Apple points out that “these ideological shifts in common-sense are having a profound impact on how a large portion of the public thinks about the role of education in that society”<sup>752</sup>. Continuing with his analysis of the way the common sense politics were built in the societal sphere, Michael Apple did not refuse the opportunity to criticize particular segments within the Left for the way they have constructed arguments of how ideology operates in society. In fact, he refuses to embrace an analysis based on a “great theory”, arguing that particular segments of the

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<sup>744</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

<sup>745</sup> Op., Cit., p., 15.

<sup>746</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

<sup>747</sup> Hall, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 15.

<sup>748</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 15.

<sup>749</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>750</sup> Hall, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 16.

<sup>751</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 16.

<sup>752</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

Left have been “much too abstract in [their] attempts to analyze the role of education in the maintenance and subversion of social and cultural power”<sup>753</sup>. In so doing, and along with Hall’s perspective, Michael Apple was not reticent in stressing that the Left has “abandon[ed] the problems of concrete historical analyses”<sup>754</sup>. An accurate way, suggested by Michael Apple, to reverse this ‘amorphous’ and ‘nebulous’ situation, is to carry on developing a theoretical analysis that helps us understand the world and its history without neglecting or marginalizing it, “to inform our practice so that we may transform it”<sup>755</sup>.

It is in this context that Michael Apple invites the reader to a critical analysis of the way the meaning of (public) education has been gradually but successfully transformed under the leadership of the neoliberal social policies. Since concepts are not inert entities in which their meaning is constructed based on a particular context, Michael Apple in a *Wittgensteinian* way, argues for the need to pay attention to the “meaning of language in its specific context”<sup>756</sup>. In so doing, one would be capable of “understanding political conceptions and educational concepts, since they are part of a larger social context”<sup>757</sup>, which is “constantly shifting and is subject to severe ideological conflicts”<sup>758</sup>. Following Michael Apple’s approach, one would be naïve to ignore that “education itself is an arena in which these ideological conflicts work themselves out [since] it is one of the major sites in which different groups with distinct political, economic, and cultural visions attempt to define what socially legitimate means and ends of a society are to be”<sup>759</sup>. It is with this in mind that Michael Apple calls the reader to a complex critical ‘hermeneutical’ journey over the variability of the very meaning of ‘equality’ in education. In light of the downfall of the liberal reign and within the emergence of the New Rightist policies, Michael Apple denounces the shifting meanings of the word ‘equality’ “that have a good deal of success in redefining

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<sup>753</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>754</sup> Hall, *Apud*, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 16.

<sup>755</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>756</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 16.

<sup>757</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>758</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>759</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

what education is *for* and in shifting the ideological texture of the society profoundly to the right”<sup>760</sup>.

As the author maintains, “it is impossible to comprehend fully the shifting fortunes of the assemblage of concepts surrounding equality (equality of opportunity, equality, etc) unless we have a much clearer picture of the society’s already unequal cultural, economic, and political dynamics that provide the center of gravity around which education functions”<sup>761</sup>. At the very marrow of the intricate changeability of meaning of ‘equality’, Michael Apple targets straightforwardly the tension between ‘property rights’ and ‘personal rights’, as a primary correlation for the economy, in which, unsurprisingly, the powerful groups “have fairly consistently defended the prerogatives of property”<sup>762</sup>. Obviously, as Michael Apple reiterates, in a moment of fiscal crises, which is the particular case in nations such as the United States, the tension between ‘property rights’ and ‘personal rights’ becomes more ‘belligerent’. That is to say, in a moment of crisis, powerful groups have been able to expand their biased views and ideals to educational and other social institutions. In order to address the economic catastrophe according to the dominant views, “the gains made by women and men in employment, health and safety, welfare programs, affirmative action, legal rights, and education must be rescinded because ‘they are too expensive’ both economically and ideologically”<sup>763</sup>. That is to say, not only we are before a lack of fiscal resources, given the military policies and tax breaks, but also “people must be convinced that their belief that person rights come first is simply wrong or outmoded given current ‘realities’”<sup>764</sup>. Thus, one can identify this segregated social ideal within “legislation, administrative rules, and ideological maneuvering to create the conditions right-wing groups believe are necessary to meet these requirements”<sup>765</sup>.

It is in this context that, quite naturally, “equality, no matter how limited or broadly conceived, has become redefined”<sup>766</sup> since “the emphasis on public policy has

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<sup>760</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

<sup>761</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

<sup>762</sup> Gintis, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 18.

<sup>763</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, pp., 18-19.

<sup>764</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>765</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>766</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.



materially changed from issues of employing the state to overcoming disadvantage”<sup>767</sup>. Relying on some of the arguments in Anderson’s Ph.D. dissertation, Michael Apple’s argues that,

No longer is [equality] seen as linked to past *group* oppression and disadvantage. It is now simply a case of guaranteeing individual choice under the conditions of a free market. Thus, the current emphasis on ‘excellence’ (a word with multiple meanings and social uses) has shifted educational discourse so that underachievement once again increasingly is seen as largely the fault of the student. Student failure, which was at least partly interpreted as the fault of severely deficient educational policies and practices, is now being seen as the result of what might be called the biological and economic marketplace<sup>768</sup>.

In this rather elaborated, truncated and truculent process of redefinition of the very meaning and purpose of public schooling, what we see is an unquestioned fundamentalist faith in free choice to address social and educational ‘chaos’, and attacks on teachers and curriculum on issues such as quality, accountability, and commitment. Essentially, as Michael Apple warns us, the ‘extraordinary’ political strategy led by the neoliberals drove both the social and educational worlds into a set of multifarious conflicts, conflicts that have led to a substantive transformation of schooling to the Right. Michael Apple’s analyses show us “the movement away from social democratic principles and an acceptance of more right-wing positions in social and educational policy is precisely because conservative groups have been able to work on popular sentiments, to reorganize genuine feelings and in the process to win adherents”<sup>769</sup>. Part of the success of this strategy relies on a non-stop effort to a “dismantling of the welfare state and of the benefits that working people, people of color, and women (...) have won over decades of hard work”<sup>770</sup>. As the author highlights “one of the major aims of a rightist restoration politics is to struggle in not one but many different arenas at the

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<sup>767</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>768</sup> Anderson, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 19.

<sup>769</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 20.

<sup>770</sup> Op. Cit., p., 20.

same time, not only in the economic sphere but in education and elsewhere as well”<sup>771</sup>, that is to say, in order to succeed in this endeavor, “the economic dominance must be coupled to ‘political, moral, and intellectual leadership”<sup>772</sup>. Relying on Gramsci’s political analyses, Michael Apple stresses that we are facing a war of position, a war that “takes place where the whole relation of the state to civil society, to the ‘people’, and to popular struggles, to the individual and to the economic life of society has been thoroughly reorganized, where all the elements change”<sup>773</sup>.

Using this intricate strategy that acts dynamically not only within the economic sphere, but also in other societal sites as well, the New Rightists were successfully able to intercede within the common-sense environment, one that is deeply ordinary and contradictory, interrupting, renovating, and transforming “in a more ‘systematic’ direction people’s practical consciousness”<sup>774</sup>. It is precisely within this judicious restructuring of the commonsense (a complex outcome of multifaceted and contradictory accords) that cultural battles are fought. As a result, we can identify “a successful translation of an economic doctrine into the language of experience, moral imperative, and common-sense”<sup>775</sup>. In essence, as Michael Apple’s bluntly stresses, the ethic of the market combines with populist insights, that is to say we are witnessing “the blending together of a ‘rich mix’ of themes that have a long history—nation, family, duty, authority, standards, and traditionalism—with other thematic elements [namely, self-interest, competitive individualism, and antistatism] that have also struck a resonant chord during a time of crisis”<sup>776</sup>. To be even more accurate, as the author argues, a “reactionary common-sense is partly created”<sup>777</sup>. In essence, what one could get quite clearly from Michael Apple’s analysis of the success of neoliberal policies currently, among other things, is their capability of working and reworking within the common sense and generating new meanings among societal key concepts.

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<sup>771</sup> Op. Cit., p., 21.

<sup>772</sup> Op. Cit., p., 21.

<sup>773</sup> Gramsci, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 22.

<sup>774</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 22.

<sup>775</sup> Op. Cit., p., 22.

<sup>776</sup> Op. Cit., p., 22.

<sup>777</sup> Hall, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 22.

Thus, and as one can understand from Michael Apple's scrutiny, and as we had the opportunity to analyze elsewhere<sup>778</sup>, the New Right was able to play with the meanings of particular key words. In so doing, the very meanings of specific critical concepts become too flaccid. That is to say, basic concepts such as public vs. private, democracy, autonomy, diversity, freedom, social justice, equality, human rights, and so forth, were routinely pushed to the economic realm and gradually lost their capacity to address and build the public common good. It is precisely within the (new) borders and limits promulgated by the economic platform that new meanings were constructed for such concepts. Macedo, Dendrinos and Gounari's approach teaches us great deal here. As they argue, "in order to redefine the concept of freedom, neoliberal ideology produces a powerful discourse whose effects are so pervasive that it becomes almost impossible for anybody to even imagine freedom outside the market order"<sup>779</sup>. That is to say, and drawing from Marcuse, the authors argue that the "analytical predication of words such as freedom, democracy, equality, etc. or transgression of the discourse beyond the closed analytical structure is incorrect or propaganda"<sup>780</sup>. In other words, the very meaning of vital notions that should pave the way for a really just and equal society is 'perverted', questioning the very construction of the public common good. Using a good example put forward by Michael Apple, democracy loses its capacity as a public tool to build and maintain a really just society, becoming instead a consumer commodity<sup>781</sup>. This well-orchestrated strategy builds a hegemonic commonsense, and it is precisely within this strategy that one should not ignore the role that the media have played, helping dynamically in the process of reconstructing this hegemonic commonsense by 'fabricating' specific meanings while obliterating many others, some of them almost 'unquestionable' and, in a way, 'untouchable' just a few decades ago.

Moreover, and this is particularly frightening, specific key concepts and agendas that historically were deeply rooted within the marrow of a progressive educational and curriculum body, such as social justice and freedom, experienced what we dare to call a (de)(re)meaning process, one which was gradually able to reframe their very meaning,

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<sup>778</sup> Paraskeva, J. (1998) Algarve.

<sup>779</sup> Macedo, D. Dendrinos, B. & Gounari, P. (2003) *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, p., 124.

<sup>780</sup> Marcuse, *Apud*, Macedo, D. Dendrinos, B. & Gounari, P. (2003) *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, p., 125.

<sup>781</sup> Apple, Michael (1999) *Power Meaning and Identity. Essays in Critical Educational Studies*. New York: Peter Lang.

assuming a 'marketwise' cultural meaning. This shift documents, as we had the opportunity to comment on elsewhere<sup>782</sup>, that curriculum does play a key role under the New Right agenda, an undeniable fact that led the New Rightists to appropriate the left discourse. What we are claiming here, and based on Michael Apple's analysis, is that the process of reworking the very meanings of particular key words in order to operate a gradual reconfiguration within the commonsense, one that serves the purpose of the New Right agenda, implies a careful and intricate process of disarticulation and rearticulation. As Gandin concisely, yet accurately, reminds us, we are witnessing how "specific categories are now stripped from the meanings that linked them to specific struggles for justice and equality in general and education in particular, and connected with categories like 'efficiency', 'productivity', and 'knowledge as a commodity'"<sup>783</sup>. Thus, what really underpins the New Right's winning reconfiguration strategy within the commonsense is, in fact, a continuous dynamic tension between disarticulation vs. rearticulation. That is to say the intricate process of articulation, which involves the tension between disarticulation and rearticulation, according to Torfing, allows one to understand "how cultural artifacts are overdetermined by political ideologies, and by social and political identities in terms of class, race, nationality, and gender"<sup>784</sup>. Hence, articulation, as Hall reminds us, is the "form of the connection that 'can' make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions; [that is to say] it is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time"<sup>785</sup>. Thus, along with Hall, and recapturing some of the arguments that we raised before, one should be very aware that the New Rightist bloc was "forged or made"<sup>786</sup> under particular circumstances put forward, not only by both *Reaganism and Thatcherism*, but also by the current complexity that the neoliberal policies manifest. As we noted previously, Fairclough and Mouffe's analyses of the very latest neoliberal trend teach us great deal here. In trying to analyze the very latest metamorphosis of New Rightist policies, which push the very meaning of democracy to one of paradox since they give the dangerous

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<sup>782</sup> Paraskeva, J. (2001) *As Dinâmicas dos Conflitos Ideológicos e Culturais na Fundamentação do Currículo*. Porto: ASA.

<sup>783</sup> Gandin, L. (2002) *Democratization Access, Governance, and Knowledge: The Struggle for Educational Alternatives in Porto Alegre, Brazil*. Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison. Doctoral Dissertation, pp., 36-37.

<sup>784</sup> Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse. Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*. Oxford: Blackwell, p., 211.

<sup>785</sup> Hall, S. (1996) On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall. In D. Morley and K. Bhen (eds) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, pp., 131-150, p., 141.

<sup>786</sup> Op. Cit., p., 141.

idea that there is no alternative, Mouffe stresses that both Blair and Clinton were able to ‘construct’ a “radical centre”<sup>787</sup>. Unlike the “traditional centre, which lies in the middle of the spectrum between right and left”<sup>788</sup>, the ‘radical centre’ is the new coalition that “transcends the traditional left/right division by articulating themes and values from both sides in a new synthesis”<sup>789</sup>. This current coalition, as Mouffe reminds us, stresses that “the alternative to state action is a ‘generative’ politics that provides a framework for the life-political decisions of the individual and allows people to make things happen themselves”<sup>790</sup>. Thus, “democracy, should become ‘dialogic’, and far from being limited to the political sphere, it has to reach the various areas of personal life”<sup>791</sup>. In so doing, they pave the way for the market mechanisms. So, based on Mouffe’s accurate analysis one would be profoundly naïve to dissociate the impact of the attempt to erase historical political agendas such as those from the left and the right, led by the so called ‘radical center’, from the redefinition and reconfiguration of the commonsense. Both are anchored in and an integral part of a strategy of (de)(re)meaning. Likewise, Fairclough also sees a connection between *Reaganism Thatcherism* with Blair’s and Clinton’s ‘radical centers’. As he maintains “the ‘third way’ is a political discourse built out of the elements from other political discourses, of the left and right”<sup>792</sup>. However, unlike Mouffe, Fairclough stress that the ‘radical center’ strategy does not consist only in “bringing together elements from these [left and right] political discourses”<sup>793</sup>. As he argues, this ‘radical center’ was really able not only to “reconcile[e] themes which have been seen as irreconcilable [but also to go] beyond such contrary themes, transcending them”<sup>794</sup>. Fairclough’s analysis deserves to be quoted in length:

It is one thing to say that there may be ways of reconciling for instance the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination; it is quite another to say that the two ‘themes’ can no longer be in conflict. The former is perfectly conventional—Labour

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<sup>787</sup> Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, p., 108.

<sup>788</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108.

<sup>789</sup> Op. Cit., p., 108.

<sup>790</sup> Op. Cit., p., 109.

<sup>791</sup> Op. Cit., p., 109.

<sup>792</sup> Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge, p., 43.

<sup>793</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>794</sup> Op. Cit., p., 45.

governments in the past have made such claims—the latter is not. The claim of [the radical center] to constitute a 'new politics' must be based on the latter<sup>795</sup>.

On another issue and also unlike Mouffe, Fairclough argues that this strategy is not based on a dialogic stance. That is to say, the 'radical center' achieved consent within the governed sphere "not through political [democratical] dialogue, but through managerial methods of promotion and forms of consultation with the public; [that is to say] the government tends to act like a corporation treating the public as its consumers rather than citizens"<sup>796</sup>. Notwithstanding the seeming differences between Fairclough and Mouffe's approaches, one becomes deeply aware of the main source that is driving the current complex reconfiguration of specific key social meanings. This process aims to interfere dynamically and with efficacy within the reconfiguration of the commonsense, a commonsense that is under, as Laclau and Mouffe highlighted, a complex process of articulation. In other words, the practice establishes "a relation among elements such that their identity is modified [precisely] as a result of the articulatory practice"<sup>797</sup>.

Having analyzed the way the commonsense is reconstructed and reorganized around the tension of 'old words - new meanings', through a complex process of articulation, it will be judicious now to see how the media overtly lend a hand in this intricate and smooth process, a process that undeniably helps to perpetuate a particular hegemonic commonsense that is helpful for the new right political project. In so doing, we will recall the peace rally that we used as a theoretical and practical tool to lay out our arguments, and we will open the door to influential approaches offered by other intellectuals that will end up making Michael Apple's approach even more powerful and pertinent.

According to Ramonet<sup>798</sup>, to understand the power of the media currently, one has to understand that the 'only' strategic issue is the stock market. That is to say, we live in a

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<sup>795</sup> Op. Cit., p., 45.

<sup>796</sup> Op. Cit., p., 12; 129.

<sup>797</sup> Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, p., 105.

<sup>798</sup> Ramonet, I. (2001) *O que e o Mundo Hoje; Como Funciona; Resistir em Nome de Que?* Porto: Campo da Comunicacao.

moment in which raw materials are no longer considered as strategic arguments. Conversely, the more devastated economies in the world are those in countries that produce raw materials. As he argues<sup>799</sup>, even Norway, considered one of the most developed countries and one that produces oil, saw its currency under a ferocious attack because its main resource is a raw material. What Ramonet is trying to claim here is that global power is anchored in the speculative stock exchange platform, fully disseminated all over the world, and hence weakening national governments. Thus, political power is continually challenged by the economic power with the support of the media apparatuses<sup>800</sup>. As Gee, Hull and Lankshear<sup>801</sup> remind us, under the neoliberal strategy, we witnessed a transition from commodity-ism to consumerism. This is an important issue, and one that becomes much more interesting when one considers the way Michael Apple lays out his arguments of the media's role in this neoliberal strategy. In fact, by combining Michael Apple's analyses with those advanced by other scholars, we achieve a high level of complexity over the way the media selectively acts in a given society.

As Bourdieu<sup>802</sup> suggests, among countless issues, analyzing the media means that one should be aware of issues such as economic and political censorship, the 'game' of showing and hiding, the circular circulation of information, and the relation between market share and competition, all of them pivotal, not only in the peace rally that we described, but also in Michael Apple's analysis of Channel One's approach toward schooling. As Bourdieu straightforwardly argues, television is permeated by censorship both political and economic. That is to say, with television, one experiences a "loss of independence linked to the conditions imposed on those who speak on television"<sup>803</sup> which means that one is faced with a political censorship, but also one should be aware that "what gets on television is determined by the owners, by the companies that pay for the ads, or by the government that gives subsidies"<sup>804</sup>. Quite naturally this sort of 'promiscuity' leads to what Bourdieu calls "individual corruption [that in fact] only mask[s] structural corruption"<sup>805</sup>. This particular form of ideological control is

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<sup>799</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>800</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>801</sup> Gee, J., Hull, G., Lankshear, C. (1996) *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism*. Boulder: Westview Press.

<sup>802</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1996) *On Television*. New York : The New York Press.

<sup>803</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

<sup>804</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>805</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

profoundly related to what the author calls a 'show and hide' strategy. That is to say, "[paradoxically] television can hide by showing"<sup>806</sup>, since journalists (and neither Bourdieu nor I is claiming an essentializing position here) "select very specific aspects [of a given event] as a function of their particular perceptual categories, the particular way they see things [categories] that are the product of education, history; [in other words] they used [specific] [eye] glasses"<sup>807</sup>. Thus, as Fiske and Hartley highlight, since "television is a human construct and the job that it does is the result of human choice, cultural decisions and social pressures"<sup>808</sup>, reading television is being radically aware of its "manifest [and] latent content"<sup>809</sup>. In essence, as Bourdieu highlights, one should be aware that in the tension between "giving news vs. giving views"<sup>810</sup>, the mainstream media aligns with the latter. In order to make something extraordinary, they prize 'dramatization' and in so doing they not only produce a "reality effect [but they also produce an] effect on reality"<sup>811</sup>. Thus one should not minimize the role that language plays in the media 'milieu', a 'milieu' that "allow[s] certain things to be said and proscribe[s] others"<sup>812</sup>. Thus "both language and television 'mediate' reality" and the fact is that "television extends this ability, and an understanding of the way in which television structures and presents its pictures of reality"<sup>813</sup>. Following the same line of analysis, one can say that under the free market economy trend, the media acts according to what Herman and Chomsky call the "propaganda model"<sup>814</sup> and "its is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society"<sup>815</sup>. It is precisely this 'propaganda model' that promotes actively what Bourdieu calls "the circular circulation of information"<sup>816</sup>, that is to say, given rating dynamics and the race for audiences, the media is competing over the same issues and "in some sense, the choices made on television are choices made by no

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<sup>806</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>807</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>808</sup> Fiske, J. & Hartley, J. (1998) *Reading Television*. London: Methuen, p., 17.

<sup>809</sup> Op. Cit., p., 21.

<sup>810</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1996) *On Television*. New York : The New York Press, p., 42.

<sup>811</sup> Op. Cit., p., 22.

<sup>812</sup> Op. Cit., p., 35.

<sup>813</sup> Fiske, J. & Hartley, J. (1998) *Reading Television*. London: Methuen, p., 17.

<sup>814</sup> Herman, S., & Chomsky, N. (2002) *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, p., 1.

<sup>815</sup> Op. Cit., p., 1.

<sup>816</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1996) *On Television*. New York: The New York Press, p., 23.



subject”<sup>817</sup>. So, by being slaves and hostages of the audience ratings, journalists and the media by and large are acting under the rhythms and cadences of those rates, which imposed a specific cultural model.

Therefore, as one can easily see, “television puts ‘reality’ together”<sup>818</sup>. In so doing, as Derrida argues, television produces an artifactuality. Given its pertinence, his analysis deserves to be highlighted:

‘artifactuality’, signifies first of all that there is ‘actuality’—in the sense of ‘what is timely’ or rather, in the sense of ‘what is broadcast under the heading of ‘the news’ on radio and television—only insofar as a whole set of technical and political apparatuses come as it were to choose, from a nonfinite mass of events, the ‘facts’ that are to constitute actuality: what are then called ‘the facts’ on which the ‘news’ or ‘information’ feeds. [The] choices, of course, are never neutral, whether they are made at the television and radio stations or whether they are already decided at the press agencies. All actuality negotiates with artifice, in general dissimulated. But already it should be added [that] these artifices are controlled, simultaneously or alternatively, by private and state agencies<sup>819</sup>.

Based on this analysis, the examples put forward by Fairclough<sup>820</sup> (the overwhelming victories of both Berlusconi’s Forza Italia and Blair’s new laborism and the painful reality of the two million Hutu refugees), Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney<sup>821</sup> (the way Springsteen’s ‘Born in the USA’ was appropriate for both conservative and radical groups), Gitlin<sup>822</sup> (the way the media made and unmade the Students for a Democratic Society movement during the 1960’s), Fiske (the way sexual discrimination overtly dominates the media) and Michael Apple<sup>823</sup> (his analyses of the way floods are portrayed in the news) function as clear evidence of the way the media acts dynamically

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<sup>817</sup> Op. Cit., p., 25.

<sup>818</sup> Eldridge, J. (1993) *Getting the Message. News, Truth and Power*. London: Routledge, p., 4.

<sup>819</sup> Derrida, J. (2002) Artifactuality, Homohegemony. In J. Derrida and B. Stiegler *Echographies of Television*. Cambridge: Polity, pp., 41-55, p., 42.

<sup>820</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold.

<sup>821</sup> Grossberg, L., Wartella, E., Whitney, D. (1998) *Media Making. Mass Media in a Popular Culture*. London: Sage.

<sup>822</sup> Gitlin, T. (1980) *The Whole World is Watching. Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>823</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

and selectively in (re)(des)constructing reality. As Michael Apple<sup>824</sup> highlights in an analysis that is profoundly aligned with those that we unveiling here, the news is not something that is 'out there'. Quite conversely, news is something 'doable' in a bias way. Thus a critical understanding of the nature of that selective product implies that one must be deeply attentive, not only to the selective and interpretive process that helps 'fabricate' particular meanings, a process that actually occurs within the limits imposed by such meanings, but also to the construction of specific captive audiences, to use Michael Apple's<sup>825</sup> terminology, upon which those meanings are aimed.

It is precisely the set of strategies that we analyzed above that are crucial to the analysis of mainstream media *vis a vis*, both the peace rally event and Channel One. As for the peace rally, as we stressed previously, the set of messages and meanings portrayed by the protesters in Madison, Wisconsin, although some of them unquestionably were much more insightful than others, were not the same as those presented in the mainstream U.S. media, namely "New York Times", "Washington Post", "USA Today", "Chicago Tribune", "CNN", "ABC", "CBS", "MSNBC", "FOX 47", and "WKOWTV". By contrasting the messages of these mega media corporations with the messages of the rally and, with those messages portrayed by 'non aligned' media (e.g. "The Nation", "The Progressive", "Counter Punch", "Le Monde", "Diplomatic", and so forth) one can gather clear evidence of the way the mainstream media 'plays' in the complex process of reconfiguring the commonsense through the intricate process of articulation. That is to say, and trying to combine the articulation process with the arguments that we have raised on the media, there is a demonstrable 'show by hiding' strategy, a circular circulation of information, a political and economic censorship approach, and evidence of the effects of market apparatuses. To sum up, and as Michael Apple<sup>826</sup> argues, one is before a set of complex cultural policy struggles over meaning. In order to 'debunk' and understand this complex struggle, and following Michael Apple's approach based on Fiske's perspective, one needs to "analyze how [the media] constructs a picture of the world, and how it makes sense of the real, [to theorize] the work these meanings perform in and on the viewing subject, [to connect] those television forms and subject positions to the way that power is distributed and exercised in our social system [and] we need to examine closely the negotiated and oppositional

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<sup>824</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>825</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>826</sup> Op. Cit.

'readings' of television, thereby moving away from the idea of television or any 'text' as closed, as a site where dominant meanings automatically exert considerable or total influence over the reader"<sup>827</sup>. As Bakhtin<sup>828</sup> reminds us, one must not merge the world of the text with the world outside the text, since they are not the same.

Thus, since the real question is not "the 'effects' of television, but rather how a particular television work, seen as a polysemic potential of meanings, connects with the social life of the viewer or group of viewers [that is to say] how is a 'television text' created by the active reading of an audience [and] how does the process of commonsense making operate"<sup>829</sup>. The task is to understand and claim what Hall<sup>830</sup>, Fairclough<sup>831</sup> and van Dijk<sup>832</sup> call media as discourse. As they argue, media as discourse is an approach that permeates micro (concerned with the analyses of the syntax, semantics of the text), meso (the institutional forms of production, distribution and consumption of the messages) and macro levels (the political regulations and economic forms of control)<sup>833</sup>. That is to say, and drawing from Fairclough, in order to unveil the effects of the media within a given society one need to analyze media language as discourse. One has the unavoidable task of engaging in "discourse analysis [deeply] concerned with the ways in which texts are produced by media workers in media institutions, and the ways the texts are received by audiences [as well as] how the media texts are socially distributed"<sup>834</sup>. Following a similar path to that put forward by Johnson<sup>835</sup> (one that we had the opportunity to note before) what Fairclough is claiming here is the critical need to understand the media as discourse, a discourse that interferes dynamically both "as social action and interaction, [in which people interact together in] real situations [and, consequently] as a social construction of reality, a form of

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<sup>827</sup> Fiske, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 157.

<sup>828</sup> Bakhtin, M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas.

<sup>829</sup> Fiske, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 98.

<sup>830</sup> Hall, S. (1994) Encoding, Decoding. In S. During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp., 90-103.

<sup>831</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, pp., 57-68.

<sup>832</sup> Van Dijk, T. (1985) Introduction. Discourse Analysis in (Mass) Communication Research. In T. Van Dijk (ed) *Discourse and Communication*. Berlin; Walter de Gruyter, pp., 1-93.

<sup>833</sup> A much deeper analysis of the politics of the mass media can be found in Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse. Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*. Oxford: Blackwell.

<sup>834</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, p., 16.

<sup>835</sup> Johnson, R. (1983) *What is cultural studies anyway?* Centre for contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, N° 74 (mimeographed).

knowledge”<sup>836</sup>. By claiming the term ‘discourse’ Fairclough is “proposing to regard language use as a [per]form[ance] of social practices rather than [an ineffective and innocent] individual activity”<sup>837</sup>.

Consequently, media as discourse should be seen, not only as a “mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well a mode of representation [which implies] a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure” but also as a social practice “shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels, [that is to say] by class and other social relations at a societal level, by the relations specific to particular institutions such as law or education, by systems of classification, by various norms and conventions”<sup>838</sup>. Thus, as Fairclough reminds us (and this is of utter importance for the arguments that we are presenting), analyzing media as discourse, builds a critical awareness of an apparatus that acts dynamically in the construction of “social identities, subject positions and types of self [helping to construct] social relationships between people”<sup>839</sup> and also in the construction of “systems of knowledge and belief”<sup>840</sup>. It is precisely this that one can overtly identify by confronting the mainstream media discourse with the peace rally messages. That is, say, the mainstream media helped ‘put reality together’ in such a way, that the war on Iraq become commonsensically unavoidable. To be more exact, the mainstream media, through a process of political and economic censorship and circular circulation of information, to use Bourdieu’s lenses, did act dynamically and overtly in the construction of a complex amalgam of what Fairclough coined as social identities, subject positions, self typologies, systems of knowledge and beliefs. These are not only on both sides of the belligerent forces, but also within the Western and Eastern sides, a framework that ‘naturally’ helps to pave the way, not precisely to invade Iraq, but for the acceptance of U.S. foreign policies. Moreover, and this is quite important, along with Caragee, Michael Apple argues that we are under a distorted construction of the ‘other’ that “consistently define[s] international events and especially foreign social

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<sup>836</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, p., 18.

<sup>837</sup> Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p., 63.

<sup>838</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 63-64

<sup>839</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

<sup>840</sup> Op. Cit., p., 64.

movements in ways that [confirm] the dominant political meanings and values of the American society”<sup>841</sup>.

Both Said’s and Chomsky’s analyses teach us great deal here. According to Chomsky, forms of “vicious repression of dissident opinion”<sup>842</sup> today are rather different from those in the past. As he argues, “today the methods are different [since] now it’s not the threat of force that ensures the media will present things within a framework that serves the interests of the dominant institutions”<sup>843</sup>. As Chomsky reminds us, “the mechanisms today are much more subtle, [and there] is a complex system of filters in the media and educational institutions which ends up ensuring that dissident perspectives are weeded out, or marginalized in one way or another”<sup>844</sup>. It is based in this perspective that Chomsky put forward the concept of a propaganda model as a tool to help us think about the way the media operates. After unveiling the tension between “how the media ‘ought’ to function [vs.] how they do function”<sup>845</sup> Chomsky argues that “the media presents a picture of the world which defends and inculcates the economic, social, and political agendas of the privileged groups that dominate the domestic economy, and who therefore also largely control the government”<sup>846</sup>. Thus, according to “this ‘propaganda model’ the media serve their societal purpose by the way they select topics, distribute concerns, frame issues, filter information, focus their analysis, through emphasis, tone, and a whole range of other techniques like that”<sup>847</sup>. As Chomsky indicates elsewhere, with Herman, “the essential ingredients of our propaganda model, or set of ‘news’ filters fall under the following headings: (1)the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms, (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media, (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and ‘experts’ funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power, (4) ‘flak’ as a means of disciplining the media, and (5) ‘anticommunism’ as a national religion and control

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<sup>841</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 104.

<sup>842</sup> Chomsky, N. (2002) The Media: An Institutional Analysis. In P. Mitchell and J. Schoeffel (eds) *Understanding Power. The Indispensable Chomsky*. New York: The New Press, pp., 12-15, p., 13. I am in debt to my colleague and friend Alvaro Hypolito for his critical and insightful input on this particular argument.

<sup>843</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>844</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>845</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

<sup>846</sup> Chomsky, N. (2002) Testing the Propaganda Model. In P. Mitchell and J. Schoeffel (eds) *Understanding Power. The Indispensable Chomsky*. New York: The New Press, pp., 15-18, p., 15.

<sup>847</sup> Op. Cit., p., 15.

mechanism”<sup>848</sup>. Consequently, and inviting Said into our argument, these particular kinds of ideological filters will help maintain a non-stop process of building specific “communities of interpretation”<sup>849</sup>, communities that are built through constant struggle yet only within particular semantic borders that will reward a specific kind of commonsense.

Using such a political and ideological strategy, one that in fact, ‘reorganizes’ or ‘reconfigures’ the commonsense, which is still fragile and numbed by the still-fresh 9-11 tragedy and the frustration of the inconsequential capture of the CIA’s and FBI’s top most wanted individual, it was not that difficult for Bush’s New Right militaristic approach to build and gain consensus of the governed, under a new reconfiguration of the commonsense through the mainstream media. Actually, both 9-11 and the War in Afghanistan, and as we can now overtly see, the War in Iraq, were marked by what Gitlin highlights as selective media strategies. They are the same ones that ‘made’ and ‘unmade’ the *Students for a Democratic Society* movement in the 1960’s. In fact, each tragic event noted above went through a selective media process of “trivialization, polarization, emphasis and marginalization”<sup>850</sup>. In so doing, one must stress that, as Fairclough, drawing from Blackwell and Seabrook highlights, the mass media operates critically and selectively “within a social system”<sup>851</sup>. Thus, we face an overdetermined relation, since “the media are shaped by, and in turn contribute to shaping, the system overall”. Therefore, understanding the media is also understanding the way power relations occur within a given society. That is one should not ignore the way the media “affected and are affected by power relations within the social system, including relations of class, gender and ethnicity, and relations between particular groups like politicians or scientists and the mass of the population”<sup>852</sup>. In fact, the mainstream media should be understood, as an intricate comprised of powerful allies of the dominant forces to create ‘commonsensical’ acts within every day life and to conquer the commonsense.

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<sup>848</sup> Herman, E., and Chomsky, N. (2002) *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, p., 2.

<sup>849</sup> Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Vintage Books, pp., 36-68.

<sup>850</sup> Gitlin, T. (1980) *The Whole World is Watching. Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Bekerley: University of California Press.

<sup>851</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, p., 12.

<sup>852</sup> Op. Cit., p., 12.

As we could clearly identify, and along with Torfing and Fairclough, by being profoundly engaged “in the production of the fabric of everyday life [since] they organize our leisure time, shape our social behavior and provide material out of which our very identities are constructed in terms of class, race, nationality, sexuality, and distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’”<sup>853</sup>, the media as discourse should be seen as a selective work at a cultural and ideological level including “particular ways of representing the world [...] particular constructions of social identities [and] particular constructions of social relations”<sup>854</sup>. This idiosyncratic cultural and ideological bias characteristic of the (mainstream) media becomes even more aggressive under a free market policy trend. In fact, and drawing from Bourdieu and Williams, worldwide media corporations like MSNBC, CBS, and ABC, by being owned (or produced) by mega multinational corporations such as General Electric, Westinghouse, and Disney<sup>855</sup> respectively, (and one could add Channel One via Whittle Communications, as Michael Apple<sup>856</sup> warns us) not only fall under those mega ‘corporational’ needs, but also are seriously and heavily dependent of the shared dominance they portray (or not) through advertising and to their audiences. These monopoly trends become a quite graphic dangerous reality if one pays attention to the last Report of the Federal Communications Commission in the US, over the connections between the media and technology. As the Dreazan and Flint documented the new Federal Regulations will allow the consubstantiation and aggravation of the current media framework, one which “the top 20 online news sites are owned by 16 large media companies, with the top five sites getting more traffic than the other 15 combined”<sup>857</sup> – a reality that actually was anticipated already a couple of years ago by McChesney<sup>858</sup>.

As Williams straightforwardly reminds us, “paid advertisements, or commercials, are now a significantly large element of most newspapers and most broadcasting services, to an extent where, in a majority of the cases, the financial viability of the presumably

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<sup>853</sup> Torfing, J. (1999) *New Theories of Discourse. Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*. Oxford: Blackwell, p., 210.

<sup>854</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, p., 12.

<sup>855</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1996) *On Television*. New York: The New York Press.

<sup>856</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>857</sup> Dreazan, Y., and Flint, J. (2003) FCC Eases Media-Ownership Caps, Clearing the Way for New Mergers. *The Wall Street Journal*, 03/06, p., 1.

<sup>858</sup> McChesney, R. (1999) *Rich Media, Poor Democracy. Communications Policy in Dubious Times*. New York: The New Press. I am in debt to my friend and colleague Paulino Motter for the arguments over this particular issue.

primary service [is] directly determined by its performance in this area”<sup>859</sup>. What we see is clearly a quarrelsome struggle over what and how to make and unmake what constitutes ‘news’, a struggle that within a given media editorial board takes a “good deal of time talking about other newspapers, particularly about ‘what they did and we didn’t do and what should be done, since the other part did it”<sup>860</sup>. Given the power of the advertising and audience dictatorship, the media have to act, not only within the limits allowed and instigated by those flaccid constructions, but also on the understanding that they are dealing with profit-driven market device. This device is shaped by and shapes the social system in a given society, but it also gradually and successfully has been able to smoothly push the media to become a non-public issue. In fact, and as Fairclough stresses, “marketization undermines the media as a public sphere”<sup>861</sup>.

It is precisely this pertinent concern that one can identify within Michael Apple’s analysis of the effects of Channel One within schooling, both at the level of the news and of the commercials. Hiding under the rhetoric of the debated fiscal crises within the U.S., Whittle Communications ‘discovered’ (or ‘fabricated’) in schooling a new societal pocket in which it can become even more profitable. In order to do that, schooling has to shift from something with societal meaning to something with economic meaning. This strategic aim was achievable given the way the media embraced a complex process of reorganizing the commonsense, highlighting in a sensational way the waste and lack of efficiency within public schooling. As one of the Whittle Communications spokesperson commented, “somebody has to pay for the bill for education [meaning the fiscal crisis bill], and commercials are the most direct way to pay”<sup>862</sup>.

Hence, as we highlighted before, Channel One should be seen within the larger context of what Michael Apple coined conservative restoration<sup>863</sup>. Through his analysis of the impact of Channel One within schools, Michael Apple demonstrates not only the economic, ideological, and cultural dynamics underpinning the advent of Channel One,

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<sup>859</sup> Williams, R. (1987) *Human History and its Communications*. In O. Boyd-Barrett and P. Braham (eds.) *Media, Knowledge and Power*. London: Croom Helm/ Open University, pp., 32-49, p., 39.

<sup>860</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1996) *On Television*. New York: The New York Press, p., 24.

<sup>861</sup> Fairclough, N. (1995) *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold, p., 13.

<sup>862</sup> Barry, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 96.

<sup>863</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.



but also how Channel One should be seen as a “paradigm case of the social transformation of our ideas about public and private, and about schooling itself”<sup>864</sup>. Thus, and recapturing Michael Apple’s arguments that we have already raised, “television inside and outside of schools is involved in the ‘struggle for meaning’ [and] like textbooks, it is not simply a transparent medium that reflects or conveys ‘information’ about the ‘real world’ into classrooms and living rooms”<sup>865</sup>. Drawing partly from Bastian, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer and Haskin’s approach, Michael Apple argues that Channel One’s impact within schooling is not only palpable in the major aims of education, curriculum and teaching:

It is not just at the level of social goals or curriculum and teaching that the ‘industrialization’ of education has proceeded. Channel One stands at the intersection of other tendencies as well. [...] The Right has attempted to alter our very perception of schooling itself, turning it away from the idea of a common ground in which democracy is hammered out (an intensively *political* idea involving interactive notions of citizenship in a polity). Instead, the common ground of the school becomes no longer based on a set of democratic political commitments (no matter how weak before); rather, it is placed by the idea of a competitive marketplace. The citizen as a political being with reciprocal rights and duties is lost. In its place is the self as *consumer*. Schooling (and students) becomes a retail product. Freedom in a democracy is no longer defined as participating in building the common good, but as living in an unfettered commercial market, with the educational system now being seen as needing to be integrated into the mechanisms of such market<sup>866</sup>.

What one can get from this accurate analysis is that the key issue is “to see the ideological reconstruction that is going on, to understand that in the process of making the school [...] into a product to be bought and sold, we are radically altering our definitions of what it means to participate in our institutions”. That is to say, “convincing the public at large to see education as a product to be evaluated for its economic utility and as a commodity to be bought and sold like anything else in the

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<sup>864</sup> Op. Cit., p., 111.

<sup>865</sup> Fiske, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, pp., 87-98.

<sup>866</sup> Bastian, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer and Haskins, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 111.

'free market''<sup>867</sup> requires hard work within the ideological framework. And, as Michael Apple serenely (yet thoroughly incisively) puts it, "the effects of this shift can be seen in a number of educational policies and proposals now gaining momentum throughout the country"<sup>868</sup>, namely

(1) Proposals for voucher and choice plans and tax credits to make schools more like the idealized free-market economy; (2) the movement in state legislatures and state departments of education to raise 'standards' and mandate both teacher and student 'competencies' and basic curricular goals and knowledge, thereby centralizing even more at a state level the control of teaching and curricula; (3) the increasingly effective assaults on the school curriculum for its supposedly antifamily and anti-free-enterprise bias, its 'secular humanism', its lack of patriotism, and its neglect of the Western tradition'; (4) the growing pressure to make the needs of business and industry into primary goals of educational system<sup>869</sup>.

Summing up Michael Apple's analysis of the impact of Channel One in schools one can clearly perceive that he is deeply concerned not only with the way 'the news' "in general constructs a picture of the world"<sup>870</sup>, but also the effects of the commercials within the school environment, creating what he calls a 'captive audience'. As for the former, and drawing from Fiske's approach, Michael Apple argues that 'reality' "is brought into existence, is built, through the construction, apprehension and utilization of symbolic forms". Notwithstanding the fact that the meaning in the media should be seen as "both variable and patterned [since] real people actively intervene, interrupt, and create meanings in interaction with the media"<sup>871</sup> (as both the peace rally event and Michael Apple's position provide clear examples), the fact is that the media mainstream keeps constructing a biased view of the world, 'giving views' to the detriment of 'giving news', as one can see by the distorted way they portrayed the so called 'third world' nations. Their view of these nations helps build the dangerous perspective that, for instance, there is no political solution for 'those' nations. To be even more blunt, since

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<sup>867</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 111.

<sup>868</sup> Op. Cit., p., 19.

<sup>869</sup> Op. Cit., p., 20.

<sup>870</sup> Op. Cit., p., 98.

<sup>871</sup> Op. Cit., p., 99.

the so-called 'third world' is almost completely obliterated from the mainstream media (it is not considered worthwhile enough to make it as news), the media, oddly enough, act in a political metamorphosis. By ignoring the so called 'third world' nations, 'these nations' already painfully exploited, are simply excluded. They do not even 'exist'.  
Period.

Thus, under Channel One's strategy "what students and teachers are getting in 'the news' [is] quite important"<sup>872</sup> since, as we mentioned before, the frenetic fever to dramatize and to build a sense of alarm makes the news value "crimes, scandals and disasters"<sup>873</sup>. Taking the floods as an example, this sensational approach obliterates the political reasons that undergird these social sagas. That's why, Michael Apple, critically 'shouts' with his pen over the need to "understand not only what is there [in the news] and what 'is not there'"<sup>874</sup>. That is to say, one should be deeply aware of who really benefits in the 'circular circulation of information'. As for the commercial policies, and as Michael Apple argues, they should be understood as a complementary tool to the media's biased strategy that we have been able to unveil. Drawing from a number of advertisers and directors, Michael Apple stresses that Channel One is indeed a "very interesting medium for reaching an audience that's hard to reach, [and therefore should be seen] as an excellent targeting opportunity"<sup>875</sup>. Thus, we face a "profitable strategy" that, not only pushes school systems to fall under the market logic, but also creates a captive audience. In so doing, as Michael Apple warns, schools are transformed into a commodity. Such a complex strategy reminds us of what Marx argue, that is, "the wealth of societies in which a capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an immense collection of commodities"<sup>876</sup>. It is precisely based on this formulation of Marx, that Jhally, in unveiling the "advertising at the edge of the apocalypse", framed the advertising policies within a colonized culture, one that "has been developed as a delivered system for marketers, [and] its prime function is to produce audiences for sale to advertisers"<sup>877</sup>. As Jhally argues, we are on a multibillion dollar economic path

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<sup>872</sup> Op. Cit., p., 101.

<sup>873</sup> Gans, *Apud*, Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 101.

<sup>874</sup> Op. Cit., p., 101.

<sup>875</sup> Op. Cit., p., 96.

<sup>876</sup> Marx, K. (1976) *Capital (I)*. London: Penguin, p., 125.

<sup>877</sup> Jhally, S. (2000) Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse. In R. Andersen and L. Strate (eds) *Critical Studies in Media Commercialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp., 27-39, p., 28.

(currently within the U.S. alone, “\$175 billion a year is spent to sell us things”<sup>878</sup>) and the real issue is not “whether ad campaigns create a demand for a particular product”, but precisely how to understand the “real social power of advertising”<sup>879</sup>. Thus, “the right question would ask about the cultural role of advertising, not its marketing role”<sup>880</sup>. To go even further in our analysis, one would be naïve not to admit that ad policies are undeniably gender, class and race policies. As Entman and Book have shown in their study, one should pay close attention to the way race, class and gender operate within the ad framework. As they document, “few advertisers wanted to link their products in the dominant White buying public’s minds with persons symbolizing pollution or danger”<sup>881</sup>. Notwithstanding some gains that have been made within the black community, “this does not mean that black persons have equivalent cultural status in America”<sup>882</sup>. In fact, they have only been able to “move to an intermediate position on the spectrum of acceptability [in] many mainstream cultural products, including advertisements”<sup>883</sup>. However, given the political pressure from particular social movements and since the black community represents a significant part of the so-called consumer audience, ad policies ended up with a strategy that ‘hooked’ the black community without unhooked the white spectrum, that is the ‘lightenization’ of black color, and also valuing the feminine sphere. Based on a myriad of critical studies, the authors stress that ad policies have been driven by a set of assumptions, such as “light is better than dark; light is associated with purity, dark with danger and pollution and research shows that the white majority appears more accepting of light-skinned black females”<sup>884</sup>. As a matter of fact, the light-skinned female’s presence was perceived as one of serenity, non-aggression, and non-violence. Thus, this dual strategy of *lightenization* and of prizing the feminine should be seen as an unstable compromise conceptualized by ad politicians to incorporate the black community without losing the ‘white’.

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<sup>878</sup> Op. Cit., p., 28.

<sup>879</sup> Op. Cit., p., 29.

<sup>880</sup> Op. Cit., p., 29.

<sup>881</sup> Entman, R., and Book, C. (2000) Light Makes Right: Skin Colour and Racial Hierarchy in Television Advertising. In R. Andersen and L. Strate (eds) *Critical Studies in Media Commercialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp., 214-224, p., 214.

<sup>882</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

<sup>883</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

<sup>884</sup> Op. Cit., p., 215.

Another issue profoundly crucial in Michael Apple's analysis of the ad policies is what he calls the politics of pleasure. That is to say, and given examples such as Channel One, one should not minimize the importance of "what students get from commercials in the classroom as opposed to the normal routine of school life [since in fact] commercials provide an opportunity for 'play', for collective enjoyment"<sup>885</sup>, or to put it bluntly, they are tools to challenge the sometimes 'boring' daily classroom life. As Jhally reminds us, ad policies are profoundly connected with the mundane politics of happiness, "about how individuals can satisfy themselves and feel both subjectively and objectively good"<sup>886</sup>. In essence, and to apply Gimeno Sacristán lenses, Channel One is but a graphic example over the lethal "inadequacy of the market metaphor"<sup>887</sup> within the very marrow of public schooling.

We just finished an analysis of the way Michael Apple unveils the lethal implications of the New Rightist approach to education, in general, and curriculum, in particular. We were able to reveal that one of the facts that makes New Right policies so powerful currently is the way they operate within the commonsense and with the media's help in reworking specific meanings. It is this well achieved (de)(re)meaning reworking process within the commonsense that allows New Right policies, to establish a hegemonic position and to build safe conditions to 'say what just a few decades would have been 'unsayable', unthinkable. In fact, Michael Apple's scrutiny of the New Right policies casts a critical warning sign over the way the 'unsayable' become so commonsensical that it creates a space to be 'sayable'. Through a complex network of policies expressed in a myriad of foundations, institutes, scholars, writers, the New Rightists were able, not only to (de)(re)mean particular key concepts, but also to push them to an economic logic sphere and in so doing "create a language that has the force to justify the unjustifiable, to produce a 'strong discourse' as a perfect representation of reality"<sup>888</sup>, one that although not impossible, is really difficult to challenge and deconstruct. As Gee, Hall and Lankshear highlighted, this is a semantic strategy, in which the texts "'grab us' [since] they use words that name things which nearly all of us like but which, on

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<sup>885</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 108.

<sup>886</sup> Jhally, S. (2000) Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse. In R. Andersen and L. Strate (eds) *Critical Studies in Media Commercialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp., 27-39, p., 30.

<sup>887</sup> Gimeno Sacristán, J. (1998) *Poderes Inestables en Educación*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.

<sup>888</sup> Macedo, D., Dendrinis, B. and Gounari, P., (2003) *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, p., 122.

reflection are seen to mean slightly 'and sometimes very' different things [than] they mean to many of us"<sup>889</sup>. It was with this 'morpho-syntactic-semantic' strategy that Thatcher was able to wipe out the very concept of society. In a world driven by a constructed culture dominated by 'consumerism based messages' the very space that binds us together (society) loses its democratic and just significance. As Jhally and Torres Santome argue, and given the 'tout court' (de)(re)demeaning conditions articulated by the New Rightist politicians, Thatcher was not shy about her infamous approach towards society—"there is no such thing as 'society'. There are just individuals and their families"<sup>890</sup>. Simultaneously, in so doing, Thatcher not only would demolish society as a valuable sphere within a democratic and just society, but also conveniently pushed the responsibility for education onto the family. Another fresher and more graphic example of the way New Right policies were able to rework within the commonsense through a process of (de)(re)demeaning specific key concepts comes from the XV Constitutional Portuguese Government Program. In this program, education, which comes under the rubric 'Investing in the Qualification of 'the' Portuguese people', is seen as a tool to revamp the economic crises. Based on this, the Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party 'radical center' coalition was not reticent in linking the world monopoly with (public) education. Their position deserves to be quotes at length:

The quasi monopoly of public schooling that exists nowadays, at all levels of schooling, is not the desirable model. Not because it is public, but because for quite a while it has been subject to limitations on its functioning, its culture, which collide with the constitutional freedom principle of learning and teaching, of choosing and the access to a good that is maintained by all the Portuguese population.<sup>891</sup>

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<sup>889</sup> Gee, J., Hull. G., Lankshear, C. (1996) *The New Work Order: Behind the Language of the New Capitalism*. Boulder: Westview Press, p., 29.

<sup>890</sup> Thatcher, *Apud*, Jhally, S. (2000) Adverstising at the Edge of the Apocalypse. In R. Andersen and L. Strate (eds) *Critical Studies in Media Commercialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp., 27-39, p., 33. Also *Vide* Torres Santome, J. (2001) A Construção da Escola Pública como Instituição Democrática: Poder e Participação da Comunidade. *Revista Currículo Sem Fronteiras*, 1 (1), pp., 51-80, p., 63. [www.curriculosemfronteiras.org](http://www.curriculosemfronteiras.org).

<sup>891</sup> *Programa do XV Governo Constitucional de Portugal*. <http://www.portugal.gov.pt>

As Afonso<sup>892</sup> cautiously warns us, notwithstanding one should not ignore the specificities of a peripheral country such as Portugal, as one can easily see - and the Portuguese case is a graphic example - the New Rightist approach is not timid and does not hesitate to link the vicious meaning of words, such as monopoly with the public. In so doing they pervert the very meaning of schooling as a public good, and consequently they destroy the borders between the public and the private, they wipe out the common good as a social aim, opening the door and welcoming the private to establish itself as the most valuable tool to challenge the ‘odd’ conceptual construction of the ‘monopoly of the public’. By merging the idea of the ‘public’ with that of ‘monopoly’, the ‘radical Portuguese center’ was able to deconstruct the notion of the public as a common good, and in so doing, they, as Somers<sup>893</sup> warns, also paved the way for markets mechanisms. In essence, neoliberal imprimatur, as Pacheco<sup>894</sup> highlights, is a result of a non-stop tension between the State and the Market forces, and our claim is that it is precisely that intricate tension that is pumping the oxygen for the neo-liberal intellectual engines. One of the noteworthy struggles within this complex tension is, what Stoer<sup>895</sup> denounces as the “transformation of the discursive basis”, a multifaceted set of processes within which the right has been able to operate surgical ‘adjustments’ within the very concept of change.

It is precisely within this particular strategy that one should also perceive Channel One. As Michael Apple warns us, Channel One “is a paradigm case of the social transformation of our ideas about public and private, and about schooling itself”<sup>896</sup>. That is to say, “it is not just at the level of social goals or curriculum and teaching that the ‘industrialization’ of education has proceeded; [in fact,] Channel One stands at the intersection of other tendencies as well [as an attempt] to alter our very perception of schooling itself, turning it away from the idea of a common ground in which democracy

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<sup>892</sup> Afonso, A. (1998) Modernização, Democratização e Neoliberalismo. Tensões e Ambiguidades de uma Reforma Educativa. *Ler História – Modernidade e Educação em Portugal*, 35, pp., 109-126.

<sup>893</sup> Somers, M. (2001) Romancing the Market, Reviling the State: The Politics and Knowledge of Civil Society and the Public Sphere. From Political Economy to Neoliberalism. *A. E. Havens Center for the Study of Social Structure and Social Change*. Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>894</sup> Pacheco, J. (2000) Introdução Geral. Contextos e Características do Neoliberalismo em Educação. In J. Pacheco (org.) *Políticas Educativas. O Neoliberalismo em Educação*. Porto: Porto Editora, pp., 9-20.

<sup>895</sup> Stoer, S. (2002) No Fio da Navalha ou, por outras palavras, como Michael Apple chama a Nossa Atenção para ter ‘Cuidado com o Fosso’. *Encontro Internacional de Políticas Educativas e Curriculares*, Valongo. Centro de Formação das Escolas do Concelho de Valongo, Centro de Formação Sebastião da Gama, Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas da Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, *Revista Currículo sem Fronteiras*, pp., 39-49.

<sup>896</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 111.

is hammered out”<sup>897</sup>. Quite naturally, as Michael Apple argues, “the common ground of the schools becomes no longer based on a set of democratic political commitments [rather], it is replaced by the idea of a competitive marketplace”<sup>898</sup>. Also, under this strategy of (de)(re)meaning specific concepts, as one could easily identify from Michael Apple’s approach, New Rightists were able to build the dangerous commonsensical idea that ‘market logic’ is the only way to drive current societies, and in so doing they dared to build what Mouffe<sup>899</sup> calls a democratic paradox. That is to say, for the current New Rightist trend, the tension is not between having or not having a representative *vs.* participatory democracy. The real issue is that they manage to build a fallacious notion within the commonsense that there is no adversary to their impulses, which really creates a paradox within a truly democratic system, one that they were not shy to ‘bypass’.

However we are not making the claim here that neoliberal policies do not face serious obstructions from a myriad of social groups deeply committed to a truly just democratic society, or serious conflicts that this hegemonic bloc certainly has within its elements. Before we start considering such contradictions and forms of resistance, it is crucial to highlight that the process of (de)(re)meaning specific key concepts with the commonsense is not a peaceful process. As Michael Apple highlights, “meanings are polysemic [and] there can be multiple meanings in any situation”<sup>900</sup>. However, notwithstanding the fact that “people make meaning [since they] make multiple and often competing meaning[s]”, Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney warn us “they are not entirely free to make any meaning they want [since] there is a history and a way of life behind the interpretations of the world and of the languages that they make”. Thus, even though polysemic, as Michael Apple reminds us, and expressing a “certain autonomy”, meaning is something representational. Hence, the (de)(re) meaning process that we are claiming here is one that, to apply Macedo, Dendrinis, and Gounari’s<sup>901</sup> terminology, drives one’s representations to a closure position. What we are trying to argue here is that the New Rightist process of (de)(re)demeaning particular crucial concepts is not

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<sup>897</sup> Op. Cit., p., 111.

<sup>898</sup> Op. Cit., p., 111.

<sup>899</sup> Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.

<sup>900</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 106.

<sup>901</sup> Macedo, D. Dendrinis, B. & Gounari, P. (2003) *The Hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.



an easy process. Conversely, it is a process that involves infinite battles in the struggle over meaning, and the fact is that unfortunately too many battles have been won by the New Rightist platform. Having noted this particular issue and knowing how the New Right is ‘winning’ we concur with Michael Apple, for whom one of the main issues is to question if this New Right trend would be able to maintain this particular dynamic of triumphalism. One way to address the issue is by paying careful attention to what is going on both inside and outside the said coalition. In fact, as Michael Apple carefully reminds us, New Right policies are facing major obstacles, namely, the advent of a great transformation in racial identities, a new and much more powerful self-conscious collective identity that has been formed, the growing development of power from ‘non-white’ communities, the subsumed (yet powerful) class tensions within elements of the New Rightist bloc, and finally teachers reacting against the loss of control over their work, the process of deskilling, and so forth. As for the particular class tensions within the Rightist bloc, as Michael Apple argues, “fragile compromises may come apart because of the sometimes directly contradictory beliefs held by many of the partners in the new accord”<sup>902</sup>. As he reveals, particular tensions are perceivable amongst the “two groups now involved in supporting the accord”<sup>903</sup>,

There are both what can be called ‘residual’ and ‘emergent’ ideological systems or codes at work here. The residual culture and the ideologies of the old middle class and of an upwardly mobile portion of the working class and lower middle class—stressing control, individual achievement, ‘morality, etc.—has been merged with the emergent code of a portion of the new middle class: getting ahead, technique, efficiency, bureaucratic advancement, and so on. These codes are in an inherently unstable relationship<sup>904</sup>.

This set of contradictions within the New Rightist coalition becomes even more powerful if one pays close attention to both Soros’s and Stiglitz’s ‘confessions’. Our aim here is not to analyze thoroughly their claims against the New Rightist trends but rather to note two graphic examples of contradictions (and why not resistances) at the

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<sup>902</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 32.

<sup>903</sup> Op. Cit., p., 32.

<sup>904</sup> Op. Cit., p., 33.

very core of the New Right platform that will color even more Michael Apple's diagnosis and prognosis. Soros describes himself as a "successful money manager [and] a philanthropist [who sometimes] felt like a gigantic digestive tract, taking in money at one end and pushing it out at the other"<sup>905</sup>. Notwithstanding the fact that his fortune was anchored in and propelled by the financial markets, Soros stresses that "the global capitalist system which has been responsible for the remarkable prosperity of this country in the last decade is coming apart at the seams"<sup>906</sup>. As he claims, "the current decline in the US stock market is only a symptom, and a belated symptom at that, of the more profound problems afflicting the world economy"<sup>907</sup>. According to Soros, the "current state of affairs is unsound and unsustainable [since] financial markets are inherently unstable, and there are social needs that cannot be met by giving market forces free rein"<sup>908</sup>. Unfortunately, as he argues "these defects are not recognized [and] there is a widespread belief that markets are self-correcting and a global economy can flourish without any need for a global society"<sup>909</sup>. Claiming that "the development of a global economy has not been matched by the development of a global society, Soros destroys the idea of 'laissez faire' and warns his readers against the dangers of what he calls "market fundamentalism [that under *Reaganism and Thatcherism*] has put capital into the driver's seat"<sup>910</sup>. As he stresses, we are living in an era in which "global financial markets are largely beyond the control of national or international authorities"<sup>911</sup>. That is to say, in an analysis that resembles our position towards the peace rally event, he claims "international law and international institutions, insofar as they exist, are not strong enough to prevent the war, or the large-scale abuse of human rights in individual countries [and also] ecological threats are not adequately dealt with". As we mentioned previously, and very cautiously for fear of taking a reductionist perspective, it seems that the economy is above everything else. According to Soros, global capitalism is a distorted exercise of a free and open society. As Soros argues, market fundamentalism blocks the State's ability and capability. He adds, "today the

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<sup>905</sup> Soros, G. (1998) *The Crisis of Global Capitalism*. New York: Public Affairs, p., ix. I am in great debt to Boaventura Sousa Santos for his critical insight on this particular issue.

<sup>906</sup> Op. Cit., p., xi.

<sup>907</sup> Op. Cit., p., xi.

<sup>908</sup> Op. Cit., p., xx.

<sup>909</sup> Op. Cit., p., xx.

<sup>910</sup> Op. Cit., p., xx.

<sup>911</sup> Op. Cit., p., xx.

ability of the state to provide for the welfare of its citizens has been severely impaired by the mobility of capital”<sup>912</sup>.

Like Soros, Stiglitz’s analysis also shows some contradictions within the very heart of the New Rightist coalition. Identifying himself as an academic, he “served on the Council of Economic Advisors under the US Clinton administration and was a Chief Economist and senior Vice President of the World Bank”<sup>913</sup>, and his 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics gave us enough impartiality to pay attention to his arguments. According to Stiglitz, his experience with the World Bank allowed him to see “firsthand the devastating effect that globalization can have on developing countries, and especially the poor within those countries”<sup>914</sup>. Despite his belief that “globalization—the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies—can be a force for good and that it has the ‘potential’ to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor”, Stiglitz argues that he was not so foolish as to believe that markets by themselves solved every social problem. As he highlights, “inequality, unemployment, pollution [were] issues in which government had to take an important role”<sup>915</sup>. As Stiglitz argues, “to understand what went wrong, it’s important to look at the three main institutions that govern globalization, [namely] the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO”<sup>916</sup>. Globalization, according to Stiglitz’s ‘romantic old time view’, “is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people across borders”<sup>917</sup>. However this (‘romantic’) aim turns out to be a nightmare given the perverted way, say, the IMF operates. Stiglitz’s own words deserve to be highlighted:

I had worked on the initiative for ‘reinventing government’ – making government more efficient and more responsive; I have seen where government was neither; I had seen how difficult reform is; [at the IMF] I discovered [that] decisions were made on the basis of what seemed a curious

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<sup>912</sup> Soros, G. (2002) *Open Society. Reforming Global Capitalism*. London: Little, Brown and Company, p., 177.

<sup>913</sup> Stiglitz, J. (2002) *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, p., ix.

<sup>914</sup> Op. Cit., ix.

<sup>915</sup> Op. Cit., p., xiii.

<sup>916</sup> Op. Cit., p., 10.

<sup>917</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

blend of ideology and bad economics, dogma that sometimes seemed to be thinly veiling special interests. When the crises hit, the IMF prescribed outmoded, inappropriate, if 'standard' solutions, without considering the effects they would have on the people in the countries told to follow these policies. Rarely did I see forecasts about what the policies would do to poverty. Rarely did I see thoughtful discussions and analysis of the consequences of alternative policies. There was a single prescription. Alternative opinions were not sought. Open, frank discussion was discouraged – there was no room for it. Ideology guided policy prescription and countries were expected to follow IMF guidelines without debate [There] are no smoking guns here. You won't find hard evidence of a terrible conspiracy by Wall Street and the IMF to take over the world. I don't believe such a conspiracy exists. The truth is subtler. Often it is a tone of voice, or a meeting behind closed doors, or a memo that determines the outcomes of discussions<sup>918</sup>.

Notwithstanding Stiglitz's lack of aggressive criticism towards say the World Bank or the WTO, at least at the same level of criticism he leveled at the IMF (and despite the fact that as Bourdieu reminds us "we just have to read about the World Trade Organization to figure out and perceive the educational policies for the next 5 years"<sup>919</sup>) one should not minimize his perspective. Also, and within the same line of resistance but from outside of the New Rightist core, one should not marginalize the examples that Michael Apple put forward, namely, the vocational *Rindge School of Technical Arts* in the Boston Area, and the progressive Journal based in Milwaukee - *Rethinking Schools*. As for the former, the real aim is not only in "making students more competitive as workers, but in community development, employee control, and community and student involvement at every level"<sup>920</sup>; the latter "has had considerable influence in stimulating the school system's rethinking of its reliance on specific mandated reading programs and standardized testing [and] committed itself to altering the politics of curriculum and teaching within schools"<sup>921</sup>.

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<sup>918</sup> Op. Cit., pp., xiii-xiv.

<sup>919</sup> Bourdieu, P. (2002) En Defensa de un Saber Comprometido. *Le Monde Diplomatique* – Spanish Edition, 76, pp., 1-3.

<sup>920</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge, p., 37.

<sup>921</sup> Op. Cit., p., 37.

Summing up, one can see, and as we already pointed out in other context<sup>922</sup>, neoliberalism, as an economic, political and cultural project<sup>923</sup>, contains meanings, ideas and values that are the basis of a profound belief in a free-market, in a deterritorialization of the individual, and in self-interest as unique instruments—at the level of effectiveness—towards the sedimentation of an (allegedly) more socially just society. It represents an ideological construct that is based on a repertoire of strategies at various levels, by means of which the individual/consumer (and this concept is vital to the neoliberal ideology) is subordinate, is assimilated and is excluded. One finds a trend which leads the social movement of conservative restoration<sup>924</sup>, encompassing the neoliberals, the neoconservatives, the authoritarian populists and even a new professional middle class<sup>925</sup>, and which has dominated contemporary educational politics, the fundamental objective of which rests on the conservative modernization of social and educational politics<sup>926</sup>. The notion of State providence, and all its logics—economic, political and cultural—begin to disintegrate and, in essence, it is a scenario of crisis of the *Taylorian* labour organization, of the welfare State, of the State of intervention, of ecology, of the global *Fordism* and of the individual *Fordism* that stimulates the emergence of the neoliberal doctrine<sup>927</sup>, largely propelled by the macroeconomic thought of Milton Friedman. For Friedman<sup>928</sup>, the intervention of the government in the economy causes an excessive multiplication of costs, and the limitations imposed on economic liberty threaten our economic progress. The

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<sup>922</sup> Paraskeva, J. (in press) [D]escolarização: Genotexto e Fenotexto das Políticas Curriculares Neoliberais. In Jurjo Torres Santomé, Michael Apple e Joao Paraskeva *Ventos de Descolarização: A Nova Ameaça à Escolarização Pública*. Also Vide Paraskeva, J. (2002) [D]escolarização: Genotexto e Fenotexto das Políticas Curriculares Neoliberais. *Cadernos de Educacao*, 11, n.18, p.7-67.

<sup>923</sup> McChesney, R. (1999). Introduction. In N. Chomsky (1999). *Profit Over People. Neoliberalism and Global Order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

<sup>924</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge; Apple, Michael, (1996) *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press; Apple, Michael (1998) Education and New Hegemonic Blocs: Doing Policy the ‘Right’ Way. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8, (2), pp. 181-200; Apple, Michael. (2000) Away All the Teachers. The Politics of Homeschooling. *Conference in London*: Institute of Education. Vide also Apple, Michael (2002) ‘Endireitar’ a Educação: As Escolas e a Nova Aliança Conservadora. *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, 2 (1), pp., 55-78, [www.curriculosemfronteiras.org](http://www.curriculosemfronteiras.org)

<sup>925</sup> Apple, Michael (1998) Education and New Hegemonic Blocs: Doing policy the ‘Right’ Way. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8 (2), pp. 181-200. Vide also Apple, Michael (2002) ‘Endireitar’ a Educação: As Escolas e a Nova Aliança Conservadora. *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, 2 (1), pp., 55-78, [www.curriculosemfronteiras.org](http://www.curriculosemfronteiras.org)

<sup>926</sup> Dale, R. (1989). *The State and Education Policy*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

<sup>927</sup> Hirsch, J. (1992). Fordismo y Posfordismo, La Crisis Actual y Sus Consecuencias. In J. Hirsch *et al* (Eds.). *Los estudios sobre el Estado y la Reestructuración Capitalista*. Buenos Aires. Editorial Tierra del Fuego

<sup>928</sup> Butler, E. (1985) *Milton Friedman: A Guide to his Economic Thought*. Aldershot: Gower; Friedman, M. (1990) *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*. New York: Harcourt.

intervention of the government in the economy causes an unmeasured multiplication of costs, and the limitations imposed on the economic freedom threaten economic progress<sup>929</sup>. In other words, the lessening of the role played by the government is thus assumed as a crucial objective in economic development<sup>930</sup>.

Actually we do not want to embrace here in analyzes over the most appropriate 'label' to put forward to such a complicate movement. We do know that too many scholars address the alliance invariably, be it conservative restoration, be it conservative modernization, etc. What it is interesting to flag here is that Michael Apple's cartography is one that incorporates both forms of hegemony highlighted by Gramsci. That is to say, one is before an alliance that was able to build a hegemonic position based both on 'transformism' and 'expansionism'. While the former is a non-aggressive strategy, which tries gradually to incorporate 'peacefully' various elements –even those deeply contradictory – under a particular umbrella, the latter should be seen as deeply and overtly aggressive. It is this overtly tough approach that allows the dominant classes to maintain the leadership of the alliance, and working and reworking particular nods of consensus as well, that will mobile as much social groups as they could under the same umbrella<sup>931</sup>. As Gramsci felicitously highlights, we are before an “interpretative criterion of molecular changes which in fact progressively modify pre-existing composition of forces, and hence become the matrix of new changes”<sup>932</sup>.

Despite the various names with which it is frequently referred to (New Right, neoliberalism, neoconservatism, new Alliance of Conservative Restoration), one is, nevertheless, able to detect in this movement two basic ideological tendencies: one, liberal; the other, conservative. According to some authors<sup>933</sup>, neoliberalism is more closely related to concepts like market, technological development, and

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<sup>929</sup> Friedman, M. (1990) *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*. New York: Harcourt.

<sup>930</sup> Friedman, M. (1992) An interview with Milton Friedman. *The Region*. Minneapolis: Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

<sup>931</sup> Gramsci, A. (1971) *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Q. Hoare and G. Smith. New York: International publishers, pp., 55-59.

<sup>932</sup> Op. Cit., 109.

<sup>933</sup> Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. (1985) *Education Under Siege. The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate over Schooling*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Shapiro, S. (1990) *Between Capitalism and Democracy. Educational Policy and the Crisis of the Welfare State*. New York: Bergin & Garvey Publishers. Stoer, S.; Cortesão, L. e Magalhães, A. (1998) A Questão da Impossibilidade Racional de Decidir e o Despacho sobre os Currículos Alternativos. *VII Colóquio Nacional da AIPELF/AFIRSE, A Decisão em Educação*, pp., 210-215. Pacheco, J. (org.) (2000) *Políticas Educativas. O Neoliberalismo em Educação*. Porto: Porto Editora.

neoconservatism, and with the aristocracy, authority, militarism, and religious values. That is, while neoliberalism is guided by a weak State, and by an economic rationale, which valorizes the market, a strong State, and family values<sup>934</sup>, such movements being in continuous formation<sup>935</sup> are able to construct and maintain a certain hegemonic cultural and ideological norm.

Be it as a culture of anticipation (neoliberalism) or a culture of reaction (neoconservatism), the New Right is able to hide its contradictions. On the one hand, the neoconservatives mobilize the arguments of the neoliberal economic rationale with the aim of blocking the degradation of traditional family values and of imposing high standards, national *curricula* and evaluations. On the other, the neoliberals restrict the school to the discipline and the rules of the market, placing it as the referee of social meritocracy, capable of (re)distributing resources in accordance with the effort made by each one, discredit the viability of a public education and depoliticize education, turning it into a product to be consumed according to specific choices and options. This has been happening in various countries at the end of the twentieth century, with the “choice” and “voucher” plans, and homeschooling. What has always been designated as the part of political dynamics emerges now as a market decision<sup>936</sup>.

By questioning State providence, neoliberalism assumes its major objective is to reduce as much as possible the field of performance of the State<sup>937</sup>. It is market logic as opposed to state logic, and subordination to market politics as the only form of homeostatic regulation of society. In essence, neoliberalism translates the beginning of the macro-programmes of social adjustment<sup>938</sup>, which document the morphological crises that capitalist systems undergo<sup>939</sup>, and inaugurating what was predicted to be the

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<sup>934</sup> Apple, Michael (1998) Education and New Hegemonic Blocs: Doing Policy the ‘Right’ Way. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8 (2), pp. 181-200. Vide also Apple, Michael (2002) ‘Endireitar’ a Educação: As Escolas e a Nova Aliança Conservadora. *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, 2 (1), pp., 55-78, [www.curriculosemfronteiras.org](http://www.curriculosemfronteiras.org)

<sup>935</sup> Apple, Michael & Oliver, Anita. (1996) Becoming Right: Education and the Formation of Conservative Movements. *Teachers College Record*, Volume 97 (3), pp. 419-445.

<sup>936</sup> Bottery, M. (2000) Markets, Managerialism and Education. In M. Leicester, C. Modgil & S. Modgil (Eds.). Education, culture and values, Volume 1, *Systems of Education, Theories, Policies and Implicit Values*. London: Falmer Press, pp. 15-26.

<sup>937</sup> Friedman, M. (1982) *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>938</sup> Lomnitz, L. & Melnick, A. (1991) *Chile's Middle Class. A Struggle for Survival in the Face of Neoliberalism*. London: Lynne Rienner Editors.

<sup>939</sup> Gentili, P. (1994). *Poder Económico, Ideología y Educación*. Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila Editores.

great transformation of the Western economic system defined as the 'big market'<sup>940</sup>. In this aspect, the new Right, led by the neoliberal movement, reiterates that education should submit to administrative, curricular and pedagogical reform that privileges efficiency and productivity, thereby optimizing educational results, as a strategy in which the principle of educational management is superimposed and dilutes authentic democratization. Consequently, there is an intensification of participation and autonomy rhetoric (even if under the wing of decentralization), and administrative and inspector controls of the work performed by teachers and students with the aim of increasing productivity, thus insuring the effectiveness of results in accordance with the specific rhythms of the market, especially since, as is indicated by Ball, Bowe & Gewirtz<sup>941</sup>, the market is a mechanism that produces its own steps and its own order. For such a thing to happen, and according to Fernández<sup>942</sup>, the sedimentation of the belief in the quality and effectiveness of management and results of private initiative led to the restructuring of curricular and educational politics, school institutions, and curricular models and practices.

The New Right constructed its own discourse around the market metaphor, predisposed to the implementation of certain virtues, namely personal energy, efficiency, accountability, standards, competitiveness, autonomy, and flexibility, wherein any ameliorative attempts with regards to the dynamics imposed by the market are silenced. However, in the ambit of the laws of the market, the schools may not be seen as something natural, rid of detailed planning<sup>943</sup>. On the contrary, they are framed and influenced by specific conservative political objectives that retain the control of the system and impose a mechanism of performance indicators on schools, namely, national curriculum and evaluation. Thus they provide an accurate system of information and knowledge vital to market mechanisms permitting the consumers the best choices, as well as guiding the provisions of education in order to attain the best objectives and

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<sup>940</sup> Polanyi, K. (1957) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press

<sup>941</sup> Ball, S., Bowe, R., e Gewirtz, S. (1994). Market forces and parental choice: self-interest and competitive advantage in education. In S. Tomlinson (Ed.) *Educational Reform and its Consequences*. London: Rivers Oram Press, pp. 13- 25.

<sup>942</sup> Fernández, M. (1997) Introducción. Escuela Pública y Atención a la Diversidad. In J. Gimeno Sacristán; A. Pérez Gomez; J. Torres Santomé; F. Angulo Rasco; M. López Melero e M. Guerra. *Escuela Pública y Sociedad Neoliberal. IX Jornadas de Formación del Profesorado*. Málaga.

<sup>943</sup> Ball, S., Bowe, R., e Gewirtz, S. (1994). Market Forces and Parental Choice: Self-Interest and Competitive Advantage in Education. In S. Tomlinson (Ed.) *Educational Reform and its Consequences*. London: Rivers Oram Press, pp. 13- 25.



purposes, creating specific patterns of individualization in the schools that systematically disfavor particular groups of students. The major theorists of “free choice”—the genesis of the neoliberal concept—believe that the State lacks the conditions to manage both the growing expenses and the demands of society, as well as what is denounced by Chomsky<sup>944</sup> as the (necessary) construction of a new global social order, that is determined, on the one hand, by a belief in the market, in individualism, in competitiveness, in work deregulation and flexibilization<sup>945</sup> and, on the other hand, in the weakening of the State, in the reduction of public expense, in the incentives drawn around privatizations, and in the planetarization of the means of production and of consumerism<sup>946</sup>. As the translation of a hegemonic ideology, neoliberalism needs to work at the level of common sense, constructing certain frameworks, redefining scenarios, creating appealing markers, creating conditions to create [although, with resistance] the notion that everything is [naturally] converted and is determined into a merchandisable value. This implies a very broad perception related to the expansion and the generalization of the market universe that causes an impact, not only on the reality of material things, but also on the materiality of consciences<sup>947</sup>. It is under the wings of this reform movement that qualitative reconversions of certain cultural and ideological forms are achieved, which are structured as premises in the construction of specific social concepts and which operate at the level of common sense<sup>948</sup>. This conversion of certain concepts moves from the political dominion into the economic sphere, as is the case with concepts of democracy and education<sup>949</sup>.

We are just about to end our analyses of Michael Apple’s approach towards the New Right ‘turn’, and its consequences within education, in general, and curriculum, in particular. It will be wise now, to map out some of our concerns with regards to Michael Apple’s approach. Again, and despite the fact that we fully understand that an author cannot deal with and address every single issue in his work, given the importance of the concerns that we about to unveil, and the way that Michael Apple seriously respects

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<sup>944</sup> Chomsky, N. (1999). *Profit Over People. Neoliberalism and Global Order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

<sup>945</sup> Hayek, F. (1993) *A Desnacionalización del Dinero*. Madrid: Unión Editorial

<sup>946</sup> Nozick, R. (1988). *Anarquía, Estado y Utopía*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica

<sup>947</sup> Wallerstein, I. (1991) *Unthinking Social Science. The Limits of Nineteenth Century Paradigms*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>948</sup> In this regard *Vide* Apple, Michael (1997). *Os Professores e o Currículo: Abordagens Sociológicas*. Educa Currículo. Ministério da Educação/Instituto de Inovação Educacional. Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação. Universidade de Lisboa. Lisboa: Artes Gráficas Lda.

<sup>949</sup> Apple, M. (1996). *Cultural Politics and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

criticism of his work, we hope that he will deal with these particular concerns in his further work. One of our major concerns emerges directly from Michael Apple's New Rightist cartography. Michael Apple's examination of the current New Rightist trend is undeniably clear. We are living 'under' a hegemonic supremacy expressed in a coalition between neoliberals, neoconservatives, and an increasingly active segment of authoritarian populists, a group that is made up of largely white working-class and middle-class groups, and 'finally' a fraction of the professional new middle class. While, in essence, we agree with this particular cartography (for instance, how can one deny the power that Rightist religious fundamentalism is currently demonstrating within the U.S.) since it reaches a sustainable level of complexity, it is undeniable that the way Michael Apple unveils this coalition raises some concerns. Let us start by clarifying our arguments here, which are threefold. While Michael Apple clarifies the way this particular coalition operates, stressing the need to understand it as a 'non-monolithic' group, it is however important that we do not perceive within Michael Apple's arguments, a concern over the contradictions, not exactly between the 'neos' (liberals and conservatives), but precisely within the very core of neoliberals and neoconservatives. Indubitably, and we are confident that Michael Apple would agree with our arguments, not only the New Rightist coalition should be seen as a 'non-monolithic' group, but also both the neoliberals and neoconservatives should be perceived as 'non-monolithic' entities as well. As we already indicated, both Soros's and Stiglitz's analyses function as clear examples of the contradictions within neoliberalism. Moreover, in an article published in the *Financial Times* on March 3, 2003, current neoliberal 'dissidents' Zingales and McCormack show overt contradictions, not only within the alliance, but precisely within the very marrow of the neoliberal platform. As they argue in the said article (a synopsis of their latest work *Saving Capitalism from Capitalists*), while "competition is an opportunity for the have-nots and stimulus for the constant improvement of the economy as a whole, it is a treat for today's elites"<sup>950</sup>. Moreover, as they overtly affirm, by prizing a competitive free market ideology, the current New Right trend pushes the super rich "against free markets because it sees them only as competition and not as opportunity"<sup>951</sup>. Conversely "the free market's strongest supporters are typically self-made small and medium-sized

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<sup>950</sup> Zingales, L., and McCormack, R. (2003) A Choice Between the Rich and the Market. *Financial Times*, March the 3<sup>rd</sup>, p., 13.

<sup>951</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

business owners and professionals who do not have the political power to lobby for special protections and who need the level playing field of a free market”<sup>952</sup>. According to them, one should be deeply aware of the distinction between “market-supporting and market-suppressing regulation [and that] being pro-market and being pro-rich are not same”<sup>953</sup>. They end their analysis with a call to the Republican Party to “make up its mind”<sup>954</sup>. That is to say, does “it want to defend the few against the larger interests of capitalism, or does it embrace not just the rhetoric but also the substance of a pro-market agenda”<sup>955</sup>. As one can perceive, they maintain the current New Right capitalist alliance is a crucial threat to the capital, a fact that opens the door to a set of serious questions. How are those conflicts and contradictions within neoliberalism solved or do they become ideologically anesthetized in order to not to damage the coalition? From what bases do those contradictions erupt? What kinds of compromises, say, within neoliberalism, are made to not jeopardize the hegemonic alliance? Who is the hegemonic force among the neoliberals? What kind of struggles can one identify and what are the counter-hegemonic claims within the neoliberal marrow? The same questions can be asked of the neoconservatives. Moreover, one can ask whether there is any viability or visibility of an alliance between neoliberals and neoconservatives and counter hegemonic forces? How do those neoliberal and neoconservative counter-hegemonic forces ‘resist’ and interpelate, not only the alliance of hegemonic forces, but also the authoritarian populists, and the professional new middle class? Moreover, is there any way that neoliberal and neoconservative counter-hegemonic forces are ‘building’ alliances with elements ‘outside’ the alliance aiming at a reconfiguration of its power positions? How many of those conflicts and contradictions are instigated from inside of each group, from the interplay that each group has with each other, or even from forces outside the alliance? Trying to address such issues, undeniably, would take us, not only to a even deeper level of complexity, but also, subsequently, would make Michael Apple’s approach even more powerful. With these questions in mind, we challenged Michael Apple:

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<sup>952</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>953</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>954</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

<sup>955</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

I agree with you and I think it's a legitimate criticism. I hint at that by talking about two kinds of neo-liberalism in the economy and its relationship to schools. One group that sees schools as a black hole into which money is poured and results do not come out and therefore let's shrink the state; and another group that is perfectly willing to spend more money provided that schools do capital's bidding, and so obviously there are differences within the neo-liberal camp, the neo-liberal position. But my project over the last 2 or 3 books has been to look at the alliance and the way it is creatively sutured together among groups. I think that you're correct. I don't think I've paid enough attention to the differences within the groups because their compromises are aggressively political. Take the Friday group as an example. We're all progressive but there's real differences among folks within there. We have to find some way of mediating all the different politics, progressive politics, within it under the term decentered unity. Decentered unities are formed not just on the left, but on the right. Such a unity is formed within each of the elements within that block, so not all neoliberals agree with each other, and not all neoconservatives agree with each other, and certainly not all authoritarian populists agree with each other. Thus, I agree with your point, but I have no answer to that other than to repeat that this problem indeed requires further analysis and further thought and I think it's a legitimate criticism"<sup>956</sup>.

This particular silence opens the door to other concerns. It seems to us that both the active segment of authoritarian populists—a group that is made up largely of white working-class and middle-class groups—and a fraction of the professional new middle class fall into both neoliberal and neoconservative camps. If that is so, there are two other towering concerns. First, the given political cartography crosses, say, ideological, class, and race spheres. In fact, Michael Apple lays out in his arguments how neoliberals and neoconservatives were able to pull under their umbrella an active segment of authoritarian populists—a group that is largely made up of white working-class and middle-class groups—and a fraction of the professional new middle class. However, despite the fact that we know that it was not Michael Apple's intention to do so, it seems to us that this particular cartography, in a way, silences the feminist, queer, and black conservatism, which is puzzling, since Michael Apple does pay serious attention to feminist and black counter-hegemonic movements that continually challenge this particular alliance. The fact that this is serious hole in Michael Apple's approach, and the fact that he actually recognizes this puzzling silence is that Michael

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<sup>956</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 48* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Apple recently is paying attention to some of the given categories we raised above, as one can see from his analyses over WKKK in *Educating the 'Right' Way* and his concerns with the Black Alliance for Educational Options – BAEO<sup>957</sup>, in Milwaukee.

We are not making the claim, which would be profoundly unfair, that Michael Apple ends up producing a picture that is by and large white and masculine. That will be profoundly unreasonable and is not the issue here. The real issue is the very words that Michael Apple chooses, not only to identify the groups within the alliance, but also within society at large. They are, in a way, unbalanced, as is the case with 'largely white working-class and middle-class groups' and 'people of color' respectively. Because of Michael Apple's political language, the reader might take up a framework that is not endorsed by Michael Apple. In our view, identifying 'non-whites' as 'people of color' is deeply puzzling in two dimensions. On one hand, it gives the idea that the white category is colorless, something outside of the color system, something that has already solved the 'color issue'—it is beyond color. On the other hand, it maintains a conceptual framework that was designed by white segregationist policies, say, in South Africa, Rhodesia, and within the American South, that split societal fabric between 'whites vs. people of color'. We are putting forth a call to Michael Apple to abandon this conceptual language framework, one that also erases ethnicity issues. Even within the vast umbrella of 'other colors than white', one can find hierarchies of domination and exploitation. We can even trace this unbalanced framework within Paul's story referred by Michael Apple both as a black pupil and as his African American son. We think that this cartography should be seen as still 'under construction', one that needs particular upgrades, some of which, curiously, Michael Apple is already addressing, and this takes us to the issue that we want to raise now.

Regardless of the concerns that we are raising here over Michael Apple's cartography, Michael Apple's analysis fits rather well within the U.S. context, and within particular nations in the European Union, although here it is important to establish a distinction between mainstream and peripheral countries. However, if one takes, say, the Southern Africa context, Michael Apple's cartography becomes substantially outdated. A good example of this could be found in the reality of countries

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<sup>957</sup> Apple, Michael (2003) Strategic Alliance or Hegemonic Strategy: Conservatism Among the Dispossessed. *Paper Presented in the Friday Seminar*. Madison: University of Wisconsin – Madison. (Photocopy).

like Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, and in a way South Africa. It is undeniable that every country listed has been driven by a neoliberal approach. However, this particular approach was imposed from outside, given the economic crisis (which is something that should not be minimized), and also the race elements are precisely the opposite. That is to say, we do have a neoliberal and neoconservative alliance in Mozambique that was also able to incorporate an active segment of authoritarian populists, and a fraction of the new professional new middle class; however, a huge majority of this element are blacks and male. This opens the door for us to argue that this global New Right alliance is such a powerful ideological construction, so powerful that it is able to wipe out race, class, and gender tensions and is capable of overcoming secular contradictions. Oddly enough, and unlike the U.S. context in which it was not that difficult to gain support from Republicans and Democrats, in Mozambique (and in the other Southern African nations) this New Rightist alliance had to 'win the consent' within a Marxist Leninist political framework which is a remarkable achievement. What we are claiming here is the following. First, it seems that the New Rightist alliance is not afraid to wipe out secular race, class, gender, and ideological conflicts in the name of the political project that they aim to accomplish. Moreover, this particular wiping out strategy occurs in different ways, say in Milwaukee from Maputo. In both Milwaukee and Maputo, the black community accepts the 'neoliberal cards', yet for different reasons. For this New Right coalition, it seems the real issue is to de-race, de-class, and de-gender. Moreover I am not that sure, if, say, both in Milwaukee and in Maputo, people are, in fact, 'becoming right'. Confronted by this intricate problematic Michael Apple argues,

Yes I do understand your point. But remember that I'm talking about those nations that are predominantly white, historically, that are at the center of racial politics and my claim is you can't understand any of this without placing race at the very center, so the last chapter of *Educating the Right Way* spent a lot of pages talking about the politics of whiteness, saying that you can't understand markets, you can't understand the ethic of return in culture, you can't understand the history of authoritarian populism, and you can't understand new middle class credentialism unless you place race at the very center of your analysis. So I'm not saying that's above race. I'm saying exactly the opposite, that at the core of this is a fear of the other and that other is raced as well as classed, but it's profoundly raced, and that you can't understand the genesis of this unless you understand that there is a racial contract underpinning everything that

goes on. In chapter 3, in *Educating the Right Way* I say now let's even look at those places with strong histories of social democracy such as Norway and Sweden. Let's take Norway. It's been able to withstand some neo-liberal impulses, but as soon as the "Others" are among us, where you have to deal with the fact that "non-Norwegians" (meaning people who are from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, for instance) are here within Oslo as an example, neo-liberalism comes to the fore and so does neo-conservatism. Thus, I don't want to claim at all that it's above it. I think it's borne out of it in interaction with it. That's my argument. Moreover, after I finished *Educating the Right Way* and *The State and the Politics of Knowledge*, what am I working on? Black conservatism"<sup>958</sup>.

Second, we need to be very careful in using Michael Apple's cartography of the New Rightist trend, since, while one could apply it to other nations, in fact, there are too many differing factors which would require that his analysis be reworked. In fact, and keenly aware of this serious problem, Michael Apple already noted in the afterword of his latest book (a book that tries to deal with the way neoliberal policies occur in different countries, such as Brazil, Korea, Taiwan) the dangers of not thinking according to the context. His call deserves to be highlighted:

First [we must] think contextually. Understanding—and action on—the very real relations of power in any situation requires us not to apply simple formulas. This does not prevent us at all from examining major axes of differential power, such as class, gender, race, or colonial forms of domination. [Second] think about multiple levels, [that is] examine the mechanisms that link the global with the local; yet at the same time, also think about the specific relations of power at each level, ones that may not always be reducible to the automatic working out of global power onto the local. [Third] while we must 'never' forget the massive structuring force of the economy and class dynamics, think about multiple relations of power. More than one dynamic may be acting at a specific site: colonialism, race and gender; class and gender; not only forms of economic domination but cultural relations of power as well. [Fourth] think historically [in] order to understand what the limits and possibilities of social transformation are and the role education can play in these process [Fifth] don't assume that education is simply a passive actor, a mirror of relations outside itself [since] it can have relative autonomy. [Sixth] pay attention to

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<sup>958</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 48* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

social movements and 'not' only progressives ones, but the range of progressive and retrogressive movements that provide much of the impetus behind the politics of education<sup>959</sup>.

Undeniably Michael Apple's warning of the danger of simply applying 'formulas' without paying attention to the context is a position already quite visible in his Ed.D. dissertation, a claim that clearly shows his *Huebnerian* influence. A final concern comes also from Michael Apple's approach towards the New Right trend. It is undeniable that such an analysis of the "radical center" coalition is of utter importance, given its devastating effects within the educational field. As we had opportunity to see, this concern was already visible in the embryonic stages of Michael Apple's work, although it only gains forceful expression at the beginning of what we call the second trilogy. However, and this is our particular concern, by neglecting a serious analysis of the way the Left has not been capable of breaking with the New Rightist hegemonic bloc, Michael Apple's analysis, in a way, becomes unbalanced. Moreover, this kind of analysis design by a scholar like Michael Apple, is especially critical since he is one of the few who really knows a specific progressive movement from the inside. We are not claiming that Michael Apple should abandon his analysis of the New Rightist turn. What we are claiming here is that a serious analysis of why the Left is not able 'to win', in fact, why the Left is losing, might end up helping Michael Apple and each one of us, not only to better understand some of the losses, but also to reverse the situation. Undeniably, he has authority to do that. Undeniably, by avoiding balancing this unbalanced approach, Michael Apple might open the door for the reader to claim that it is before an *Applean* heteronomy – one that desiccates overtly particular issues and other that for intellectual and political strategic reasons 'shows by hiding' particular kinds of issues as well. Moreover, and to use Williams terms<sup>960</sup>, we think that a sort of 'performative contradiction' – that is to say what the Left thinks about itself and what the others think about the Left -, would be profoundly pertinent for the field. Despite a probable strategic stance that underpins this particular silence, we maintain that 'Michael Apple's pen' can lay out the 'wounds' without causing any turmoil. Yet curriculum turmoil might be needed. In the stage that we are at, the Left is portrayed

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<sup>959</sup> Apple, Michael (2003) Afterword. In Michael Apple *The State and the Politics of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge, pp., 221-225, pp., 221-222.

<sup>960</sup> Williams, R. (1989) *Resources of Hope*. London: Verso.



(just) as a group that resists with tenacity that is trying hard to make a difference that is always running against opposition forces. It seems that the task of the Left is simply to deconstruct what the Right has done. What about the mistakes of the past? And what about current mistakes? What is the connection? What is the Left in contemporary times? Which space does it occupy? Why? What is the borderline between the radical and critical Left? Why is that so impossible for the Left to build powerful alliances? Is there any radical curriculum for the Left to reclaim? Challenged by this concern, Michael Apple stresses that,

Well I talked about this a lot last time, let me just restate some things. The old joke about when the left lines up in a firing squad, it lines up in a circle is something that I think is very important. I do skewer, meaning something like puncture, the left and point out what's wrong and I'm very well-known for that actually. Everybody reads between the lines so I actually don't have to say it. They know it's there. Moreover, since the left is under attack massively by particular groups of people and the left is much less powerful than it ever has been in the United States, and it was never very powerful in the United States in the first place but it's near dissolution right now, I think it is much more important to focus on the right than it is on the left. But this must be done in such a way so that people understand between the lines that you're also challenging the left to do what it's not doing. I actually think it would be very hard for anybody reading my work not to understand that I am taking a position. An example would be in *Educating the Right Way* where I have a chapter, the empirical chapter, that aims to rebuilt, to deconstruct, to argue against those people in critical pedagogy who don't have a clue about what is going on, and don't have a strategic bone in their body. Also the last chapter in *Educating the Right Way* is a criticism of the left. Everybody knows it is. It's saying instead of doing this nonsense that you're doing, or limiting yourself to this, here is what you ought to be doing. It would be hard for anyone who knows anything about the left, indeed I think it would be impossible, not to read that as both a criticism of what counts as the critical pedagogical material right now, or the overly vulgar functionalist Marxist material, something all too reminiscent of Bowles and Gintis, that people are returning to. That chapter is a criticism of that, it's there. In essence, my task has been not simply to criticize the left that's there, but to spend much more of my time talking strategically about what the alternatives are. Now that may be correct or wrong, and your criticism may still be legitimate, but there are strategic reasons why I do what I do in terms of the left"<sup>961</sup>.

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<sup>961</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 48* Recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

In this final section, we have laid out Michael Apple's arguments on the current New Right trend, and, in so doing, we have unveiled not only the reasons why this political platform has been able to build a powerful hegemonic bloc, but also questioned the capability of the New Rightists to perpetuate this framework. Before we turn our attention to our final chapter, it is important to pay attention to the arguments raised by both Michael Apple and James Beane, in *Democratic Schools*, over the possibilities to build truly democratic community learning experiences within public schools, even under a neoliberal tenets, an analysis that will be pursued in the next section.

### **5.7 Public Democratic Schools**

As we mentioned previously, it is our aim in this section, not only to explore the central arguments raised by Michael Apple in *Democratic Schools*<sup>962</sup>, a work that is co-authored and co-edited with James Beane, but also to confront this particular work with some of the foremost arguments that we have drawn from Dewey's *Schools of Tomorrow*<sup>963</sup>, co-authored with his daughter Evelyn, and from Dewey's *Experience and Education*<sup>964</sup>. In so doing we will finalize our analysis of Michael Apple's substantive intellectual work, an analysis that covers his major claims and his political and pedagogical commitment, pursued consistently for more than three decades. However, before we direct our focus to these works, it is important to identify Beane's political and pedagogical background and commitment.

Undoubtedly, Beane is one of the noteworthy contemporary progressive curriculum figures. After finishing his B.A in English in 1966, and his Ed.M. in English Education in 1968, he completed his Educational Doctorate in Curriculum Development in 1971 from State University of New York at Buffalo. He is a scholar with a wealth of powerful experiences in a number of different educational spheres. Starting as a public school teacher during the 1960's in Maryvale, New York, and Amherst, New York, Beane was also (1) a Research Assistant in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at State University of New York at Buffalo, (2) Associate Director of School District Planning and Redesign at the New York State Office for Educational Planning,

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<sup>962</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James. (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>963</sup> Dewey, J, and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>964</sup> Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York : The Macmillan company.

(3) Visiting Professor/Honorary Fellow of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of the University of Wisconsin – Madison, (4) Consultant for Curriculum Integration – National Schools Network, Australia, Toronto, Canada, Washington D.C., Buffalo, New York, New Orleans, Louisiana, and the State Departments of Education, Delaware, Wisconsin, New York, Indiana, Virginia, Idaho, (5) Awarded the “Louis E. Raths Memorial Award, Western New York Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, among countless other achievements. From 1973 until 1989, Beane was Professor of Education at St. Bonaventure University, Allegany, New York. He is currently Professor of Education at National College of Education, at National-Louis University, Evanston, Illinois.

As one can clearly discern from a look at his Curriculum Vitae<sup>965</sup>, not only is Beane’s intellectual production fertile and prolific, but also, we can notice in his countless publications particular keywords/key concepts that remain central in his more than three decades of academic writing. These include ‘middle school’, ‘democratic education’, ‘democratic curriculum’, ‘curriculum integration’, ‘shared decision-making’, ‘cooperative planning’, ‘community’, and so forth. That is to say, an accurate perusal of some of his earlier pieces documents not only Beane’s not-negotiable commitment to democratic values, and an accurate knowledge over the history of the field<sup>966</sup>, but also (and this is of utter importance) his deep certainty in the democratic school and democratic curriculum as necessary for fueling a truly democratic society. As one can see, already in a 1970 piece, Beane argued straightforwardly of the ‘burning need’ to have students involved in curriculum planning. As he claims,

(1) Effective citizenship in a democratic society requires knowing how to plan both individually and cooperatively (2) Participants feel greatest commitment to activities and decisions if they have been involved in decision-making (some call it motivation), (3) For the emerging adolescent who is beginning to gain independence from authority figures and think about the future, the ability to plan effectively is a critical need, (4) Inasmuch as curriculum planning has concern for pupil interests and felt needs, a logical starting point for such planning is pupil

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<sup>965</sup> Beane, J. (2003) *Vita*. Mimeographed.

<sup>966</sup> Beane, J. (1997) *Curriculum integration : designing the core of democratic education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

expression of concerns, (5) Involvement of pupils in planning provides a vehicle for continually readjusting original plans as ideas are pursued and new needs emerge<sup>967</sup>.

It is precisely this democratic curriculum claim that one can trace in Beane's *Institutional Affect in the High School*<sup>968</sup>. In denouncing the harmful contradiction between educational aims and institutional features within the High School systems, Beane writes, "the high school curriculum is essentially subject-centered, focusing on the mastery of subject matter from various academic disciplines [ignoring] to a large extent, the preoccupying social and personal concerns of adolescents"<sup>969</sup>. Among a number of issues, Beane stresses the pressing need for educational reform that "would involve fuller participation by adolescents in the governance of the high school (...) the development of means for adolescents' interaction with other age-groups (...) more opportunities for group work"<sup>970</sup>, let alone the need to reverse the wrong (yet quite convenient) idea that students "are incapable of functioning responsibly"<sup>971</sup>. Clearly, Beane is calling for a 'new type' of relation between the school community ("which consists of those persons who are directly involved in the schools—teachers, students, administrators, school boards"<sup>972</sup>) and the community-at-large ("which consists of all those persons who reside, work and pay taxes into the community and who send their children to the schools"<sup>973</sup>). A close and full relation between the school community and the community-at-large, Beane argues, allows one to expect the following interesting outcomes: (1) that the community will develop a commitment to the program of the schools through its participation, (2) that citizens and professionals alike will begin to develop planning skills which are essential for democratic action, (3) that the idea of cooperation will extend to the activities of the classroom, (4) that the local community will become the object of study and service projects as a part of the school curriculum in the mode of the community school, (5) that the citizens involved will define areas in

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<sup>967</sup> Beane, J. (1972) Teacher-Pupil Planning in the Middle School. *Dissemination Services on Middle Grades*, III (9), pp., 1-4, p., 1.

<sup>968</sup> Beane, J. (1979) Institutional Affect in the High School. *The High School Journal*, 62(5), pp., 209-216.

<sup>969</sup> Op. Cit., p., 212.

<sup>970</sup> Op. Cit. pp., 213-214

<sup>971</sup> Op. Cit. p., 214.

<sup>972</sup> Beane, J. (1973) Organizing the School Community for Cooperative Learning. *Community Educational Journal*, III (5) pp., 26-28 & 44., p., 26.

<sup>973</sup> Op. Cit., p., 26.

which cooperative planning will contribute to change and improvement in the community-at-large”<sup>974</sup>. Essentially, Beane is expressing his political and pedagogical view of an educational framework, a framework urgently needed for a society that aims for a fully healthy democracy. That is to say, a fully democratic educational and curriculum framework should be based “on students’ needs and social problems”<sup>975</sup>. In building his political and pedagogical case for the core curriculum in the middle school, Beane maintains his argument, stressing the need for a portion of the curriculum program to be “devoted to personal and social problems with regard for and transcending subject areas”<sup>976</sup>. In essence, “if the curriculum is to support a genuine search for self and social meaning [then] it ought to be drawn from concerns young people have about themselves and their world. [That is to say] if this kind of curriculum is to be authentic, then those young people must fully participate in the identification of such concerns and the themes they suggest for the curriculum”<sup>977</sup>.

It is in this context and in a piece adapted from the *John Dewey Society Memorial Lecture*, delivered at the 1998 ASCD Annual Conference, Beane argued over the non-negotiable need to pursue a really democratic school and curriculum. Reacting vigorously against the Right turn within education, Beane denounced the heartbreaking and poignant reality that “schools are becoming simply one more example of niche products in a free market place of educational boutiques where parents are ‘consumers’ of our teaching product”<sup>978</sup>. According to him, “today the talk about teaching and learning is mostly about something else entirely”<sup>979</sup>. Claiming to be part of a “long line of progressive work”,<sup>980</sup> Beane denounces what he calls “the false idols of education”<sup>981</sup>—the standards movement, national testing schemes and the rest of the

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<sup>974</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>975</sup> Beane, J. (1980) The General Education We Need. *Educational Leadership. Journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, 37 (4), pp., 307-308, p., 307.

<sup>976</sup> Beane, J. (1975) The Case for Core in the Middle School, *Middle School Journal*, VI (2), pp., 33-34, p., 33.

<sup>977</sup> Brodhagen, B., Weilbacher, G., and Beane, J. (1992) Living in the Future: An Experiment with an Integrative Curriculum. *Dissemination Services on the Middle Grades*, XXIII (9), pp., 1-8, p., 1.

<sup>978</sup> Beane, J. (1998) Reclaiming a Democratic Purpose for Education. *Educational Leadership. Journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, 56 (2), pp., 8-11, p., 9

<sup>979</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

<sup>980</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

<sup>981</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

“authoritarian mechanisms needed to control young people and their teachers”<sup>982</sup>—and reclaims a democratic purpose for the educational process. As he stresses,

It is a time to reclaim a purpose for education that is worth having, one that is forged from the more generous impulses and aspirations of democracy and the democratic way of life, one that demands we take action [since] we cannot continue to accept the emerging collection of inequitable and mis-educative ideas as if they constitute a curriculum worthy of our heritage or of our young people’s future. We should begin now to ask something else of the curriculum, something more than the narrow economic and political purposes being forced upon us.<sup>983</sup>

Clearly for Beane’s political and pedagogical journey of more than three decades, democracy is a non-negotiable entity in which education plays a pivotal role. By pushing the school-community and the community-at-large to embrace the democratic purposes of education, Beane is defending much more than the need for cooperative learning for a democratic society. In fact, Beane is claiming that the best way to do education for a society that desires a democracy based on social justice and equality is through curriculum integration, one that would not be coerced by the power of the disciplines, but rather address real students’ and teachers’ social problems and needs. Deservedly and not surprisingly, Beane would end up being identified as the primary progressive curriculum integration figure within the field.

It was important to summarize briefly Beane’s political and pedagogical commitment in order to understand accurately Beane’s powerful input in *Democratic Schools*<sup>984</sup>. As the old academic saying goes, at the time *Democratic Schools*<sup>985</sup> emerged as a political and pedagogical project, Beane had no need to put ‘his name on a serious book cover’. Thus, in scrutinizing Beane’s political and pedagogical journey, we have tried to build evidence that could work as a kind of credibility check for the claim we want to make. That is to say, like Michael Apple, Beane should be seen as an independent scholar, and

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<sup>982</sup> Op. Cit, p., 9.

<sup>983</sup> Op. Cit., p., 10.

<sup>984</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>985</sup> Op. Cit.

*Democratic Schools*<sup>986</sup> should be perceived as clear evidence of the power of cooperative work (in this particular case) between two independent intellectuals—James Beane and Michael Apple. It is the result of this influential and complex interaction (the same could be said of *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>987</sup>) that made *Democratic Schools*<sup>988</sup> so different from the rest of Michael Apple's countless intellectual works, yet powerful nevertheless and addressing something that had been missing in Michael Apple's political and pedagogical journey.

Having examined James Beane's independent path with regards to Michael Apple, we will now try to scrutinize some of the major arguments found within *Democratic Schools*<sup>989</sup>. In so doing, we will also briefly analyze two of the democratic experiences that structure the book (namely the *Rindge School of Technical Arts* in the Boston area, and *Georgia O'Keefe Middle School* in Madison, Wisconsin) and we will try to lay out the connection among *Democratic Schools*<sup>990</sup>, *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>991</sup>, and sporadically *Experience and Education*<sup>992</sup>. Although we will identify some important differences, we will also clearly identify critical similarities among them. However before we start this analysis it is important to understand the main reasons behind the political and pedagogical co-authored project of *Democratic Schools*. First of all, it would be an irreparable mistake to analyze *Democratic Schools* apart from Michael Apple's earlier intellectual work. If *Official Knowledge* is understood as a kind of epistemological break within Michael Apple's line of thought (since for the first time he unveils his own curriculum practices), *Democratic Schools* introduces another epistemological break. That is to say *Democratic Schools* breaks completely with the kind of analysis that Michael Apple was embracing, but at the same time, it recaptures the arguments raised in *Official Knowledge*. However, instead of thinking about *What do I do on Monday?*, we really see what real teachers in real public schools do on Monday. Michael Apple agrees with this analysis.

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<sup>986</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>987</sup> Dewey, J, and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

<sup>988</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>989</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>990</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>991</sup> Dewey, J, and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>992</sup> Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York : The Macmillan company.

Yes I do agree with you. *Democratic Schools* does have, as you mention, *Official Knowledge* as a background. That's why ASCD approached me. I didn't contact them. They contacted me, and they said they love my criticism. They wanted me to tell them *what we should do*. I was already using my own experience to try to say here's the complexities of practice, and here's some practices that I engage in. I was already dealing honestly with that in a number of ways, so the question came at exactly the right time. The problem is that I also didn't and don't believe that I should be the one answering the question. The problem was that I believed very strongly that I can talk about my own practice but I don't have a right to tell all these teachers what they should do from on high. That's Tyler all over again. So I battled with ASCD. I said I will not say what you should do on Monday. My answers are from the people who are teaching me what to talk about and do practically in a time of contradiction and elements of good and bad sense. These are people defending good sense because they're in real schools, and real schools have to compromise to achieve victories. So I began to make contact with friends throughout the country about what was going on, and with two schools that I was close to, Central Park East and Fratney Street. Well there were three that I was closest to, including Ringe, and I won the battle with ASCD and showed them that people were actually building this, expanding the spaces where there were compromises that had good sense, and demonstrating many of the things that I—as a progressive and critical educator—deeply believed in. You have to tell that story. So I approached Beane, a close friend, because he and I were talking a lot about this issue already. He had just edited the ASCD yearbook and had a style that was exactly right for ASCD. So strategically he and I agreed that the best thing would be to tactically write in that style because the practical material in the book had to connect with real educators, some of whom already agreed with a critical educational position and some of whom may have been leaning towards it but couldn't see how it was actually possible. The original core of the practical stories in the book comes from me. Ringe, Central Park East, and Fratney Street were the ones I was close to. Barbara was the one that Beane was closest to, but it became the best possible thing. Beane and I wrote the first chapter in ASCD style, in social democratic style, sounding a little like Norway. It has some politics in it; it's moderately leftist. There's not enough bite to it, but that was our strategic choice. The process was that Beane would write a section, I would rewrite it, I'd write a section, and then he would rewrite it. But the idea was to get 200,000 ASCD members reading the book and accepting it. We had to do this because some members of the ASCD readership might already be scared of Michael Apple. When they're through with working that out, as the book gets progressively more political, Beane and I talking strategically about how are we going to push people in more political directions, and which chapter should come first, which comes second? Then I did the draft of the last chapter and Beane then made a major contribution on that<sup>993</sup>.

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<sup>993</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 38* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.



What Michael Apple stresses here matches with the letters that went back and forward between him and Brandt (at that time ASCD Executive Director). In a letter issued on February 17, 1994, and addressed to Brandt, Michael Apple explained the major political aim of *Democratic Schools*, which was “having real practicing educators who are deeply involved in efforts to ‘restructure’ schools around democratic principles tell their stories – with all the frustration and joy – honestly”<sup>994</sup>. It is in this letter that Michael Apple put forward the book’s structure including these democratic school experiences, which shows “[a] program or [a] school really engaged in [democratic] efforts”<sup>995</sup>. As he continued building their case for *Democratic Schools*, Michael Apple noted that the schools selected have “developed a national reputation and each, in its own way, is deeply committed to democratic ideals”<sup>996</sup>. Moreover, he stressed (actually he uses the word ‘reiterate’), these schools “are not ‘outside the mainstream’ of school reform but constitute a large and growing segment of those educators—many of whom belong to ASCD—who are dissatisfied with the what may be happening in some of the other more top-down models of reform that are currently being proposed (e.g. national curricula, national testing)”<sup>997</sup>.

*Democratic Schools*<sup>998</sup>, as the authors explicitly wrote, tried to build (arguably it would be more accurate to say rebuild) the case for public democratic schools. It is a teamwork that goes far beyond James Beane’s and Michael Apple’s cooperation, since it describes the real stories of four public schools in the U.S. searching for real democratic practices (namely, *Central Park East Secondary School*, in New York City; *Rindge School of Technical Arts* in the Boston area; *La Escuela Fratney* in Milwaukee; and the *Georgia O’Keefe Middle School* in Madison, Wisconsin—previously *Marquette Middle School*), stories that are told by the teachers of each school. Thus, it presents real public democratic schools, involving real public teachers, real public students, and real communities. Conversely, Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>999</sup>, takes a slightly different approach. Notwithstanding the fact that in this particular work we can identify an indubitable claim for a democratic school and curriculum in order to fully realize the continuous democratic process within society-at-large, the fact is that

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<sup>994</sup> Apple, Michael, (1994) *Letter to Ron Brandt ASCD’s Executive Director*. Copy.

<sup>995</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>996</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>997</sup> Op, Cit.

<sup>998</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>999</sup> Dewey, J, and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

*Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1000</sup> not only deals with public schools, but also with private school realities. Also *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1001</sup> scrutinizes experiences in more than four schools (again both public and private). All of these experiences but one did not come directly from teachers but indirectly through the observations of Dewey's elder daughter (Evelyn) who 'witnessed' those school practices.

Before we analyze Rosenstock and Steinberg's *Reinventing Vocational Education* and Brodhagen's *Georgia O'Keefe Middle School*, which we are confident show education and curriculum democracy happening in public schools, we will try to highlight the core arguments put forward by Michael Apple and James Beane in *Democratic Schools*<sup>1002</sup>. In this work one can identify the authors' political and pedagogical cartography (one that is driven by the need to build powerful evidence for the viability of public democratic schooling), which examines the deep political and pedagogical meaning of democracy, democratic school and curriculum, and the message of hope that one can find in the stories narrated in the book. They also demonstrate their intellectual humbleness by admitting that *Democratic Schools* should be seen as part of a particular secular tradition within the field. In fact, both Michael Apple and James Beane recognize that *Democratic Schools* is built on a rich legacy of a specific progressive curriculum tradition, of which Dewey is at the front line. It will be wise to note here again, that this particular political position (one that we fully sympathize with) aligns with the argument that we raised previously in chapter two, in which we challenged the *Pinarian* concept of reconceptualization. Actually, as Michael Apple comments in the letter addressed to Brandt, "these efforts at democratic reform have a long tradition, stretching back into the Progressive movement's programs for teacher/student negotiation of the curriculum, for a more social problem centered process of curriculum and teaching, and for a more community based approach in education that takes account of local culture, language and needs"<sup>1003</sup>.

Thus, by confronting some of the major arguments presented within *Democratic Schools*<sup>1004</sup> and *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1005</sup>, and by looking quite sporadically at

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<sup>1000</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1001</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1002</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1003</sup> Apple, Michael, (1994) *Letter to Ron Brandt ASCD's Executive Director*. Copy.

<sup>1004</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1005</sup> Dewey, J, and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

*Experience and Education*<sup>1006</sup>, we will spot the bridges between them, similarities that bear testimony of the fact that, *Democratic Schools*<sup>1007</sup> stands on the shoulders of a powerful progressive curriculum tradition, that since the end of the nineteenth century has been fighting for a more just and equal society. In fact, we assert that *Democratic Schools*<sup>1008</sup> is very much like Dewey's work.

In examining the authors' cartography in *Democratic Schools*, one becomes aware of their firm commitment to a democratic society *via* democratic schooling. As they argue, although "those who live in the United States claim that democracy is the central tenet of our social and political relations, [the] basis for how we govern ourselves [and] the standard we use to measure the political progress of other countries as well their trade status with our own"<sup>1009</sup>, the fact is, as Michael Apple stresses, "the meaning of democracy is just ambiguous in our own times, and the rhetorical convenience of that ambiguity is more evident than ever"<sup>1010</sup>. That is to say, and having the United States as an example, the authors denounce the U.S. as a complex society in which "clear divisions of wealth and power, the freedoms and ambiguity associated with democracy have clearly benefited some people more than others"<sup>1011</sup>. Worse than this is the hard-hitting reality that many "efforts to sharpen the definition of democracy and extend its meaning throughout society are seen by some of the more privileged people of [the U.S.] as threats to their own status and power"<sup>1012</sup>. In fact, as the authors highlighted, the very meaning of democracy is so puzzling in our societies that it not that easy to "settle on its meaning for everyday life in schools"<sup>1013</sup>. As they cautiously and accurately remind us, "in the midst of widespread attacks on education"<sup>1014</sup>, in the moment when "the idea of democratic schools [has] fallen [apart, and] public schools are called on to educate all of our children, yet are simultaneously blamed for the social and economic disparities that severely detract from their chances of successfully doing so"<sup>1015</sup>, it is the time to fight

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<sup>1006</sup> Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York : The Macmillan company.

<sup>1007</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1008</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1009</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 4.

<sup>1010</sup> Apple, Michael *Apud*, Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 5.

<sup>1011</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, pp., 5-6.

<sup>1012</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>1013</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>1014</sup> Op. Cit., p., 3.

<sup>1015</sup> Op. Cit., p., 3.

for democracy in our schools, it is the right time to strengthen the belief that “democracy does mean something and that bringing that meaning to light is critical at a time when many citizens are vigorously debating the future course of our schools”<sup>1016</sup>. Destroying the insipid ways in which democracy has been taught in schools—as a “form of political government involving the consent of the governed and equality of opportunities”<sup>1017</sup>—both James Beane and Michael Apple see the need to construct a school cooperative learning environment (as we see when we analyze Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education*, and also Brodhagen’s *Georgia O’Keefe Middle School* experience later on) that deals with “the conditions on which a democracy depends and the foundations of the democratic way of life”<sup>1018</sup>.

According to them, it is precisely (1) “the open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible, (2) faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems, (3) the use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies, (4) concern for the welfare of others and the ‘common good’, (5) concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities, (6) an understanding that democracy is not so much an ‘ideal’ to be pursued as an ‘idealized’ set of values that we must live and that must guide our life as possible, and (7) the organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life”<sup>1019</sup> that should be seen as central concerns for really democratic schooling. Relying on Dewey’s masterwork *Democracy and Education*, both James Beane and Michael Apple argue that “if people are to secure and maintain a democratic way of life, they must have opportunities to learn what that way of life means and how it might be led”<sup>1020</sup>.

They acknowledge that democratic schools is one of the more problematic (if not the most) within the educational and curriculum fields, given the myriad social, economic and cultural perspectives that have emerged around this concept. In this puzzling context, and given some of reductive perspectives of democracy such as the idea that

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<sup>1016</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>1017</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>1018</sup> Beane, James *Apud* Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 6.

<sup>1019</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, pp., 6-7.

<sup>1020</sup> Dewey, *Apud*, Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 7.

some things “cannot work in schools”<sup>1021</sup> or that it is the “right of adults not of young people”<sup>1022</sup>, or even that it is “nothing more than a form of federal government”<sup>1023</sup> which cannot be applied to schools, both James Beane and Michael Apple take the risk in agreeing with Dewey and frankly putting forward the idea of democracy as a way of life. As they highlight,

[We and many others] are committed to the idea that the democratic way of life is built upon opportunities to learn what it is about and how to lead it. [We and many others] believe that the schools, as a common experience of virtually all young people, have a moral obligation to introduce them to the democratic way of life. [We and many others] know, as well, that such a life is learned by experience. It is not a status to be attained only after other things are learned. Moreover, [we and many others] believe that democracy extends to all people, including the young. Finally [we and many others] believe that democracy is neither cumbersome nor dangerous, that it can work in societies and it can work in schools<sup>1024</sup>.

However, and despite the critical relevance that the authors give to student’s role in a democratic society, one cannot make the claim that they ignore the role of other major educational actors. In fact, as they argue, “democratic schools are meant to be democratic places, so the idea of democracy also extends to the many roles that adults play in the schools”<sup>1025</sup>.

We have just scrutinized some of the major arguments built by both James Beane and Michael Apple on the very meaning of democracy and its implications on building a really democratic school-community. Before we proceed with our analysis of James Beane and Michael Apple’s cartography of the need for a public democratic school and curriculum, it will be wise to note here the strong parallel between James Beane and Michael Apple’s and Dewey’s arguments of the very political ‘reading’ of the concept of democracy. By confessing to have, like Dewey, unshakeable faith in democracy, disclosing their “fundamental belief that democracy has a powerful meaning, that it can

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<sup>1021</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 7.

<sup>1022</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>1023</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>1024</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7.

<sup>1025</sup> Op. Cit., p., 7

work, and that it is necessary if we are to maintain freedom and human dignity in our social affairs”<sup>1026</sup>, both James Beane and Michael Apple explicitly show much more than a weak alignment with Dewey’s political and pedagogical position. In fact, they both insert themselves in Dewey’s pedagogical footsteps, and this particular point is of great importance for one committed to scrutinizing Michael Apple’s intricate political and pedagogical journey. Thus, as we had the opportunity to analyze quite extensively in chapter two, at the very beginning of his intellectual work, Dewey was not that important for Michael Apple. Moreover, and after examining the major arguments built by Michael Apple in *Ideology and Curriculum*<sup>1027</sup> and *Official Knowledge*<sup>1028</sup> as we did in previous sections of this chapter, one can dare to say that thirty years ago, it would have been impossible for Michael Apple to embrace the kind of political and pedagogical project found in *Democratic Schools*. At that time, the ‘enemy’ included not only the liberal tradition, but also a particular set of reductive left approaches which were powerless to challenge the liberal dominant tradition, let alone to transform the educational platform. Arguably, by balancing the gains and losses achieved during the liberal momentum with the harm wrought by the current Rightist fundamentalist influence on society in general, and education, in particular, Michael Apple was forced to reconsider some of his initial political and pedagogical positions. To be more precise, it seems clear that Michael Apple is deeply aware that the fundamentalist Rightist attack on the Liberal dominant tradition is clear evidence of specific gains or democratic changes that had been achieved, gains that were much closer to a fully democratic and just society, than those implemented by the neoliberals nowadays. Challenged by this awareness, in what we see as a strategic reconsideration, Michael Apple stresses the following:

I think you characterize it correctly. My position historically has been that that must be pushed further to the left and I would argue with that. Unfortunately what used to be on the margins in part is now at the core of governance and the economy and schools, etc. Again you characterized it correctly so it is now not Lenin who is saying the only good state is a dead state. It’s the Right that’s saying that and because of that we have to engage in two kinds of activities.

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<sup>1026</sup> Op. Cit., p. 6.

<sup>1027</sup> Apple, Michael (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>1028</sup> Apple, Michael (2000) *Official Knowledge. Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.

One is defensive and one is offensive. The defensive posture is one of defending the gains that were made under social democracy. Weak as they were, limited as they were, they were gains within the State and it's absolutely central to defend them because real people are getting literally killed, as well as education, health care, housing policies, etc. being destroyed. The other is an offensive position, which is to continue to push for much more socialist and democratic socialist and anti-racist policies. Now that requires a very *Gramscian* sense of wars of position vs. wars of manoeuvre, where this is not a terrain that we've made. The old Marxist saying that people make their own history but not under conditions of their own choosing is always on my mind. You know I'm a very strategic person, so in a time when defensive strategies are absolutely crucial, we must defend the very idea of the public and of public schools, even though we know that the definitions of the public were and are fully raced and gendered. The public sphere was white not black, and male not female. But when the very possibility of a public sphere is under threat, you have to defend the gains within the public sphere and you have to defend the public, the idea of a public sphere. That means that you take public institutions and try and show that the gains associated with it are crucial to defend. *Democratic Schools* is part of this war position vs. war maneuver thinking that I'm committed to that says the following: let us find ways of defending public institutions that also have moments and programs of pedagogy and curriculum and evaluation that are leftist and/or social democratic. They may be still social democratic, still reformist, but they may also incorporate non-homophobic policies and education, anti-racist strategies, that are negotiated from oppressed communities on upwards. But let's do it in a way that's not threatening because people's common sense is being reconstructed and they may be worried about progressive policies and positions in ways that they weren't before. When common sense is being reconstructed, you have to start where people (including educators) are. That's pure Dewey and Freire in combination. So that's on my mind, let's combine the two. Then there's of course an offensive form that's hidden in this. Within education there are still partly social democratic and humanistic visions and I want to use the idea of defending them, which many teachers and administrators still have, to push them to the left. The left in my mind is no longer simply classed, well it never was in my mind, but it's about race, it's about gender, it's about the politics of the body and sexuality. Thus, the stories that are told in *Democratic Schools* are also stories about anti-racist forms, about non-homophobic discussions going on in real classrooms, about gender specificities and the politics of class and race at the same time. Strategically, then, it is both a defense of the gains that were made under limited social democracy, an attempt to use those gains which are still believed in by many teachers, to continue a more offensive project, to still take people where they are and push them further left, but still knowing that the right is in power, so I can't do what I did in the 70s and early 80s which was to show how social democracy is a horribly limited project. That is not a terrain that I can win on. Hence, once again it's a very strategic book and I think you're correct. I wish it was still a problem that I was fighting to push limited social reforms much further to the left. But, in a time of conservative resurgence, we do not operate on a terrain of our own making. This means that I think it would be wrong to see *Democratic Schools* as simply a defensive

posture. There are elements still of the older posture in it, but in a different language now pushing people further by showing that it's actually possible to do serious critical and democratic work in real classrooms. That's always been on my agenda, to show that radical educational work can be done even in difficult circumstances. But again the focus is on defense in that book<sup>1029</sup>.

A myriad of factors contributed to this position. According to our reading, one of them was undeniably Michael Apple's experience in Norway. As he admits,

you raise a good point. I actually hadn't thought too rigorously about the connections between the Norway experience and *Democratic Schools*, but I'm certain it had a substantial influence. In fact as I was thinking over *Democratic Schools*, I was spending a lot of time in Norway and recognizing that the liberal tradition and the social democratic tradition needed to be defended against the right, and that there were elements in that tradition that needed to be kept and expanded. There was no doubt in my mind that we could use that sort of reform. In this kind of reform, people won't go crazy over it, they won't get overly worried and hence reject reform. Most teachers have a democratic impulse. They're not socialists, but they want issues that are collective and imaginative and serious, and they want a safety net under it. They want kids to be treated well. I could use the social democratic material as a stepping-stone to taking the next step. Unfortunately, in the context of the U.S. even the social democratic educational model is getting washed away. Well, I came back from Norway to the U.S. with further appreciation of the fact that even simple reform or victories may have to be defended. The first thing is to defend the gains that had already been made and that's what Norway was doing against the onslaught of neoliberalism. Norway is no longer doing that quite as well as before unfortunately. For example, I just got an email from my friend Petter Assen in Norway saying that there are new curriculum proposals based on neo-conservative models and the introduction of voucher plans there. So the idea of defending the social democratic gains during a time of rightist attack became more important. The fact that I am going to Norway and seeing the difference between reformist capitalism for what it is and comparing it to the destructive forms of neoliberalism, forms that are destroying people's lives, destroying curricular tradition and getting horrible materials in school; undoubtedly, that had an effect on me and led me to think more about what we have to defend. In my mind there wasn't an overt connection between Norway and *Democratic Schools*, but no doubt it was in the background, the experience of seeing schools that are not falling apart, teachers that travel with the kids, that is they start out in the first grade and

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<sup>1029</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 47* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.



go with them to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Having the same teacher, so you could build a classroom community seemed attractive to me. So did the government's policy that when people they lose their jobs they basically get three years of average annual wage, no questions asked. It's not his or her fault that the factory moved to Mexico. Everybody has health care. Compare this to what's happening here? All of those limited reforms are being washed away. Thus, as I've always stressed, you have a dual strategy. The first part is to defend the gains that have been made, and the second is to use these gains to expand to more radical possibilities, what I call in *Education and Power* the strategy of nonreformist reforms. In my mind, I'm putting into practice what I wrote about<sup>1030</sup>.

Having noted a kind of parallelism between James Beane and Michael Apple and Dewey's political and pedagogical positions towards democratic schooling, and also Michael Apple's reconsidered position, it is now time to resume our analysis of the major arguments built by James Beane and Michael Apple in *Democratic Schools*<sup>1031</sup>. In so doing, we will continue examining the way they build their arguments for democratic schools and curriculum, and the parallels that one can perfectly establish with Dewey and Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow* and *Experience and Education*.

According to the authors, *Democratic Schools* is not something that becomes reality through a weak law. Rather they come about through the continuous serious attempts "by educators to put in place arrangements and opportunities that will bring democracy to life [arrangements] and opportunities [which] involve two lines of work [namely] to create democratic structures and processes by which life in schools is carried out [and] to create a curriculum that will give young people democratic experiences"<sup>1032</sup>. As for the conception and implementation of democratic structures and processes within schools, both James Beane and Michael Apple<sup>1033</sup> highlight that these political goals require commitments (1) that one should be deeply aware of the tensions between the central and the local power, (2) that diversity should be seen as an outstanding aim to create a democratic school-community, (3) that the common good should be perceived as a non-negotiable value, (4) that decision-making must express a really participatory

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<sup>1030</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 38* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

<sup>1031</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) *The Case for Democratic Schools*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25.

<sup>1032</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 9.

<sup>1033</sup> *Op. Cit.*, pp., 1-25.

process, (5) that the democratic practice should be anchored in cooperative interaction, (6) that the democratic practice should be a truthful example of a community of learners, (7) that collaboration and cooperation must be the democratic school aims and not competition, (8) that not only educational opportunities, but also structural equity should be achieved, and (9) that the state cannot dissociate itself from this social process. This kind of political commitment to a democratic school, as the authors suggested convincingly, will (1) not allow the “engineering of consent toward a predetermined decision that has too often created the illusion of democracy”<sup>1034</sup>, (2) it will also be able to block populist political desires that sometimes at the local level do not “serve democratic ends”<sup>1035</sup>, (3) thus, following on point 2, it can create intervention by the State, “especially where the process and content of local decision making serve to disenfranchise and oppress selected groups of people”<sup>1036</sup>, (4) it engages in creating school practices in a real community of learners, (5) it emphasizes relentlessly the need for group work without ignoring the individual, (6) and it aims at building a powerful tool that will create real conditions to go well beyond the weak aims of equal access of opportunities.

It is precisely this fixed aim to change the dominant structures and process of schooling that make James Beane and Michael Apple’s democratic idea for schools considerably different from other “kinds of progressives schools, such as those that are simply humanistic or child centered”<sup>1037</sup>. Having no intention to claim that James Beane and Michael Apple’s political and pedagogical democratic school perspective neglects a humanistic or child centered nuance, one could, however, say that their political scope goes well beyond that. As they argue, “[d]emocratic schools are both of those in many ways, but their vision extends beyond purposes such as improving the school climate or enhancing students self-esteem [seeking] not only to lessen the harshness of social inequalities in school, but to change the conditions that create them”<sup>1038</sup>. As one can see here, James Beane and Michael Apple’s democratic faith in and vision for schooling is one that overtly attempts to correct social injustices, but also (and this is particularly important) to change the subsumed power relations that prompt

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<sup>1034</sup> Op. Cit., 1-25, p., 9.

<sup>1035</sup> Op. Cit., p., 9.

<sup>1036</sup> Op. Cit., p., 10.

<sup>1037</sup> Op. Cit., p., 11.

<sup>1038</sup> Op. Cit., p., 11.

and promulgate those ‘savage inequalities’<sup>1039</sup>, to use Kozol’s terminology. Education for the authors of *Democratic Schools* is a transformative, cooperative practice. It is precisely this kind of political and pedagogical perspective exhibited by both James Beane and Michael Apple that one can find in Dewey’s *Experience and Education*<sup>1040</sup>. In fact, in this particular work, Dewey castigates educational reactionaries who maintain a mistaken notion that the main aim of schooling is the transmission of a (specific) cultural tradition, hence neglecting the crucial role that schools should have in transforming society<sup>1041</sup>.

However, as the authors recognize, building a democratic school according to participatory democratic practices is never an easy process, especially now when the Rightist policies have become so powerful. As they both warn us, while “the democratic way of life is learned through democratic experiences, schools have been remarkably undemocratic institutions; [while] democracy emphasizes cooperation among people, too many schools have fostered competition; [while] democracy depends upon caring for the common good, many schools (...) have emphasized an idea of individuality based almost entirely on self-interest; [while] democracy prizes diversity, too many schools have largely reflected the interests and aspirations of the most powerful groups; [while] schools in a democracy would presumably demonstrate how to achieve equal opportunity for all, too many schools are plagued by structures like tracking and ability grouping that deny equal opportunity and results to many”<sup>1042</sup>. Nevertheless, neither James Beane nor Michael Apple see this as an insurmountable obstruction to creating a truly democratic school. In fact, as they argue, democratic educators (and curriculumists) are deeply aware not only of the fact that the commitment to build a democratic school is deeply political, and naturally involves conflict and tensions much of the times, but also that “democracy does not present an ideal state”, something motionless and ready to be ‘consumed’. Rather, it is a process marked by “contradictions, conflict, and controversy”<sup>1043</sup>, dilemmas that, in essence, strengthen the very societal democratic marrow and, thus, need not be seen as a sign of weakness.

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<sup>1039</sup> Kozol, J. (1991) *Savage inequalities*. New York: Crown.

<sup>1040</sup> Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York : The Macmillan Company.

<sup>1041</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1042</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 12.

<sup>1043</sup> Op. Cit., p., 13.

As we continue examining James Beane and Michael Apple's case for a public democratic school, we stumbled upon a rather predictable position. In other words, as it is impossible to achieve a really democratic and just society without truly democratic institutions (in which the school has a responsibility), it is also impossible to have and secure a democratic school without a democratic curriculum. Thus, and as we noted before, democratic schools not only entail a significant change within the dominant structures and process of schooling, but also demand the democratization of both curriculum process and development. Too many schools persist in acting in undemocratic ways by narrowing "the range of school-sponsored knowledge to what we might call 'official' or high/status knowledge that is produced or endorsed by the dominant culture"<sup>1044</sup>, and by silencing "the voices of those outside the dominant culture", (as found in the textbooks or curriculum guides). Most troubling, they teach the so called 'official-legitimate knowledge' as "though it were 'truth' arisen from some immutable, infallible source"<sup>1045</sup>, the fact is that critical democratic educators should fight for a participatory curriculum platform, one that is aware that a democratic curriculum should create real and full conditions of access "to a wide range of information and the right of those of varied opinions to have their viewpoints heard"<sup>1046</sup>. As the authors maintain, in a democratic curriculum "young people learn to be 'critical readers' of their society [and] when confronted with some knowledge or viewpoint, they are encouraged to ask questions [such as] who said this? Why did they say it? Why should we believe this? And who benefits if we believe this and act upon it?"<sup>1047</sup>. The examples that both James Beane and Michael Apple present (such as floods, often treated in classrooms as a 'natural disaster', and the working cost calculations of a monthly bus pass) offer a substantive indication of a democratic curriculum, one that tries incessantly "to move beyond the 'selective tradition' of knowledge and meanings endorsed by the dominant culture, toward a wider range of views and voices"<sup>1048</sup>. Although taking a significantly different perspective, one can trace the same relational curriculum aim within Dewey and Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow*. Their analysis deserves to be quoted at length:

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<sup>1044</sup> Apple, *Apud*, Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple, and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 13.

<sup>1045</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 13.

<sup>1046</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p., 13.

<sup>1047</sup> *Op. Cit.*, pp., 13-14.

<sup>1048</sup> Williams, *Apud* Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 14.

Take a child in the school kitchen: he is not merely preparing that day's midday meal because he must eat; he is learning a multitude of new things. In following the directions of the recipe he is learning accuracy, and the success or failure of the dish serves as an excellent measure of the pupil's success. In measuring quantities, he is learning arithmetic and tables of measures; in mixing materials, he is finding out how substances act when they are manipulated; in breaking or boiling he is discovering some of the elementary facts of physics and chemistry; [in other words] the kitchen becomes a laboratory for the study of a fundamental factor in human life<sup>1049</sup>.

Given this quotation, and based on Dewey and Dewey's terminology, one might say that both James Beane and Michael Apple's examples of the flood and cost calculations of a monthly bus pass also served as powerful laboratories (quite political indeed) for students and teachers to analyze complex social dilemmas.

In fact, within a really democratic and just society no one can claim "sole ownership of possible knowledge and meaning"<sup>1050</sup>. What we see here is something that we have already examined. That is, reality is not a weak social construction, but a thoughtful vindication of the need, not only to understand who is acting dynamically in that construction, and who really benefits from that particular segregated construction, but also to transform, to drastically change and "reconstruct the dominant knowledge"<sup>1051</sup>. In so doing a democratic curriculum is indeed helping in the conception and implementation of a really democratic society.

Essentially, for James Beane and Michael Apple, a democratic curriculum allows and invites all the students and teachers "to shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of 'meaning makers', [to recognize] that people acquire knowledge by both studying external sources and engaging in complex activities that require them to construct their own knowledge [which implies] an amalgam of opportunities for exploring critical questions and searching for possible answers, and above all, a democratic curriculum is not girded to the unbendable limits of and between

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<sup>1049</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 296.

<sup>1050</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 15.

<sup>1051</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

the disciplines”<sup>1052</sup>. Contrarily, a democratic curriculum shatters the borders of the disciplines, introducing and promoting the need for what we will be able to call a discipline debate. As one of the *Democratic Schools*’ authors said, “the disciplines of knowledge are not simply categories of ‘high culture’ for children to absorb and accumulate, [they] are sources of insight and information that might be brought to bear on problems of living”<sup>1053</sup>. In fact, and as we had the opportunity to mention before, one can find precisely this same position with regards ‘knowledge’ within Michael Apple *Gramscian* approach towards the disciplines of knowledge. This is quite an interesting perspective since what one could easily identify here is a claim for curriculum integration. That is to say, for James Beane and Michael Apple, a democratic curriculum is achievable by doing curriculum integration. In fact these claims for curriculum integration go well beyond a weak—and thus inconsequential—relation of curriculum pieces from different disciplines, and “become a larger conversation involving what those ‘relations’ might be about”<sup>1054</sup>. Thus a really democratic curriculum exhibits itself as an integration process, one that not only challenges endlessly “the sterilized version of knowledge and skill that is part of the separate-subject, discipline-centered ‘high-culture’ approach to curriculum”, but also that would not ignore or minimize the dominant knowledge. Since having this particular dominant knowledge functions as a tool for social mobility within society-at-large, democratic educators are committed to a democratic curriculum and are deeply aware of a ‘constant tension of seeking a more significant education for young people while attending to the knowledge and skills expected by powerful educational forces whose interests are anything but democratic’<sup>1055</sup>. Thus curriculum integration can help by acting dynamically within the dominant knowledge framework and reconstruct it in a more just and democratic way that mirrors the countless voices, spaces and times within society.

Notwithstanding all of this confidence and faith in the need to build a democratic school and curriculum to foster a truly just and equal society, the fact is that both James Beane and Michael Apple remind us of some of the hindrances that a democratic

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<sup>1052</sup> Op. Cit., p., 16.

<sup>1053</sup> Beane, *Apud*, Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 16.

<sup>1054</sup> Beane, James. and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, p., 16.

<sup>1055</sup> Op. Cit., p., 17.

educator faces when engaged in a political and pedagogical project of this nature, one that challenges and intends, after all, to rebuild the dominant social framework. However, as the authors argue, it is a struggle worth fighting for since it is “hard to imagine that people who have known the privileges of democracy would so easily give them up”<sup>1056</sup>. Before we finish our analysis in this particular section, we will turn our attention to Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education* and Brodhagen’s *Georgia O’Keefe Middle School* since we find them to be accurate examples, not only of how curriculum integration fosters a democratic curriculum and to build a real cooperative community of learners, but also of the way a relation between school-community and community-at-large should be. In so doing, we will trace some of the major arguments raised by the authors (real teachers, in fact) and their similarities with Dewey and Dewey’s *School for To-Morrow*<sup>1057</sup>.

After a brief historical background (one that explains truthfully how a dual educational system was created, with Massachusetts at the front line at the beginning of the last century), Rosenstock and Steinberg<sup>1058</sup>, based upon a 9<sup>th</sup> grader’s statement published in the *High School Journal*, denounce the segregated and biased perspective that society holds of vocational schools. As the authors argue, this 9<sup>th</sup> grade student (Maura) acted as “one would hope all members of a participatory democracy could act, [that is to say] speaking out publicly in protest of something she sees as unfair, challenging class stereotypes, showing confidence in herself and her working-class peers, and seeing herself as a member of a community”<sup>1059</sup>. Demonstrating respect towards vocational students (students who “have or will have shortly, an advanced technological mind as well as an academic mind”<sup>1060</sup>), Maura was, according to the authors, relying on her experiences in “City Works, the center piece of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade program at Rindge”. ‘City Works’ is the result of a “participatory planning process to develop a new 9<sup>th</sup> grade program [one that implied three rules:] (1) to keep everyone in the department informed of all that we were doing, (2) nobody would have to participate who did not want to and (3) those who did not want to participate would not be allowed

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<sup>1056</sup> Op. Cit., p., 6.

<sup>1057</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1058</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) *Beyond the Shop. Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1059</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

<sup>1060</sup> Op. Cit., p., 44.

to interfere with the efforts of those who did”<sup>1061</sup>. A similar claim against a dual educational system, which is indeed a tool to foster segregation, is clearly visible in Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1062</sup>. As the authors stress, “a division of the public school system into one part which pursues traditional methods, with incidental improvements, and another which deals with those who are to go into manual labor means a plan of social predestination totally foreign to the spirit of a democracy”<sup>1063</sup>.

Based on Rosenstock and Steinberg’s<sup>1064</sup> description, *City Works* has some rather peculiar features that made the program quite atypical in that it combines “key characteristics of vocational programs – a project approach, apprentice-master relations, and real clients—with a broader content and essential skills of academic education [and] is taught in a space designed for collaborative project work”<sup>1065</sup>, and also “the community representatives are invited to help create a context for students’ efforts”<sup>1066</sup>. As Rosenstock and Steinberg<sup>1067</sup> highlight, the main aim of a program such as ‘City Works’ is to “help students understand their community and its needs, and ultimately to see themselves as people who can affect that community and create new opportunities for themselves and others who live or work there”<sup>1068</sup>. Likewise, in Dewey and Dewey, one can also find reference to students needs. That is to say educational and curriculum activities intimately related with the students needs “call for the positive virtues—energy, initiative, and originality—qualities that are worth more to the world than even the most perfect faithfulness in carrying out orders”<sup>1069</sup>. In other words, as the authors argue, “the pupil sees the value of his work and so sees his own progress, which spurs him on to further results”<sup>1070</sup>.

To be more precise, students learned by doing in a powerful connection with the community-at-large. As Rosenstock and Steinberg put it, “[t]hrough the lens of community development, students arrive at a very different and more positive vision of what it means to be a vocational student [and the real issue] is not just to make things,

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<sup>1061</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 45-47.

<sup>1062</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1063</sup> Op. Cit., p., 315.

<sup>1064</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) *Beyond the Shop: Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1065</sup> Op. Cit., p., 45

<sup>1066</sup> Op. Cit., p., 45.

<sup>1067</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 41-57.

<sup>1068</sup> Op. Cit., p., 46.

<sup>1069</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 298

<sup>1070</sup> Op. Cit., p., 298.



learn some skills, and get a job, but rather to become thinkers and solvers of problems who work well together in teams and communicate well with various audiences”<sup>1071</sup>, a claim that is also quite transparent in Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1072</sup>. As they argue, students should learn by doing since “when a pupil learns by doing he is reviling both mentally and physically some experience which has proved important to the human *race*”<sup>1073</sup>. Thus, as they maintain, since students learn how to do by doing, they know “the value of the result, that is, the fact. [Conversely] a statement, even of facts, does not reveal the value of the fact, or the sense of its truth—of the fact that it is a fact. Where children are fed only on knowledge, one ‘fact’ is as good as another; they have no standards of judgment or belief”<sup>1074</sup>.

This particular and quite interesting program suggests a new role for teachers. Rosenstock and Steinberg (for whom “teachers like students are not empty vessels into which the current wisdom can be pored”<sup>1075</sup>) challenged the dominant reductive teaching perspective. As they argue, “for years, vocational teachers at Rindge had spent virtually all of their time at school teaching occupationally specific narrow, technical skills [and in fact] most believed this is what being a vocational teacher was all about”<sup>1076</sup>. Both state mandated curricula and the textbooks helped create this reductive and inconsequential (for a truly democratic and just society) teacher perspective. Thus, as the authors straightforwardly stress, a school “where all the kids could be active participants in a democratic culture” implies the need to restructure teacher’s programs by encouraging teachers to “unearth the reasons beneath their current practices, and to reconsider that practice in the light of changing economic and social realities”<sup>1077</sup>. That is to say, a program such as *City Works* creates serious conditions for teachers “as thinkers and doers”<sup>1078</sup>. In essence its purpose was to “create a professional culture that encourages teachers to share their experiences and reflect on their practice”<sup>1079</sup>, a

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<sup>1071</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) Beyond the Shop: Reinventing Vocational Education. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57, p., 46.

<sup>1072</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1073</sup> Op. Cit., p., 293.

<sup>1074</sup> Op. Cit., p., 293.

<sup>1075</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) Beyond the Shop: Reinventing Vocational Education. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57, p., 48.

<sup>1076</sup> Op. Cit., p., 48.

<sup>1077</sup> Op. Cit., p., 48.

<sup>1078</sup> Op. Cit., p., 48.

<sup>1079</sup> Op. Cit., p., 49.

purpose that will require not only “common planning [and] including ‘outsiders’ [but also] creating genuine [curriculum] interdependence”<sup>1080</sup>. As one can easily identify, in doing curriculum through *City Works*, Rindge’s teachers, students and the community-at-large, were indeed doing curriculum integration. As both Rosenstock and Steinberg argue, “curriculum integration, an end in itself, produces important changes in teacher relationships as well. Once isolated in their own shops, and sometimes competing among themselves for students, teachers now plan the curriculum and multidisciplinary projects together [and as a] result they are more invested in the whole performance of each student, as well as the performance of the whole school”<sup>1081</sup>. In fact, this curriculum change creates conditions for teachers to change the way they work. From a traditional perspective (one that is based in a individualistic and ‘mechanistic’ perspective), gradually teachers change their position and come to “share information and are willing to identify competencies that students need regardless of their schooling or career choices”<sup>1082</sup>. In fact, and this is of utter importance, *City Works* “gives teachers a new identity”<sup>1083</sup>, one that is indisputably deeply political and pedagogical as well. It seems clear that Rindge’s ‘City Works’ political and pedagogical project provides a good example of doing curriculum (the integrative approach) in a way that fosters the conditions for a healthy dialogue between school-community and the community-at-large, making possible a truly democratic and just society.

We will now try to trace the similarities between Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1084</sup>, Dewey and Dewey’s *School of To-Morrow*<sup>1085</sup>. The similarities are quite astonishing. First, Mr. Virt, the superintendent of the school system in Gary, Indiana, along with Rosenstock and Steinberg and the rest of the educational community attempted to address a central challenge, namely, “what did the Gary children need to make them good citizens and happy and prosperous human beings, and how could the money available for educational purposes supply all of those needs”<sup>1086</sup>. Second, as in the *Gary schools*, at the *Rindge School of Technical Arts*, “the work is so well arranged that the children want to go to school [and] there is no need to

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<sup>1080</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 49-50.

<sup>1081</sup> Op. Cit., p., 50.

<sup>1082</sup> Op. Cit., p., 51.

<sup>1083</sup> Op. Cit., p., 52.

<sup>1084</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 41-57.

<sup>1085</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC

<sup>1086</sup> Op. Cit., p., 176.

drag them with truant officers or overawe them by a show of stern authority”<sup>1087</sup>. Third, by comparing the *Gary schools*’ to the Rindge School of Technical Art’s curriculum, we find a claim for a participatory integrative curriculum process and development, not the “inflexibility of the ordinary public school [curriculum, which] tends to push the students out of school instead of keeping them in”<sup>1088</sup>. Four, like the Rindge School of Technical Arts, “Gary schools do not teach civics out of a textbook [that is to say] pupils learn civics by helping to take care of their own school, by making the rules for their own conduct in the halls and on the playgrounds, by going into the public library, and by listening to the stories of what Gary is doing as told by the people who are doing it”<sup>1089</sup>. In fact, as Dewey and Dewey argue, “pupils who have made the furniture and the cement walks with their own hands, and who know how much it cost, are slow to destroy walks or furniture, nor are they going to be very easily fooled as to the value they get in service and improvements when they themselves become taxpayers”<sup>1090</sup>. Finally, like *Rindge School of Technical Arts, Gary schools* “use the community as much as possible as a contributor to the educational facilities, and in so doing they give good return in immediate results, besides the larger return in alert and intelligent citizens”<sup>1091</sup>.

Having briefly analyzed Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1092</sup> at *Rindge School of Technical Arts* and traced some key similarities with one of the schools described in Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1093</sup>, we will turn our attention now to some of the major arguments laid out in Brodhagen’s *Georgia O’Keefe Middle School*<sup>1094</sup> experience. In so doing, we will find more similarities with Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1095</sup> and also with Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1096</sup>. In fact, with regards to the need to build a real school community, cooperative learning, participatory curriculum planning, integrative curriculum and a healthy and close relation between the school-community and the

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<sup>1087</sup> Op. Cit., p., 185.

<sup>1088</sup> Op. Cit., p., 190.

<sup>1089</sup> Op. Cit., p., 199.

<sup>1090</sup> Op. Cit., p., 200.

<sup>1091</sup> Op. Cit., p., 203.

<sup>1092</sup> Op. Cit, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1093</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1094</sup> Brodhagen, B. (1995) *The Situation Made Us Special*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 83-100.

<sup>1095</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) *Beyond the Shop*. *Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1096</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., INC.

community-at-large, both Brodhagen's *O'Keefe Middle School*<sup>1097</sup> experience and Rosenstock and Steinberg's *Reinventing Vocational Education* are in the same place.

Brodhagen describes herself quite simply as a teacher who worked for many years "with children identified as having a learning disability". As one can see from her own words, this work would become a powerful political and pedagogical tool since it gave her "the unique opportunity to get into many classrooms in several school districts in Wisconsin and New York"<sup>1098</sup>, and it also allowed her to declare confidently that "rarely did [she] see students in any of those classrooms participate in determining what they were to learn or how they would learn it"<sup>1099</sup>. Committed to challenging this reality given her deep concern for democratic and just values, Brodhagen tries to create another view of schools, sharing her worries and views with peers. The author writes, "we talked of designing school experiences that involve students in all aspects of classroom life, including curriculum planning"<sup>1100</sup>. According to her, the most powerful theoretical approach was undeniably the integrative curriculum approach which includes "planning with students, cooperative learning, team teaching"<sup>1101</sup>. Brodhagen was deeply aware that the first step in creating a participatory political and pedagogical environment (one that could allow participative processes among teachers, with students, among the administration, or in the community-at-large) was to create a real cooperative community. This, of course, is a challenging goal, since "if creating a democratic community is our goal, then every young person must have a chance to be heard, and teachers must be willing to listen"<sup>1102</sup>. In fact, this particular claim is explicit in Dewey and Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1103</sup>. As they argue, students' attitudes such as "obedience, docility, submission [and] complete passivity"<sup>1104</sup> are undesirable for a society that aims for real democracy. Schools should allow space and time for students to get "their knowledge by doing things through their senses and carried over into acts"<sup>1105</sup>. As they both argue, "the conventional type of education which trains children to docility and obedience, to the careful performance of imposed tasks because they are

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<sup>1097</sup> Brodhagen, B. (1995) *The Situation Made Us Special*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 83-100.

<sup>1098</sup> Op. Cit., p., 85.

<sup>1099</sup> Op. Cit., p., 85.

<sup>1100</sup> Op. Cit., p., 85.

<sup>1101</sup> Op. Cit., p., 85.

<sup>1102</sup> Op. Cit., p., 84.

<sup>1103</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1104</sup> Op. Cit., p., 297.

<sup>1105</sup> Op. Cit., p., 298.

imposed, regardless of where they lead, is suited to an autocratic society”<sup>1106</sup>. Thus “children in school must be allowed freedom so that they will know what its use means when they become the controlling body, and they must be allowed to develop active qualities of initiative, independence, and resourcefulness, before the abuses and failures of democracy will disappear”<sup>1107</sup>.

After achieving such an important first step, the Brodhagen, writes that “one of the students suggested”<sup>1108</sup> that the group create a constitution. After drawing up the classroom constitution, one that ensures that “learning will be meaningful”<sup>1109</sup>, the next step was determining how the teaching-learning process could also be democratically substantive. Brodhagen argues that students must be involved in planning the curriculum, a process in which the teacher’s role “is not the traditional one of always directing the action from the front of the classroom, but rather one of facilitating activities and collaborating with students”<sup>1110</sup>. It is precisely this new kind of teacher’s political and pedagogical position that is promoted in Dewey and Dewey. Calling for a new educational and curricular approach, Dewey and Dewey stress a new teaching perspective, one that entails “greater freedom for the pupil, and that this freedom is a positive factor in the intellectual and moral development of the pupils”<sup>1111</sup>.

Based on this cooperative political and pedagogical conviction, a curriculum was drawn up based on self and world “questions and concerns [students] have about the world”<sup>1112</sup>, among them “Why school is so hard for me?” “Will I be successful and happy?” “How does racism ever start?” “Why are some people gay?” “Why are so many politicians dishonest?” “Why are some kids popular?”<sup>1113</sup> In essence, by building a committed and fully collaborative classroom curriculum plan, both students and teachers achieved remarkable things. As Brodhagen highlights “everyone has opportunities to participate in making decisions about what our work will be [,] young people see their teachers listening to them and treating them seriously [, and] respect and trust between students and teachers grow as both observe how actions and words

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<sup>1106</sup> Op. Cit., p., 303.

<sup>1107</sup> Op. Cit., p., 304.

<sup>1108</sup> Op. Cit., p., 86.

<sup>1109</sup> Op. Cit., p., 87.

<sup>1110</sup> Op. Cit., p., 89.

<sup>1111</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 296.

<sup>1112</sup> Brodhagen, B. (1995) *The Situation Made Us Special*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 83-100, p., 88.

<sup>1113</sup> Op. Cit., p., 88.

bring the curriculum to life”<sup>1114</sup>. Fundamentally, as Brodhagen argue, “early group planning creates a climate of openness for the rest of the year, a large part of which is a curriculum with far fewer ‘hidden’ aspects than a traditional curriculum”<sup>1115</sup>. Moreover, as Brodhagen stresses candidly, in trying to address both self and world questions, students and teachers not only end up raising new questions, but also (and this is of critical importance) students see what is really omitted or subverted in the textbooks. It is in this political and pedagogical collaborative environment that students learn that “they use textbooks to answer some questions, but they also learned that they need to consult a variety of sources for complete answers to some questions”<sup>1116</sup>.

Notwithstanding the evidence that such a cooperative process is quite uncommon in the majority of classrooms throughout the world, a really cooperative learning environment (one that challenged “students to think critically about their questions and encouraged them to keep asking tough questions of their teachers, their parents, and even their peers”<sup>1117</sup>, one that is based on an immutable faith that “students have the right to try to figure out how things got to be the way they are”<sup>1118</sup>) such as the Brodhagen’s *O’Keefe Middle School*<sup>1119</sup> experience is a result of everyone working together with the common purpose of building a real school community. The authors shared with us the O’Keefe curriculum process and development, which exhibited collaborative learning, prized cooperation and challenged competition, and allowed students to teach each other and also the teachers. This integrative approach dares to challenge the dogmas of traditional evaluation. As one can see from Brodhagen’s description, “teachers were willing to listen and negotiate with students when they presented their ideas about how evaluation might occur, sending the students a message that their ideas mattered”<sup>1120</sup>.

Despite some initial difficulties (some “teachers were uncomfortable with changing the role of the students”<sup>1121</sup>, there were natural tensions between teachers and students over decision making and a variety of reaction from peers as well as ‘silence’ from the

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<sup>1114</sup> Op. Cit., p., 89.

<sup>1115</sup> Op. Cit., p., 89.

<sup>1116</sup> Op. Cit., p., 90.

<sup>1117</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>1118</sup> Op. Cit., p., 91.

<sup>1119</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 83-100.

<sup>1120</sup> Op. Cit., p., 93.

<sup>1121</sup> Op. Cit., p., 98.

administration), Brodhagen's unshakeable confidence that she could not go back to a traditional curriculum model, teaches us a great deal about the power of an integrative curriculum, which brings together the school-community and community-at-large, paving the way for a democratic and just society.

As one can clearly notice, and as we just mentioned, despite their different approaches, both Brodhagen's *O'Keefe Middle School*<sup>1122</sup> experience and Rosenstock and Steinberg's *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1123</sup> demonstrate the same goal of working toward building a meaningful educational environment based on an integrative curriculum approach, which can lead to a healthy classroom/school-community and a healthy relationship between the school-community and the community-at-large. These interactions are the essential for building a democratic educational platform, which fosters a real democratic and just society. As Brodhagen emphasizes, "achievement such as community is what this chapter is about"<sup>1124</sup>. Also in the course of our brief analysis, we tried to point out some of the undeniable similarities between both Brodhagen's *O'Keefe Middle School*<sup>1125</sup> experience and Rosenstock and Steinberg's *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1126</sup> and Dewey and Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1127</sup>.

Summing up by using Dewey and Dewey's terminology, one can say that the school experiences in *Democratic Schools* and *Schools of To-Morrow*, despite their differences (based on different socio and political historical contexts), "reflect the new spirit in education"<sup>1128</sup>, a new political and pedagogical approach that dares to go beyond the dominant traditional curriculum limits (in both form and content), since they are "all working away from a curriculum adapted to a small and specialized class towards one which shall be truly representative of the needs and conditions of a democratic society"<sup>1129</sup>. Each one of these school experiences discloses a new political and pedagogical position for students and teachers that allows a healthy space to build a

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<sup>1122</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1123</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) Beyond the Shop. *Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1124</sup> Brodhagen, B. (1995) The Situation Made Us Special. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 83-100, p., 84.

<sup>1125</sup> Op. Cit., pp., 83-100.

<sup>1126</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) Beyond the Shop: *Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1127</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1128</sup> Op. Cit., p., 289.

<sup>1129</sup> Op. Cit., p., 288.

truly democratic school-community and to promote and strengthen a closer ties between the school-community and the community-at-large. In fact, “to the educator for whom the problems of democracy are at all real, the vital necessity appears to be that of making the connection between the child and his environment as complete and intelligent as possible, both for the welfare of the child and for the sake of the community”<sup>1130</sup>. Needless to say, for educators deeply concerned with a really democratic and just society, “if we train our children to take orders, to do things simply because they are told to, and fail to give them confidence to act and think for themselves, we are putting an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of overcoming the present defects of our system and of establishing the truth of democratic ideals”<sup>1131</sup>. It is in the context of these school experiences that one can understand that “children must have activities which have some educative content, that is, which reproduce the conditions of real life”<sup>1132</sup>.

Obviously we are not claiming here that there are no differences between *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1133</sup> and *Democratic Schools*<sup>1134</sup>. In fact, there are substantive differences (one of the most significant is the difference between public and private schooling). However, the resemblances between these two political educational projects are so striking that they demand our attention.

Coincidentally or not, both *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1135</sup> and *Democratic Schools*<sup>1136</sup> were instigated by political, cultural, economic, and social turmoil. In *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1137</sup>, as we had opportunity to analyze at great length in chapter three, both the advent of massive immigration and the impact of industrialization forced significant transformations in all societal spheres, in which school, in general, and curriculum, in particular were no exceptions. In fact, schools were seen as viable tools to address the challenges put forward by the ‘dangerous’ emergence of immigration and the industrialization effects. As Dewey and Dewey argue, the old school, in which “a knowledge of the ‘three R’s’ and a little natural ‘smartness’ was all the social equipment

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<sup>1130</sup> Op. Cit., p., 289.

<sup>1131</sup> Op. Cit., p., 304.

<sup>1132</sup> Op. Cit., p., 292.

<sup>1133</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1134</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1135</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1136</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) Lessons from Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105.

<sup>1137</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.



the child needed, all the preparation that was necessary for him to begin to get on in the world”<sup>1138</sup>, was outdated. Caught by surprise, school was inconsequential and meaningless in preparing students for the challenges of the new century. In Dewey and Dewey’s words, “the ordinary school curriculum ignores the scientific democratic society of to-day and its needs and ideals, and goes on fitting children for an individualistic struggle for existence, softened by a little intellectual ‘culture’ for the individuals enjoyment”<sup>1139</sup>. To address the new social challenges schools could not turn their backs to the “social basis of living”<sup>1140</sup>. Thus, it is precisely in this context that *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1141</sup> should be considered. That is to say, this approach tried to address a major social problem, based on just and equitable aims that would foster real democracy. Likewise, almost a century later, *Democratic Schools*<sup>1142</sup> had a particular and complex social origin. As a political and pedagogical project, *Democratic Schools*<sup>1143</sup> came into being in a moment where education was under attack by Rightist movements and groups.

It is important to point out that for the authors of *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1144</sup> at the beginning of the twentieth century, “democracy [was] a comparatively new thing in itself”<sup>1145</sup>, a ‘thing’ that was gradually growing and consequently demanding new and dramatic changes in education, and the political and pedagogical aim was to consolidate and foster a democratic way of life with the political and pedagogical imprimatur of social institutions such as schools. For the authors of *Democratic Schools*, almost a century later, the critical issue was that “the very meaning of democracy [was] being radically changed”<sup>1146</sup>. That is to say, sadly enough, almost a century after *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1147</sup> surfaced, the educational terrain, in which the issue was not exactly the very concept of democracy itself, but how to develop and consolidate it as a way of life with the help of institutions such as schools was still present. Michael Apple and James Beane ended up in a desperate fight (sometimes quixotic although worthy) over the very

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<sup>1138</sup> Op. Cit., p., 167.

<sup>1139</sup> Op. Cit., p., 165.

<sup>1140</sup> Op. Cit., p., 165.

<sup>1141</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1142</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1143</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1144</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 167.

<sup>1145</sup> Op. Cit., p., 307.

<sup>1146</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) Lessons from Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105, p., 101.

<sup>1147</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

meaning of the concept of democracy. It seems that instead of moving forward, we have gone backwards. Michael Apple and James Beane's perspective on the "the power of language manipulation"<sup>1148</sup> and its severe implications within education deserves to be cited. They comment,

Rather than referring to ways in which political and institutional life are shaped by equitable, active, widespread, and fully informed participation, democracy is increasingly being defined as unregulated businesses maneuvers in a free market economy. Applied to schools, this redefinition has given rise to the push for tax credits and vouchers, management by private firms, commercialized media and materials, and abandonment of the broader ideals of public education. This degradation has extended to the point where a private consulting firm has recommended that 'public' be dropped from 'public schools' because its similar use in conjunction with housing, libraries, radio, and assistance programs has come to have negative connotations<sup>1149</sup>.

More than a century after Dewey, the fight for the very meaning of democracy is ongoing. From the moment when democracy was granted social value and its scope was expanded, pushing its meaning more to the left of a *Rawlsian* stance, as Michael Apple suggested in *Ideology and Curriculum*, he along with James Beane end up fighting for the very meaning of concepts such as democracy, common good, public good, and above all, for democracy as a public good, one that should be fostered by public schools. As both Michael Apple and James Beane stress, "the schools described in [the] book are part of a larger movement that eschews [the limited] redefinition of democracy that is now being proposed in education. [They are connected to a movement] that [is] deeply involved in finding practical ways to increase the meaningful participation of everyone involved in the educational experience, including parents, local residents, and especially students themselves"<sup>1150</sup>. Conversely, the school experiences described in *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1151</sup> were not selected because of "any conviction that they represent, but simply because they represent the general trend of education [at that]

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<sup>1148</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James. (1995) Lessons from Democratic Schools. In. Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105, p., 101.

<sup>1149</sup> Op. Cit., p., 101.

<sup>1150</sup> Op. Cit., p., 101.

<sup>1151</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

time”<sup>1152</sup>, to consolidate a growing ‘thing’, that is really democracy, which in essence had been subverted all along. Like the school experiences depicted in *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1153</sup> and *Democratic Schools*<sup>1154</sup>, the curriculum “is based on the belief that knowledge comes to life for students and teachers only when it is connected to something that is serious, [that is to say] rigorous intellectual work is prized, not for the sake of symbolic standards or agreeable publicity, but because of its ability to make a difference in how we understand and act powerfully on the social world in which we live”<sup>1155</sup>. It is in this context, that the authors use James Beane’s approach to argue that “the idea of a thematic curriculum dominates these schools not simply as an effective methodology that keeps kids happy, but because this approach involves putting knowledge to use in relation to real-life problems and issues”; likewise, in Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*, one can clearly trace a “concern with the more fundamental changes in education, with the awakening of the schools to a realization of the fact that their work ought to prepare children for the life they are told to lead in the world”<sup>1156</sup>.

Having analyzed here, not only the major arguments raised by James Beane and Michael Apple in their *Case (for public) Democratic Schools*<sup>1157</sup>, and laying out the central arguments exhibited in both Brodhagen’s *O’Keefe Middle School*<sup>1158</sup> and Rosenstock and Steinberg’s *Reinventing Vocational Education*<sup>1159</sup>, but also the resemblances of the said political and pedagogical perspectives and practices with Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1160</sup>, one can say confidently that *Democratic Schools*<sup>1161</sup> as a political and pedagogical project, despite its “rich legacy”<sup>1162</sup>, is indeed deeply rooted in a *Deweyan* insight. It also demonstrates that

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<sup>1152</sup> Op. Cit., p., 287.

<sup>1153</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1154</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105.

<sup>1155</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) Lessons from Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane, J. (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105, p., 102.

<sup>1156</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 288.

<sup>1157</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25.

<sup>1158</sup> Brodhagen, B. (1995) The Situation Made Us Special. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 83-100.

<sup>1159</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) Beyond the Shop: Reinventing Vocational Education. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57.

<sup>1160</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1161</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1162</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25, pp., 19-22.

Dewey's political and pedagogical vision "still resonates strongly today"<sup>1163</sup>. Despite the need for revitalizing the idea of public democratic schooling to foster a just and democratic society, *Democratic Schools*<sup>1164</sup> bears testimony to the undeniable role Dewey played in fighting for that noteworthy goal.

Also the similarities between these two political and pedagogical projects are profoundly notable in the way that neither Dewey and Dewey nor Michael and James Beane wanted to put forward a curriculum model. In fact, Michael Apple does not minimize our understanding over such an intricate issue,

I understand what you're saying and obviously I find that as a serious issue. It is why I did with [Beane] *Democratic Schools*. Now the question is the following: would it be better if I did that and also have something that is a specific curricular model where you take all the elements of the material in *Democratic Schools* and you lay it out? I think that's probably true. It might be more effective. But remember, 400,000 copies of *Democratic Schools* are available in English, and that's a lot of books. However I feel caught between knowing that one of the reasons that Tyler and others were able to last is because you could point to this step and that step and then there's that step, and it could be extracted. Very few people really do exactly what Tyler said to do. Things are much more complicated in practice, but we don't have those stories. I would grant that in curriculum theory courses and curriculum development courses, to have something that might be used as a model of doing critical curriculum development, to abstract the material from the stories of *Democratic Schools* and put it into a model, would be wise. On the other hand my position which was developed well before [Beane] and I developed *Democratic Schools* is that the very idea of the abstractable model is part of the problem, not part of the solution. So the compromise was *Democratic Schools*. Would that solve all of the issues? No. But, would it still be wise to have a model that says now that you've learned this, let me tell you the problems with having a model? That might be an interesting solution that is worth considering. But I have no complete solution for that right now. Some day I may write that book, you know, with a title *Curriculum as a Design Process or Curriculum as Environmental Design*. That would be really an interesting text<sup>1165</sup>.

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<sup>1163</sup> Rosenstock, L. and Steinberg, A. (1995) *Beyond the Shop: Reinventing Vocational Education*. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 41-57, p., 42.

<sup>1164</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1165</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 40* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

On the verge of finishing our analysis, it is important to map out some of the concerns that we have with *Democratic Schools*<sup>1166</sup> and that we believe the authors should address in the near future, possibly in a second edition. These concerns emerged in our analysis of Michael Apple's intellectual work and as we were comparing it to Dewey and Dewey's *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1167</sup>. In this context, and recapturing some of the arguments we raised before, we think that there is no need for Michael Apple and James Beane to be so cautious about not falling in a "dewy-eyed [romanticism]"<sup>1168</sup>. We have argued that both *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1169</sup> and *Democratic Schools*,<sup>1170</sup> despite sharing quite complex social origins, try to address diametrically different pressures and challenges. As noted in chapters three and four, conservative groups always manage to 'win' the power struggles and lead in the educational and curriculum process, (something that quite understandably, some scholars refuse to accept<sup>1171</sup>). Except perhaps for the Sputnik era, education has never been under such strong fundamentalist conservative attacks as now. We are not claiming that Dewey's work had a romantic vein similar to that found among the so-called romantic critic's movement. However, despite the fact that being *Deweyan* does not necessarily mean being romantic, it is puzzling to concur with the author's perspective that the parallels with Dewey's thought are so irrefutably palpable.

This undeniable evidence takes us to another concern. Notwithstanding the fact that the authors confess to *Democratic Schools* emerging from a specific progressive 'rich legacy' with a multitude of powerful contributions, we think that for Michael Apple's readers, it is of tremendous importance that Dewey's thoughts be highlighted within that specific progressive 'rich legacy'. Unlike James Beane's work in which Dewey's political and pedagogical insights are clearly disseminated, in Michael Apple's earlier works<sup>1172</sup>, Dewey's political and pedagogical position is less influential. As we could

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<sup>1166</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1167</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1168</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (1995) Lessons from Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 101-105, p., 103.

<sup>1169</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1170</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1171</sup> Ravitch, D. (2000) *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>1172</sup> Paraskeva, J. Refuting Reconceptualism - A Progressive Radical Educational and Curriculum Tradition. *Con-Ciencia Social* (in press).

identify in the correspondence between Michael Apple, James Beane and Brandt, James Beane wrote most of the introductory chapter<sup>1173</sup>.

A third concern is Michael Apple's silence on private and religious schooling. Despite the fact that we do agree that a just and democratic society should be based on democratic schools and curriculum, it is difficult to accept that the extraordinary experiences described in *Democratic Schools*<sup>1174</sup> only occurs in public schools. Also, it is not explicitly clear what the author's position towards private and religious schooling is. Although we agree with Michael Apple that 'public' does not necessarily mean bad, and private does not necessarily mean good', it is not easy to accept that there are no serious and powerful progressive insights within religious education, as one can find in Huebner's latest work. It is for this reason that we titled this section 'Public Democratic Education' since the authors make their case only for public democratic schools. Before our concern Michael Apple advances the following:

I am not interested in private schools. That's not to say that there aren't some interesting things going on; but the private sector in the United States that is engaged in doing serious progressive work all of this is almost always found in elite schools and I have no interest in them, period. That's as honest as I can be. I have no interest in those schools. I am interested in schools for the majority, the vast majority of students. I have some sympathy, a bit more, with religious schools such as, for example, the Catholic schools that have stayed within slums. I still don't like religious schools per se, I don't want them to get government funding as an example, but I have sympathy with men and women religious who have devoted their lives to the poor. But those are not the schools that Dewey focused on. He focused on lab schools. Remember he helped found two schools, schools at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, two of the most elite private institutions in the world. So while Dewey defended the public sphere and public schools, his experience in working in schools is by and large with what we jokingly call faculty brats, you know children of the intellectual elite and economic elite. Given my politics, I have no interest in that. Now I do think we need pedagogies for the rich, so that they see, for example, that there is not a black problem, but a white problem. They need to see that - it's not a poor problem, it's a rich problem. We do need critical pedagogies that deal with issues of whiteness so that white people understand how they get benefits from being white. I am in favor of pedagogies for rich kids in private schools that enable them to understand how they live off of other people's labor;

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<sup>1173</sup> Brandt, R. (1994) *ASCD Memorandum Letter. Point 3 Book 'On Democratic Schools'*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1174</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

but given my commitment to schools for the majority of children, that's a less important issue in my mind. The task in *Democratic Schools* was to focus on where I think the real struggles by and large are, and that's public schooling *per se*"<sup>1175</sup>.

A fourth concern is related to the urgent need to expand this project internationally. Notwithstanding the fact that *Democratic Schools*<sup>1176</sup> has been translated in many languages, a political and pedagogical project like this could only benefit by including experiences from many other countries and not necessarily only at the level of the classroom. In this case, we challenge the authors to expand their project to include, say, not only the Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre<sup>1177</sup> and the Landless Movement classrooms, both in Brazil, but also, to give some coverage to African realities, ones in which neoliberal policies are gradually destroying the social fabric.

A final concern recaptures some of the arguments we raised earlier in this chapter, and it is intimately connected with teacher training. Public democratic schools and curriculum require a new teaching approach that calls for a "teacher as an investigator"<sup>1178</sup>, that challenges teachers to be "inventive pioneers"<sup>1179</sup>, that acknowledges "the growth of democratic ideals, demands a change in education"<sup>1180</sup>, and that "insists upon the primacy of educational values [that] represent the more fundamental interests of society, especially of a society organized on a democratic basis"<sup>1181</sup>. It seems that both Michael Apple and James Beane should give some thought to their experiences as teachers at UW-Madison and at National-Louis University and 'disclose them' to their vast reader audience, since both of them can provide exemplary cases of democratic teacher training. Undeniably there is no democratic schooling without a truthful democratic Teacher Education.

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<sup>1175</sup> Apple, Michael *Tape 47* recorded in office "e" of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison.

<sup>1176</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1177</sup> Gandin, Luis and Apple, Michael (2003) *Educating the State, Democratizing Knowledge: The Citizen School Project in Porto Alegre, Brazil*. In Michael Apple *The State and the Politics of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge, pp., 193-219.

<sup>1178</sup> Dewey, J. (1929) *The Sources of a Science of Education*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., p., 46.

<sup>1179</sup> Dewey, J. (1983) *Education as Engineering*. In J. Boydston, (Ed) *John Dewey Middle Works 1899 – 1924*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 13, pp., 323-328, p., 328.

<sup>1180</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC, p., 306.

<sup>1181</sup> Op. Cit., p., 312.

We agree that Dewey “suffered from two sorts of educational nightmares”<sup>1182</sup> in trying to do integrative curriculum; on one hand, he had visions of progressive teachers engaged in what he called “sugar-coated pedagogy”<sup>1183</sup>, and on the other hand, he exhibited puzzling visions of what he calls “penitentiary pedagogy”<sup>1184</sup>. Even so, it is clear that like *Democratic Schools*<sup>1185</sup>, *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1186</sup> makes a claim for real social justice, provides a tribute to those who believe that democracy is more than a form of government but is a way of living, argues that schools should be seen as intricate miniatures of the community, and demonstrates a political awareness that “it is fatal for a democracy to permit the formation of fixed classes”<sup>1187</sup>. Equally, *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1188</sup> offers a strong ‘voice’ “against the increasing complexity of our life, with the great accumulation of wealth at one social extreme and the condition of almost dire necessity at the other mak[ing] the task of democracy constantly more difficult”. As in James Beane and Michael Apple’s case for a public democratic school<sup>1189</sup> in which the state should act dynamically to consolidate democracy as a way of living, in Dewey and Dewey’s *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1190</sup> the role of the state in building a democratic society is not minimized. They argue, “for its own sake, the state must supply”<sup>1191</sup> the demand for a democratic education.

Coincidentally or not, both *Democratic Schools*<sup>1192</sup> and *Schools of To-Morrow*<sup>1193</sup> indicate that the best solution for social inequality and segregation is through a truly participatory democracy, one which relies on a real democratic school and curriculum.

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<sup>1182</sup> Fishman, S. (1998) Dewey’s Educational Philosophy: Reconciling Nested Dualisms. In S. Fishman and L. McCarthy (1998) *John Dewey and the Challenge of Classroom Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp., 15-28, p., 23.

<sup>1183</sup> Dewey, J. (1988) How Much Freedom in New Schools. In J. Boydston (ed) *John Dewey Later Works 1925-1953*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 5, pp., 319-325, p., 325.

<sup>1184</sup> Dewey, J. (1964) Ethical Principles Underlying Education. In R. Archambault (Ed.) *John Dewey on Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago, pp., 108-138, pp., 118-119.

<sup>1185</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1186</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1187</sup> Op. Cit., p., 313.

<sup>1188</sup> Op. Cit.

<sup>1189</sup> Beane, James and Apple, Michael (1995) The Case for Democratic Schools. In Michael Apple and James Beane (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD, pp., 1-25.

<sup>1190</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.

<sup>1191</sup> Op. Cit., p., 304.

<sup>1192</sup> Apple, Michael and Beane, James (eds.) (1995) *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria: ASCD.

<sup>1193</sup> Dewey, J. and Dewey, E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., INC.



Actually, Roth was quite accurate in his analysis at the beginning of the 1960's. He commented that the "future thought in America must go beyond Dewey [though] it is difficult to see how it can avoid going through him"<sup>1194</sup>.

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<sup>1194</sup> Roth, R. (1962) *John Dewey and Self-Realization*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, p., 144.