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Public Time and Educated Hope:
Educational Leadership and the War Against Youth

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What are the implications for society as a whole, if there are no longer social spaces conceived as at least partially autonomous from the market and market-driven politics? Where are we to find the sites of difference, the terrain of social witness, critical leverage and utopian vision, insofar as the domain of childhood--or of everyday life or of a semiautonomous realm of culture--is increasing shot through with the values of the marketplace and the discursive politics of postmodern global culture? And what happens to the bodies and minds of children in the process?¹

Youth Without a Future

Any discourse about the future has to begin with the issue of youth because more than any other group youth embody the projected dreams, desires, and commitment of a society's obligations to the future. This echoes a classical principle of modernity in which youth both symbolize society's responsibility to the future and offer a measure of its progress. For most of this century, Americans have embraced as a defining feature of politics that all levels of government would assume a large measure of responsibility for providing the resources, social provisions, security, and modes of education that simultaneously offered young people a future as it expanded the meaning and depth of a substantive democracy. In many respects, youth not only registered

symbolically the importance of modernity's claim to progress, they also affirmed the importance of the liberal, democratic tradition of the social contract in which adult responsibility was mediated through a willingness to fight for the rights of children, enact reforms that invested in their future, and provide the educational conditions necessary for them to make use of the freedoms they have while learning how to be critical citizens. Within such a modernist project, democracy was linked to the well-being of youth, while the status of how a society imagined democracy and its future was contingent on how it viewed its responsibility towards future generations.

But the category of youth did more than affirm modernity's social contract rooted in a conception of the future in which adult commitment was articulated as a vital public service, it also affirmed those vocabularies, values and social relations central to a politics capable of both defending vital institutions as a public good, and contributing to the quality of public life. Such a vocabulary was particularly important for secondary education, which often defined and addressed its highest ideals through the recognition that how it educated youth was connected to both the democratic future it hoped for and its claim as an important public sphere.

Yet, at the dawn of the new millennium, it is not at all clear that we believe any longer in youth, the future, or the social contract, even in its minimalist version. Since the Reagan/Thatcher revolution of the 1980s, we have been told that there is no such thing as society and, indeed, following that nefarious pronouncement, institutions committed to public welfare have been disappearing ever since. Those of us who, against the prevailing common sense, insist on the relationship between secondary education and the future have to face a disturbing reversal in priorities with regard to youth and education, which now defines the United States and other regions under the reign of neoliberalism. Rather than being cherished as a symbol of the future, youth are now seen as a threat to be feared and a problem to be contained. If youth once symbolized the moral necessity to address a range of social and economic ills, they are now largely portrayed as being the source of most of society's problems. Hence, youth now constitute a crisis that has less to do with improving the future than with denying it.

No longer "viewed as a privileged sign and embodiment of the future,"² youth are now demonized by the popular media and derided by politicians looking for quick-fix

solutions to crime, joblessness, and poverty. In a society deeply troubled by their presence, youth prompt a public rhetoric of fear, control, and surveillance, which translate into social policies that signal the shrinking of democratic public spheres, the highjacking of civic culture, and the increasing militarization of public space. Nurturance, trust, and respect now give way to fear, disdain, and suspicion. In many suburban malls, young people, especially urban youth of color, cannot shop or walk around without having appropriate identification cards or being in the company of a parent. Children have fewer rights than almost any other group and fewer institutions protecting these rights. Consequently, their voices and needs are almost completely absent from the debates, policies, and legislative practices that are constructed in terms of their needs.

Instead of providing a decent education to poor young people, American society offers them the growing potential of being incarcerated, buttressed by the fact that the U.S. is one of the few countries in the world that sentences minors to death and spends "three times more on each incarcerated citizen than on each public school pupil."³ Instead of guaranteeing them food, decent health care, and shelter, we serve them more standardized tests; instead of providing them with vibrant public spheres, we offer them a commercialized culture in which consumerism is the only obligation of citizenship. But in the hard currency of human suffering, children pay a heavy price in one the richest democracies in the world: 20 percent of children are poor during the first three years of life and over 13.3 million live in poverty; 9.2 million children lack health insurance; millions lack affordable child care and decent early childhood education; in many states more money is being spent on prison construction than on education; the infant mortality rate in the United States is the highest of any other industrialized nation. When broken down along racial categories, the figures become even more despairing. For example, "In 1998, 36 percent of black and 34 percent of Hispanic children lived in poverty, compared with 14 percent of white children."⁴ In some cities, such as the District of Columbia, the child poverty rate is as high as 45 percent.⁵ While the United States ranks first in military technology, military exports, defense expenditures and the number of millionaires and billionaires, it is ranked 18th among the industrialized nations in the gap between rich and poor children, 12th in the percent

of children in poverty, 17th in the efforts to lift children out of poverty, and 23rd in infant mortality.⁶ One of the most shameful figures on youth as reported by Jennifer Egan, a writer for *The New York Times*, indicates that "1.4 million children are homeless in America for a time in any given year . . . and these children make up 40 percent of the nation's homeless population."⁷ In short, economically, politically and culturally, the situation of youth in the United States is intolerable and obscene. It is all the more unforgivable since President Bush insisted during the 2000 campaign that "the biggest percentage of our budget should go to children's education." He then passed a 2002 budget in which 40 times more money went for tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 per cent of the population rather than for education.⁸

Youth have become the central site onto which the anxieties of living in an age where "there is no such thing as society" are projected. Their very presence represents *both* the broken promises of democracy in an age of corporate deregulation and downsizing and a collective fear of the consequences wrought by systemic class inequalities, racism, and a culture of "infectious greed" that has created a generation of displaced and unskilled youth who have been expelled from the "universe of moral obligations."⁹ Youth within the economic, political, and cultural geography of neoliberal capitalism occupy a degraded borderland in which the spectacle of commodification exists side by side with the imposing threat of the prison-industrial complex and the elimination of basic civil liberties. As neoliberalism disassociates economics from its social costs, "the political state has become the corporate state."¹⁰ Under such circumstances, the state does not disappear, but, as Pierre Bourdieu has brilliantly reminded us,¹¹ is refigured as its role in providing social provisions, intervening on behalf of public welfare, and regulating corporate plunder is weakened. The neo-liberal state no longer invests in solving social problems; it now punishes those who are caught in the downward spiral of its economic policies. Punishment, incarceration, and surveillance represent the face of the new state. One consequence is that the implied contract between the state and citizens is broken and social guarantees for youth as well as civic obligations to the future vanish from the agenda of public concern. Similarly, as market values supplant civic values, it becomes increasingly difficult "to translate private worries into public issues and, conversely, to discern and pinpoint public issues

in private troubles."¹² Alcoholism, homelessness, poverty, and illiteracy, among other issues are not seen as social but as individual problems--matters of character, individual fortitude, and personal responsibility. In light of the increased anti-terrorism campaign waged by the Bush administration, it becomes easier to militarize domestic space, criminalize social problems, and escape from the responsibilities of the present while destroying all possibilities of a truly democratic future. Moreover, the social costs of the complex cultural and economic operations of this assault can no longer be ignored by educators, parents, and other concerned citizens.

The war against youth, in part, can be understood within those fundamental values and practices that characterize a rapacious, neoliberal capitalism. For many young people and adults today, the private sphere has become the only space in which to imagine any sense of hope, pleasure, or possibility. Culture as an activity in which people actually produce the conditions of their own agency through dialogue, community participation, resistance and political struggle is being replaced by a "climate of cultural and linguistic privatization"¹³ in which culture becomes something you consume and the only kind of speech that is acceptable is that of the savvy shopper. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on market forces and profit margins, narrows the legitimacy of the public sphere by redefining it around the related issues of privatization, deregulation, consumption, and safety. Big government, recalled from exile after September 11th, is now popularly presented as a guardian of security--security not in terms of providing adequate social provisions or a social safety net, but with increasing the state's role as a policing force. The desire to protect market freedoms and wage a war against terrorism, ironically, has not only ushered in a culture of fear but has also dealt a lethal blow to civil freedoms. Resting in the balance of this contradiction is both the fate of democracy and the civic health and future of a generation of children and young people.

What is happening to children in America and what are its implications for addressing the future of secondary education? Lawrence Grossberg argues that "the current rejection of childhood as the core of our social identity, is at the same time, a rejection of the future as an affective investment."¹⁴ But the crisis of youth not only signals a dangerous state of affairs for the future, it also portends a crisis in the very idea

of the political and ethical constitution of the social and the possibility of articulating the relevance of democracy itself; it is in reference to the crises of youth, the social, and democracy that I want to address the relationship between secondary education and the future.

Secondary Education and Privatization of Social Life

There is a prominent educational tradition in the United States in which the future of secondary education is premised on the recognition that in order for freedom to flourish in the worldly space of the public realm, citizens had to be educated for the task of self-government. Education in this context was linked to public life through democratic values such as equality, justice, and freedom, rather than as an adjunct of the corporation whose knowledge and values were defined largely through the prism of commercial interests. For educators such as John Dewey and W.E. B. Dubois, secondary education was crucial to a notion of individual agency and public citizenship, integral to defending the relationship between an autonomous society--rooted in an ever-expanding process of self-examination, critique, and reform--and autonomous individuals, for whom critical inquiry is propelled by the need to engage in an ongoing pursuit of ethics and justice as a matter of public good. In many ways, secondary education has been faithful, at least in theory, to a project of modern politics, whose purpose was to create citizens capable of defining and implementing universal goals such as freedom, equality, and justice as part of a broader attempt to deepen the relationship between an expanded notion of the social and the enabling ground of a vibrant democracy.

Within the last two decades a widespread pessimism about public life and politics has developed in the United States. Under neoliberalism, hope becomes dystopian as the public sphere disappears and, as Peter Beilharz argues, "politics becomes banal, for there is not only an absence of citizenship but a striking absence of agency."¹⁵ As power is increasingly separated from the specificity of traditional politics and public obligations, corporations are less subject to the control of the state and "there is a strong impulse to displace political sovereignty with the sovereignty of the market, as if the latter has a mind and morality of its own."¹⁶ Under the auspices of neoliberalism, the

language of the social is either devalued or ignored altogether as the idea of the public sphere is equated with a predatory space, rife with danger and disease--as in reference to public restrooms, public transportation, and urban public schools. Dreams of the future are now modeled around the narcissistic, privatized, and self-indulgent needs of consumer culture and the dictates of the alleged free market.

Within this impoverished sense of politics and public life, the public school is gradually being transformed into a training ground for the corporate workforce. As secondary schools become increasingly strapped for money, corporations provide the needed curriculum and school resources, exerting a powerful influence on both the hiring of faculty, and how teaching is conducted and for what purposes. In addition, secondary schools now offer up stadiums as billboards for brand name corporations in order to procure additional sources of revenue while also adopting the values, management styles, cost-cutting procedures, and the language of excellence that has been the hallmark of corporate culture. Under the reign of neoliberalism and corporate culture, the boundaries between commercial culture and public culture become blurred as secondary schools rush to embrace the logic of industrial management while simultaneously forfeiting those broader values central to a democracy and capable of limiting the excesses of corporate power. Although the public school has always had ties to industry, there is a new intimacy between secondary education and corporate culture, characterized by what Larry Hanley calls a "new, quickened symbiosis."¹⁷ What was once the hidden curriculum of many secondary schools--the subordination of secondary education to capital--has now become an open and much celebrated policy of both public and private secondary education.¹⁸ How do we understand the public school in light of both the crisis of youth and the related crisis of the social that have emerged under the controlling hand of neoliberalism? How can the future be grasped given the erosion of the social and public life over the last twenty years? What are the implications for the simultaneous corporatization of secondary education in light of these dramatic changes? Any concern about the future of the public school has to both engage and challenge this transformation while simultaneously reclaiming the role of the public school as a democratic public sphere. In what follows, I want to analyze the public school as a corporate entity within the context of a crisis of the social. In particular, I

will focus on how this crisis is played out not only through the erosion of public space, but through the less explained issues of public versus corporate time, on the one hand, and the related issues of agency, pedagogy, and public mission on the other.

The Politics of Corporate Time

Questions of time are crucial to how a public school structures its public mission, the role of faculty, the use of space, and the legitimation of particular forms of knowledge and pedagogy. Time is not simply a question of how to invoke the future, but is also used to legitimate particular social relations and make claims on human behavior, representing one of the most important battlefields for determining how the future of secondary education is played out in political and ethical terms. Time refers not only to the way in which it is mediated differently by institutions, administrators, faculty and students but also how it shapes and allocates power, identities, and space through a particular set of codes and interests. But more importantly time is a central feature of politics and orders not merely the pace of the economic, but the time available for consideration, contemplation, and critical thinking. When reduced to a commodity, time often becomes the enemy of deliberation and thoughtfulness and undermines the ability of political culture to function critically.

For the past twenty years, time as a value and the value of time have been redefined through the dictates of neoliberal economics, which has largely undermined any notion of public time guided by non-commodified values central to a political and social democracy. As Peter Beilharz observes, "time has become our enemy. The active society demands of us that we keep moving, keep consuming, experience everything, travel, work as good tourists more than act as good citizens, work, shop and die. To keep moving is the only way left in our cultural repertoire to push away . . . meaning . . . [and consequently] the prospects, and forms of social solidarity available to us shrink before our eyes."¹⁹

Without question, the future of the public school will largely rest on the outcome of the current struggle between the public school as a public space with the capacity to slow time down in order to question what Jacques Derrida calls the powers that limit "a democracy to come"²⁰ and a corporate public school culture wedded to a notion of

accelerated time in which the principle of self-interest replaces politics and consumerism replaces a broader notion of social agency. A meaningful and inclusive democracy is indebted to a notion of public time, while neoliberalism celebrates what I call corporate time. Public time as a condition and critical referent makes visible how politics is played out through the unequal access different groups have to "institutions, goods, services, resources, and power and knowledge."²¹ That is, it offers a critical category for interrogating how the ideological and institutional mechanisms of secondary education work to grant time to some faculty and students and to withhold it from others, how time is mediated differently within different disciplines and among diverse teachers and students, how time can work across the canvas of power and space to create new identities and social formations capable of "intervening in public debate for the purpose of affecting positive change in the overall position and location in society."²² When linked to issues of power, identity, ideology, and politics, public time can be an important social construct for orientating the public school towards a vision of the future in which critical learning becomes central to increasing the scope of human rights, individual freedom, and the operations of a substantive democracy. In this instance, public time resonates with a project of leadership, teaching, and learning in which secondary education seems an important site for investing democratic public life with substance and vibrancy.

Public time rejects the fever-pitch appeals of "just in time" or "speed time," demands often made within the context of "ever faster technological transformation and exchange,"²³ and buttressed by corporate capital's golden rule: "time is money." Public time slows time down, not as a simple refusal of technological change or a rejection of all calls for efficiency but as an attempt to create the institutional and ideological conditions that promote long-term analyses, historical reflection, and deliberations over what our collective actions might mean for shaping the future. Rejecting an instrumentality that evacuates questions of history, ethics, and justice, public time fosters dialogue, thoughtfulness, and critical exchange. Public time offers room for knowledge that contributes to society's self-understanding, that enables it to question itself, and seeks to legitimate intellectual practices that are not only collective and non-instrumental but deepen democratic values while encouraging pedagogical relations

that question the future in terms that are political, ethical, and social. As Cornelius Castoriadis observes, public time puts into question established institutions and dominant authority, rejecting any notion of the social that either eliminates the question of judgment or "conceals . . . the question of responsibility." Rather than maintaining a passive attitude towards power, public time demands and encourages forms of political agency based on a passion for self-governing, actions informed by critical judgment, and a commitment to linking social responsibility and social transformation. Public time legitimates those pedagogical practices that provide the basis for a culture of questioning, one that enables the knowledge, skills, and social practices necessary for resistance, a space of translation, and a proliferation of discourses. Public time unsettles common sense and disturbs authority while encouraging critical and responsible leadership. As Roger Simon observes, public time "presents the question of the social--not as a space for the articulation of pre-formed visions through which to mobilize action, but as the movement in which the very question of the possibility of democracy becomes the frame within which a necessary radical learning (and questioning) is enabled."²⁴ Put differently, public time affirms a politics without guarantees and a notion of the social that is open and contingent. Public time also provides a conception of democracy that is never complete and determinate but constantly open to different understandings of the contingency of its decisions, mechanisms of exclusions, and operations of power.²⁵ Public time challenges neoliberalism's willingness to separate the economic from the social as well as its failure to address of human needs and social costs.

At its best, public time renders governmental power explicit, and in doing so it rejects the language of religious rituals and the abrogation of the conditions necessary for the assumption of basic freedoms and rights. Moreover, public time considers civic education the basis, if not essential dimension, of justice because it provides individuals with the skills, knowledge, and passions to talk back to power while simultaneously emphasizing both the necessity to question that accompanies viable forms of political agency and the assumption of public responsibility through active participation in the very process of governing. Expressions of public time in secondary education can be found in shared notions of governance between teachers and administration, in modes

of academic labor that encourage forms of collegiality tied to vibrant communities of exchange and democratic values, and in pedagogical relations in which students do not just learn about democracy but experience it through a sense of active participation, critical engagement, and social responsibility. The notion of public time has a long history in secondary education and has played a formative role in shaping some of the most important principles of academic life. Public time, in this instance, registers the importance of pedagogical practices that provide the conditions for a culture of questioning in which teachers and students engage in critical dialogue and unrestricted discussion in order to affirm their role as social agents, inspect their own past, and engage the consequences of *their own actions in shaping the future*.

As secondary education becomes increasingly corporatized, public time is replaced by **corporate time**. In corporate time, the "market is viewed as a 'master design for all affairs,'"²⁶ profit-making becomes the defining measure of responsibility, and consumption is the privileged site for determining value between the self and the larger social order. Corporate time fosters a narrow sense of leadership, agency, and public values and is largely indifferent to those concerns which are critical to a just society, but are not commercial in nature. The values of hierarchy, materialism, competition, and excessive individualism are enshrined under corporate time and play a defining role in how it allocates space, manages the production of particular forms of knowledge, and regulates pedagogical relations. Hence, it is not surprising that corporate time accentuates privatized and competitive modes of intellectual activity, largely removed from public obligations and social responsibilities. Divested of any viable democratic notion of the social, corporate time measures relationships, productivity, space, and knowledge according to the dictates of cost efficiency, profit, and a market-based rationality. Time, within this framework, is accelerated rather than slowed down and reconfigures academic labor, increasingly through, though not limited to, new computer generated technologies which are making greater demands on teachers' time, generating larger teaching loads, and producing bigger classes. And as Peter Euben observes, under such circumstances a particular form of rationality emerges as common sense in which speed rules and "calculation and logic are in [while]

moral imagination and reasoned emotions are out. With speed at a premium, shorthand, quantification and measurements become dominant modes of thought."²⁷

Corporate time maps teachers' relationships through-self promoting market agendas and narrow definitions of self-interest. Caught on the treadmill of getting more grants, teaching larger classes, and producing more revenue for the public schools, teachers become another casualty of a business ideology that attempts to "extract labor from . . . workers at the lowest possible cost."²⁸ Under the reign corporatization, time is accelerated and fragmented. Overworked and largely isolated, teachers are now rewarded for intellectual activities privileged as entrepreneurial, "measured largely in the capacity to transact and consume."²⁹ Teachers are asked to spend more time in larger classrooms while they are simultaneously expected to learn and use new instructional technologies such as PowerPoint, the Web, and various multimedia pedagogical activities. Teachers now interact with students not only in their classes and offices, but also in chat rooms and through e-mail. Grounded in the culture of competitiveness and self-interest, corporate time reworks teachers' loyalties. Teachers interaction is structured less around collective solidarities built upon practices which offer a particular relationship to public life than through corporate imposed rituals of competition and production that conform to the "narrowly focused ideas of the public school as a support to the economy."³⁰ For instance, many secondary schools are now instituting post-tenure review as an alleged measure of teachers' accountability and an efficient way to eliminate "deadwood" teachers. As Ben Agger points out, what is "Especially pernicious is the fact that teachers are supposed to axe their own colleagues, thus pitting them against each other and destroying whatever remains of the fabric of academic community and mutuality."³¹

Under such conditions, teachers' solidarities are weakened ever more as corporate time evokes cost-efficient measures by outsourcing instruction to part-time teachers who are underpaid, overworked, lack health benefits, and deprived of any power to shape the conditions under which they work. Powerlessness breeds resentment and anger among part-time teachers, and fear and insecurity among full-time teachers, who no longer believe that their tenure is secure. Hence, the divide between part- and full-time teachers is reproduced by the heavy hand of secondary schools as they

downsize and out source under the rubric of fiscal responsibility and accountability, especially in a post 9-11 era.³² But more is reproduced than structural dislocations among teachers, there is also a large pool of crippling fear, insecurity, and resentment that makes it difficult for teachers to take risks, forge bonds of solidarity, engage in social criticism, and perform as public intellectuals rather than as technicians in the service of corporate largesse.

Leadership under the reign of corporate culture and corporate time has been rewritten as a form of homage to business models of governance. As Stanley Aronowitz points out, "Today . . . leaders of secondary education wear the badge of corporate servants proudly."³³ Gone are the days when public school superintendents were hired for intellectual status and public roles. College presidents are now labeled as Chief Executive Officers, and are employed primarily because of their fund raising abilities. Deans of various colleges are often pulled from the ranks of the business world and pride themselves on the managerial logic and cost-cutting plans they adopt from the corporate culture of Microsoft, Disney, and IBM. Bill Gates and Michael Eisner replace John Dewey and Robert Hutchins as models of educational leadership. Rather than defend the public role of the public school, academic freedom, and worthy social causes, the new corporate heroes of secondary education now focus their time selling off school services to private contractors, forming partnerships with local corporations, and urging teachers to become nothing more than cheerleaders for corporate interests. Under this model of leadership the public school is being transformed from a place to think to a place for students to dream about brand names and view shopping malls as the only legitimate public spheres.

Corporate time provides a new framing mechanism for teachers' relations and modes of production and suggests a basic shift in the role of the intellectual. Educators now become less important as a resource to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to engage the future as a condition of democratic possibilities. In the "new economy," they are entrepreneurs who view the future as an investment opportunity and private career opportunity rather than as a civic and collective effort to improve public life. Increasingly educators find themselves being deskilled as they are pressured to teach more service oriented and market based courses and devote less time

to their roles either as well-informed, public intellectuals or as "cosmopolitan intellectuals situated in the public sphere."³⁴

Corporate time not only transforms the public school as a democratic public sphere into a space for training while defining teachers as market oriented producers, it also views students as both customers and potential workers, as well as a source of revenue. As customers, university students "are conceptualized in terms of their ability to pay and the more valued customers are those who can afford to pay more."³⁵ One consequence, as Gary Rhoades points out, is that student access to post-secondary education is "now shaped less by considerations of social justice than of revenue potential."³⁶ Consequently, those students who are poor and under-served are increasingly denied access to the benefits of a college education. Of course, the real problem, as Cary Nelson observes is not merely one of potential decline, but "long term and continuing failure to offer all citizens, especially minorities of class and color, equal educational opportunities,"³⁷ a failure that has been intensified under the authority of the corporate public school. As a source of revenue, students are now subjected to secondary fees, tuition costs, and are bombarded by brand name corporations who either lease space on the public school commons to advertise their goods or run any one of a number of students services from the dining halls to the public school book store. Almost every aspect of public space in secondary education is now designed to attract students as consumers and shoppers, constantly subjecting them to forms of advertisements mediated by the rhythms of corporate time which keeps students moving through a marketplace of brand name products rather than ideas. Such hyper-commercialized spaces increasingly resemble malls, transforming all available space into advertising billboards, and bringing home the message that the most important identity available to students is that of a consuming subject. As the line between public and commercial space disappears, the gravitational pull of Taco Bell, McDonald's, Starbucks, Barnes and Noble, American Express, and Nike, among others, create a "geography of nowhere,"³⁸ a consumer placelessness in which all barriers between a culture of critical ideas and branded products simply disappear.³⁹

Corporate time not only translates teachers as multinational operatives and students as sources of revenue and captive consumers, it also makes a claim on how

knowledge is valued, how the classroom is to be organized, and how pedagogy is defined. Knowledge under corporate time is valued as a form of capital. As Michael Peters observes, entire disciplines and bodies of knowledge are now either valued or devalued on the basis of their "ability to attract global capital and . . . potential for serving transnational corporations. Knowledge is valued for its strict utility rather than as an end in itself or for its emancipatory effects."⁴⁰ Good value for students means taking courses labeled as "relevant" in market terms, which are often counterposed to courses in the social sciences, humanities, and the fine arts which are concerned with forms of learning that do not readily translate into either private gain or commercial value. Under the rule of corporate time, the classroom is no longer a public space concerned with issues of justice, critical learning, or the knowledge and skills necessary for civic engagement. As training replaces education, the classroom, along with pedagogy itself, is transformed as a result of the corporate restructuring of the public school.

Not only is classroom knowledge and intellectual practice bought and traded as a marketable commodity, but they are also defined largely within what Zygmunt Bauman calls "the culture of consumer society, which is more about forgetting, [than] learning."⁴¹ That is, forgetting that knowledge can be emancipatory, that citizenship is not merely about being a consumer, and that the future cannot be sacrificed to ephemeral pleasures and values of the market. When education is reduced to training, the meaning of self-government is devalued and democracy is rendered meaningless.

What is crucial to recognize in the rise of corporate time is that while it acknowledges that secondary education should play a crucial role in offering the narratives that frame society, it presupposes that teachers, in particular, will play a different role and assume a "different relation to the framing of cultural reality."⁴² Many critics have pointed to the changing nature of governance and management structures in the public school as a central force in redefining the relationship of the public school to the larger society, but little has been said about how the changing direction of the public school impacts on the nature of academic activity and intellectual relations. While at one level, the changing nature of the institution suggests greater control of academic life by administrators and an emerging class of managerial professionals, it also points to

the privileging of those intellectuals in the techno-sciences whose services are indispensable to corporate power, while recognizing information as the reigning commodity of the new economy. Academic labor is now prized for how it fuses with capital, rather than how it contributes to what Geoff Sharp calls "society's self-understanding."⁴³ The changing institutional and social forms of the public school reject the elitist and reclusive models of intellectual practice that traditionally have refused to bridge the gap between secondary education and the larger social order, theory and practice, the academic and the public. Within the corporate public school, transformation rather than contemplation is now a fundamental principle for judging and rewarding intellectual practice. Removed from matters of either social justice or democratic possibilities, transformation is defined through a notion of the social that is increasingly rooted in privileging the material interests of the market. Secondary education's need for new sources of funding neatly dovetails with the inexhaustible need on the part of corporations for new products. Within this symbiotic relationship, knowledge is directly linked to its application in the market, mediated by a collapse of the distinction between knowledge and the commodity. Knowledge has become capital to invest in the market but has little to do with the power of self-definition, civic commitments, or ethical responsibilities that "require an engagement with the claims of others"⁴⁴ and with questions of justice. At the same time, the conditions for scholarly work are being transformed through technologies that speed up the labor process, and define social exchange in terms that are more competitive, instrumental, and removed from face to face contact.

Electronic, digital, and image-based technologies shape notions of the social in ways that were unimaginable a decade ago. Social exchanges can now proceed without the presence of "real" bodies. Contacts among teachers and between teachers and students are increasingly virtual, yet these practices profoundly delineate the nature of the social in instrumental, abstract, and commodified terms. As John Hinkson and Geoff Sharp have pointed out, these new intellectual practices and technological forms are redefining the nature of the social in education in ways that radically delimit the free sharing of ideas, cooperativeness, and interpretive collegiality seem to be disappearing among teachers.⁴⁵ This is an especially important issue since such values serve as a

"condition for the development of intellectual practices devoted to public service."⁴⁶ Within these new forms of instrumental framing and intellectual practice, the ethic of public service that once received some support in secondary education is being eliminated and with it those intellectual relations, scholarly practices, and forms of collegiality that leave some room for addressing a less commodified and democratic notion of the social.

In opposition to this notion of corporate time, instrumentalized intellectual practices, and a deracinated view of the social, I want to reassert the importance of faculty social formations that view the public school as a site of struggle and resistance. Central to such a challenge is the necessity to define intellectual practice "as part of an intricate web of morality, rigor and responsibility"⁴⁷ that enables educators to speak with conviction, enter the public sphere in order to address important social problems, and demonstrate alternative models for what it means to bridge the gap between secondary education and the broader society. This is a notion of intellectual practice that refuses both the instrumentality and privileged isolation of the academy, while affirming a broader vision of learning that links knowledge to the power of self-definition and the capacities of administrators, educators, and students to expand the scope of democratic freedoms, particularly as they address the crisis of the social as part and parcel of the crisis of both youth and democracy itself. Implicit in this notion of social and intellectual practice is a view of educators as public intellectuals. Following Edward Said, I am referring to those educators engaged in intellectual practices that interpret and question power rather than merely consolidate it, enter into the public sphere in order to alleviate human suffering, make the connections of power visible, and work individually and collectively to create the pedagogical and social conditions necessary for what the late Pierre Bourdieu has called "realist utopias."⁴⁸ I want to conclude this essay by taking up how the role of both the public school as a democratic public sphere and the function of educators as public intellectuals can be further enabled through what I call a politics of educated hope.

Educated Hope in the Age of Diminished Possibilities

If the rise of the corporate public school is to be challenged, educators and others need to reclaim the meaning and purpose of secondary education as an ethical and political response to the demise of democratic public life. Secondary and post-secondary education may be two of the few sites left in which students learn how to mediate critically between democratic values and the demands of corporate power, between identities founded on democratic principles and identities steeped in forms of competitive, atomistic individualism that celebrate self-interest, profit making, and greed. This view suggests that secondary education be defended through intellectual work that self-consciously recalls the tension between the democratic imperatives and possibilities of public institutions and their everyday realization within a society dominated by market principles. As many critical educators such as Richard Quantz have been arguing for sometime, the public school is one of the few sites we have left as a "guardian of wider civic freedoms, as interrogator of more and more complex ethical problems, as servant and preserver of deeper democratic practices"⁴⁹ and if we don't struggle for its continued existence as a democratic public sphere, than those advocates of market rule will fashion public schools as nothing more than an adjunct of corporate culture, leadership as a form of corporate management, and learning as an exercise in conformity and consumerism. Only if this struggle is taken seriously by educators and others can the public school be reclaimed as a space of debate, discussion, and at times dissidence. Within such a pedagogical space, time can be unconditionally apportioned to what Cornelius Castoriadis calls "an unlimited interrogation in all domains"⁵⁰ of society, especially with regards to the operations of dominant authority and power and the important issues that shape public life, practices ultimately valued for their contribution to the unending process of democratization.

Secondary education should be defended as a form of civic education where teachers and students have the chance to resist and rewrite those modes of pedagogy, time, and rationality that refuse to include questions of judgment and issues of responsibility. Understood as such, secondary education is neither as a consumer driven product nor as a form of training and career preparation but a mode of critical education that renders all individuals fit "to participate in power . . . to the greatest extent possible, to participate in a common government,"⁵¹ to be capable as Aristotle reminds

us of both governing and being governed. If secondary education is to bring democratic public culture and critical pedagogy back to life, educators need to provide students with the knowledge and skills that enable them not only to judge and choose between different institutions but also to create those institutions they deem necessary for living lives of decency and dignity. As Castoriadis insists, "People should have not just the typical right to participate; they should also be educated in every aspect (of leadership and politics) in order to be able to participate"⁵² in governing society. Hence, secondary education should provide not only the tools for citizen participation in public life, but also for exercising forms of critical leadership.

Reclaiming secondary education as a public sphere begins with the crucial project of challenging corporate ideology and its attending notions of time, which covers over the crisis of the social by dissociating all discussions about the goals of secondary education from the realm of democracy. This project points to the important task of redefining secondary education as a democratic public sphere not only to assert the importance of the social, but also to reconfigure it so that "economic interests cease to be the dominant factor in shaping attitudes"⁵³ about the social as a realm devoid of politics and democratic possibilities. Education is not only about issues of work and economics, but also about questions of justice, social freedom, and the capacity for democratic agency, action, and change as well as the related issues of power, exclusion, and citizenship. These are educational and political issues and should be addressed as part of a broader concern for renewing the struggle for social justice and democracy. Such a struggle demands, as the writer, Arunhdhati Roy, points out, that as intellectuals we ask ourselves some very "uncomfortable questions about our values and traditions, our vision for the future, our responsibilities as citizens, the legitimacy of our 'democratic institutions,' the role of the state, the police, the army, the judiciary, and the intellectual community."⁵⁴

Against the increasing corporatization of the public school and the advance of globalism capitalism, educators need to resurrect a language of resistance and possibility, a language that embraces a militant utopianism while constantly being attentive to those forces that seek to turn such hope into a new slogan or punish and dismiss those who dare look beyond the horizon of the given. Hope as a form of militant

utopianism is one of the preconditions for individual and social struggle, the ongoing practice of critical education in a wide variety of sites--the attempt to make a difference by being able to imagine otherwise in order to act in other ways. Educated hope is utopian, as Ruth Levitas observes, in that it is understood "more broadly as the desire for a better way of living expressed in the description of a different kind of society that makes possible that alternative way of life."⁵⁵ Educated hope also demands a certain amount of courage on the part of intellectuals in that it demands from them the necessity to articulate social possibilities, mediate the experience of injustice as part of a broader attempt to contest the workings of oppressive power, undermine various forms of domination, and fight for alternative ways to imagine the future. This is no small challenge at a time in American history when jingoistic patriotism is the only obligation of citizenship and dissent the alleged refuge of those who support terrorists.

Educated hope as a utopian longing becomes all the more urgent given the bleakness of the times, but also because it opens horizons of comparison by evoking not just different histories but different futures; at the same time, it substantiates the importance of ambivalence while problematizing certainty, or as Paul Ricoeur has suggested, it is "a major resource as the weapon against closure."⁵⁶ As a form of utopian thinking, educated hope provides a theoretical service in that it pluralizes politics by generating dissent against the claims of a false harmony, and it provides an activating presence in promoting social transformation. Jacques Derrida has observed in another context that if secondary education is going to have a future that makes a difference in promoting democracy, it is crucial for educators to take up the "necessity to rethink the concepts of the possible and the impossible."⁵⁷ What Derrida is suggesting is that educated hope provides a vocabulary for challenging the presupposition that there are no alternatives to the existing social order, while simultaneously stressing the dynamic, still unfinished elements of a democracy to be realized.⁵⁸

Educated hope as a form of oppositional utopianism accentuates the ways in which the political can become more pedagogical and the pedagogical more political. Pedagogy merges politics and ethics with revitalized forms of civic education that provide the knowledge, skills, and experiences enabling individual freedom and social agency. Making the pedagogical more political demands that educators become more

attentive to the ways in which institutional forces and cultural power are tangled up with everyday experience. It means understanding how secondary education in the information age now interfaces with the larger culture, how it has become the most important site for framing public pedagogies and authorizing specific relations between the self, the other, and the larger society that often shut down democratic visions. Any viable politics of educated hope must tap into individual experiences while at the same time linking individual responsibility with a progressive sense of social agency. Politics and pedagogy alike spring "from real situations and from what we can say and do in these situations."⁵⁹ As an empowering practice, educated hope makes concrete the possibility for transforming secondary education into an ethical practice and public event that confronts the flow of everyday experience and the weight of social suffering with the force of individual and collective resistance and the promise of an ongoing project of democratic social transformation.

The limits of the utopian imagination are related, in part, to the failure of educators and intellectuals in a variety of public spheres not only to conceive of life beyond profit margins, but also to imagine what pedagogical conditions might be necessary to bring into being forms of political agency that might expand the operations of individual rights, social provisions, and democratic freedoms. Against such failures and dystopian notions, it is crucial for us to address utopian longings as anticipatory rather than messianic, as temporal rather than merely spatial, forward looking rather than backwards. Utopian thinking in this view is neither a blue print for the future nor a form of social engineering, but a belief that different futures are possible. Utopian thinking rejects a politics of certainty and holds open matters of contingency, context, and indeterminacy as central to any notion of agency and the future. This suggests a view of hope based on the recognition that it is only through education that human beings can learn the limits of the present and the conditions necessary for them to "combine a gritty sense of limits with a lofty vision of possibility."⁶⁰ Educated hope poses the important challenge of how to reclaim social agency within a broader discourse of ethical advocacy while addressing those essential pedagogical and political elements necessary for envisioning alternatives to global neoliberalism and its attendant assault on public time and space.

Educated hope takes as a political and ethical necessity the need to address what modes of education are required for a democratic future and further requires that we ask such questions as: What pedagogical projects, resources, and practices can be put into place that would convey to students the vital importance of public time and its attendant culture of questioning as an essential step towards self-representation, agency, and a substantive democracy? How might public time with its imperative to "take more time," compel respect rather than reverence, critique rather than silence, while challenging the narrow and commercial nature of corporate time? What kinds of social relations necessarily provide students with time for deliberation as well as spaces of translation in which they can critically engage those forms of power and authority that speak directly to them both within and outside of the school? How might public time, with its unsettling refusal to be fixed or to collapse in the face of corporate time, be used to create pedagogical conditions that foster forms of self and social critique as part of a broader project of constructing alternative desires and critical modes of thinking, on the one hand, and democratic agents of change on the other? How to deal with these issues is a major question for intellectuals in the academy today and their importance resides not just in how they might provide teachers and students with the tools to fight corporatization in secondary education, but also how they address the need for fundamental institutional change in the ongoing struggles for freedom and justice in a revitalized democracy.

There is a long-standing tradition among critical theorists that pedagogy as a moral and political practice plays a crucial role in constituting the social. Far from innocent, pedagogical practices operate within institutional contexts that carry great power in determining what knowledge is of most worth, what it means for students to know something, and how such knowledge relates to a particular understanding of the self and its relationship to both others and the future. Connecting teaching as knowledge production to teaching as a form of self production, pedagogy presupposes not only an ethical and political project that offers up a variety of human capacities, it also propagates diverse meanings of the social. Moreover, as an articulation of and intervention in the social, pedagogical practices always sanction particular versions of what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something, how to be attentive

to the operations of power, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical environment. In the broadest sense, pedagogy is a principle feature of politics because it provides the capacities, knowledge, skills, and social relations through which individuals recognize themselves as social and political agents. As Roger Simon points out, "talk about pedagogy is simultaneously talk about the details of what students and others might do together and the cultural politics such practices support."⁶¹

The primary emphasis in many approaches to critical pedagogy suggests that its foremost responsibility is to provide a space where the complexity of knowledge, culture, values, and social issues can be explored in open and critical dialogue through within a vibrant culture of questioning. This position is echoed by Judith Butler who argues, "For me there is more hope in the world when we can question what is taken for granted, especially about what it is to be human."⁶² Zygmunt Bauman goes further, arguing that the resurrection of any viable notion of political and social agency is dependent upon a culture of questioning, whose purpose, as he puts it, is to "keep the forever unexhausted and unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and pre-empt the further unraveling of human possibilities, prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished."⁶³

Central to any viable notion of critical pedagogy is its willingness to take seriously those academic projects, intellectual practices, and social relations in which students have the basic right to raise, if not define questions, both within and outside of disciplinary boundaries. Such a pedagogy also must bear the responsibility of being self-conscious about those forces that sometimes prevent people from speaking openly and critically, whether they are part of a hidden curriculum of either racism, class oppression, or gender discrimination or part of those institutional and ideological mechanisms that silence students under the pretext of a claim to professionalism, objectivity, or unaccountable authority. Crucial here is the recognition that a pedagogical culture of questioning is not merely about the dynamics of communication but also about the effects of power and the mechanisms through which it either constrains, denies, or excludes particular forms of agency--preventing some individuals

from speaking in specific ways, in particular spaces, under specific circumstances. Clearly such a pedagogy might include a questioning of the corporatization of the educational context itself, the role of foreign policy, the purpose and meaning of the burgeoning prison-industrial complex, and the declining nature of the welfare state. Pedagogy makes visible the operations of power and authority as part of its processes of disruption and unsettlement--an attempt, as Larry Grossberg points out, "to win an already positioned, already invested individual or group to a different set of places, a different organization of the space of possibilities."⁶⁴

At its best, such a pedagogy is self-reflective, and views its own practices and effects not as pre-given but as the outcome of previous struggles. Rather than defined as either a technique, method, or "as a kind of physics which leaves its own history behind and never looks back,"⁶⁵ critical pedagogy is grounded in a sense of history, politics, and ethics which uses theory as a resource to respond to particular contexts, problems, and issues. I want to suggest that as educators we need to extend this approach to critical pedagogy beyond the project of simply providing students with the critical knowledge and analytic tools that enable them to use them in any way they wish. While this pedagogical approach rightly focuses on the primacy of dialogue, understanding, and critique, it does not adequately affirm the experience of the social and the obligations it evokes regarding questions of responsibility and social transformation. Such a pedagogy attempts to open up for students important questions about power, knowledge, and what it might mean for students to critically engage the conditions under which life is presented to them, but it does not directly address what it would mean for them to work to overcome those social relations of oppression that make living unbearable for those youths and adults who are poor, hungry, unemployed, refused adequate social services, and under the aegis of neoliberalism, viewed largely as disposable.

But to acknowledge that critical pedagogy is directed and interventionist is not the same as turning it into a religious ritual. Critical approaches to pedagogy do not guarantee certainty, nor should they, but they should make a distinction between a rigorous ethical and scholarly approach to learning implicated in diverse relations of power and forms of pedagogy that belie questions of responsibility and allow conversation and dialogue to degenerate into opinion, and an academic method into an

unreflective and damaging ideological approach to teaching. Rather than deny the relationship between education and politics, it seems far more crucial to engage it openly and critically so as to prevent pedagogical relations from degenerating into forms of abuse, terrorism, or contempt immune from any viable form of self-reflection and analysis.

A pedagogy that simply promotes a culture of questioning says nothing about what kind of future is or should be implied by how and what educators teach; nor does it address the necessity of recognizing the value of a future in which matters of liberty, freedom, and justice play a constitutive role. While it is crucial for critical pedagogy to be attentive to those practices in which forms of social and political agency are denied, it is also imperative to create the conditions in which forms of agency are available for students to learn how to not only think critically but to act differently. People need to be educated for democracy and educational leadership not only by expanding their capacities to think critically, but also for assuming public responsibility through active participation in the very process of governing and engaging important social problems. This suggests connecting a pedagogy of understanding with pedagogical practices that are empowering and oppositional, practices that offer students the knowledge and skills needed to believe that a substantive democracy is not only possible but is worth both taking responsibility for and struggling over. Any notion of critical pedagogy has to foreground issues not only of understanding but also social responsibility and address the implications the latter has for a democratic society. As Vaclav Havel has noted, "Democracy requires a certain type of citizen who feels responsible for something other than his own well feathered little corner; citizens who want to participate in society's affairs, who insist on it; citizens with backbones; citizens who hold their ideas about democracy at the deepest level, at the level that religion is held, where beliefs and identity are the same."⁶⁶

Responsibility breathes politics into educational practices and suggests both a different future and the possibility of politics itself. Responsibility makes politics and agency possible, because it does not end with matters of understanding since it recognizes the importance of students becoming accountable for others through their ideas, language, and actions. Being aware of the conditions that cause human suffering

and the deep inequalities that generate dreadfully undemocratic and unethical contradictions for many people is not the same as resolving them. Young people need to be made aware of socially committed injustice if they are to fight for the idea of an inclusive and just democratic society. This suggests that educators give meaning to the notion of responsibility by developing a principled notion of educational leadership in which they not only translate individual problems into public considerations and social issues into private concerns but also promote visions of a more just society and what it might mean to make such a society realizable. As Zygmunt Bauman rightly observes, one task of those who assume the mantle of leadership is to:

give public (generic) names to individually suffered problems which could neither be perceived from inside the individual experience nor tackled by individuals separately. Leaders sketch and promote visions of a good society or a better society, of social justice or a society fairer than the one known so far, of a decent and humane way of living together or a shared life more humane than the life lived at present. And then, they suggest what ought to be done to achieve any or all such improvements.⁶⁷

Leadership in this instance is both a referent and a gesture towards committed speech, informed translation and collective participation in public life. If pedagogy is to be linked to critical citizenship and public life, it needs to provide the conditions for students to learn in diverse ways how to take responsibility for moving society in the direction of a more realizable democracy. In this case, the burden of pedagogy is linked to the possibilities of understanding and acting, engaging knowledge and theory as a resource to enhance the capacity for civic action and democratic change.

The future of secondary education is inextricably connected to the future that we make available to the next generation of young people. Finding our way to a more human future means educating a new generation of scholars who not only defend secondary education as a democratic public sphere, but who also frame their own agency as both scholars and citizen activists willing to connect their teaching and service

with broader democratic concerns over equality, justice, and an alternative vision of what the school might be and what society might become.

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