

Henry Armand Giroux's Thought: An Essential Component of Critical Pedagogy in Religions Societies

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Abstract: Education is a vehicle for honing students' critical and political attitudes to create a democratic society. Schools as formal educational institutions have been interpreted as successors to the status quo. Still, the role of schools can be more meaningful, namely as a democratic public space in which teachers play an essential role as transformative intellectuals. In transformation, teachers act as designers of classroom conditions and mentors for students to engage in a critical dialogue that makes students aware of their current and future roles in a democratic society. Teachers can act as intellectuals when the school system provides opportunities for teachers to be different, create and innovate based on multicultural religions.

Keywords: the role of the teacher, a transformative intellectual, critical pedagogy, religion

A. Introduction

Henry Armand Giroux was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on September 18, 1943. His mother was Alice (Waldron), and his father was Armand Giroux. He is one of the founders of critical pedagogical theory in the United States. Giroux is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy, cultural studies,¹ youth studies, higher education, media studies, and critical theory. In 2002 Routledge named Giroux one of the fifty greatest educational thinkers of modern times. For six years, Giroux worked as a high school social studies teacher in Barrington, Rhode Island, and then held various positions at Boston University, Miami University, and Penn State University. In 2005, Giroux began serving as the Global TV Network Chair in English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in

¹ Marco Catarci, "Intercultural Education and Sustainable Development. A Crucial Nexus for Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10010024>.

Hamilton, Ontario. He completed his MA in history at Appalachian State University in 1968. After teaching high school social studies in Barrington, Rhode Island, for six years, Giroux earned his DA (Doctor of Arts) in history at Carnegie-Mellon in 1977. Giroux's first position as a professor was in education at Boston University, which he held for the next six years. After that, he became a distinguished professor of education and scholar at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. While there, he also served as the founding Director of the Center for Education and Cultural Studies. In 1992, he began a 12-year position in the Waterbury Chair Professorship at Penn State University, also serving as Director of the Waterbury Forum in Education and Cultural Studies. 2004 Giroux became the Global Television Network Chair in English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. In July 2014, he was appointed the McMaster University Chair of Scholarships in the Public Interest. He currently serves as the Director of the McMaster Research Center in the Public Interest. He is single and lives in Hamilton, Ontario, where he is presently the chairing professor for the Scholarship in the Public Interest at McMaster University.

Radical education emerged as a critical response to the ideology of traditional educational practices. This education rejects the assumption that schools are the primary mechanism for developing a democratic and egalitarian social order. Critical education theory sets itself the task of uncovering how domination and oppression are produced in various educational agencies.²

Giroux argues that against conservative claims that schools transmit objective knowledge, radical critics develop hidden curriculum theories and ideological theories that identify particular interests underlying different forms of knowledge. Rather than seeing school knowledge as a goal, as something to be simply transmitted to students, radical theorists argue that school knowledge represents a particular dominant culture. Against the claim that schools are only instructional places, extreme criticism points to the transmission and reproduction of the dominant culture in schools.³

² Henry A Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1988, 1988), <https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/999595853202121>.

³ Alan R. Sadvnik and Henry A. Giroux, "Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning," *Contemporary Sociology* 18, no. 6 (1989), <https://doi.org/10.2307/2074233>.

Finally, against claims by traditional teachers to perceive schools as non-political institutions, radical teachers illuminate how the state, through selective grants, certification policies, and the force of law, influences school practice in the interests of certain dominant ideologies.⁴

But it's a shame that radical school teachers are mired in language that connects schools primarily to ideology and domination practices. For radical pedagogy to become a viable political project, teachers must develop a discourse combining criticism with the language of possibility. For this reason, teachers must provide an analysis that reveals opportunities for the struggle for democracy and reform in learning in schools. Similarly, it must provide a theoretical basis for teachers and others to view teacher work critically and potentially transformatively. According to Giroux, two important discourse elements are the definition of school as a democratic public space and the definition of teachers as transformative intellectuals.⁵

The discourse on school as a democratic public space implies that a school is a democratic place dedicated to self-development and social empowerment. Schools are public places where students learn the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an authentic democracy. Schools are not seen as extensions of the workplace or as frontline institutions in the battle for international markets and foreign competition but rather as democratic public spaces built around forms of critical inquiry that meaningful value dialogue. The teacher's discourse as a transformative intellectual means that the teacher develops a counter-hegemonic pedagogy that not only empowers students by giving them knowledge and social skills,⁶ That means educating them to take risks, fight for institutional change, and fight against both oppression and democracy outside of school in other public spheres of opposition and the wider social arena.

In his book *Teachers as Intellectuals*, Henry A. Giroux explains that teachers should be seen as transformative intellectuals who must actively ask serious questions about what they teach, how they teach, and the larger goals they strive

⁴ Sadovnik and Giroux.

⁵ Sadovnik and Giroux.

⁶ Pengfei Zhao et al., "You Are My Way to the Universe: Critical Collective Research Through Feminist Community Building," in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 23, 2022.

for.. This means that they must take a responsible role in shaping the goals and conditions of the school. Such a task is impossible in a division of labour where teachers have little influence over their work's ideological and economic conditions.⁷

In the classroom teachers can use critical methods in the teaching and learning process.⁸ For example, according to Giroux, students can improve their critical thinking skills in historical research by using their thinking to assess the historical stories they research, not just take the written history for granted. Students are brought to experience the process of writing history as historians do. They look back at the themes to be written, carry out dialogues and process these themes with organising ideas. In this case, the teacher needs to build parallel relationships with his students to establish participatory communication. Teachers should not only be able to teach, but as transformative intellectual agents, they can understand society's reality and relate it to the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In critical pedagogy, the role of the teacher as a transformative intellectual is an essential component because this view will make us think about and reform the traditions and circumstances that prevent the teacher from realising his full potential as a reflective practitioner in education. In this case, the teacher actively organises education and does not merely follow the agenda designed to be lived. By viewing teachers as transformative intellectuals, it is hoped that the goal of making pedagogy more political and politics more pedagogical is achieved. Pedagogy is more political, meaning that the educational process is included in the political realm by showing that education symbolises the struggle to define the meaning and open relations of power. As a result, students will be sensitive and responsive to the social reality around them. Making politics more pedagogical means using pedagogy to realise political interests that are essentially emancipatory. It uses a pedagogy that treats students as critical agents, makes knowledge problematic, and utilizes dialogue that strengthens and creates conditions that enable the struggle to create a better world for everyone.

⁷ Sadovnik and Giroux, "Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning."

⁸ Alfredo Gaete, Viviana Gómez, and Pelayo Benavides, "The Overuse of Self-Report in the Study of Beliefs in Education: Epistemological Considerations," *International Journal of Research and Method in Education* 41, no. 3 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2017.1288205>.

B. Methods

This research uses a literature study. The main books are the writings of Henry A. Giroux as follows: *Teachers as Intellectuals*, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling*, *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life* and *Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age*. Furthermore, Paulo Freire's writings are: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *The Politics of Education*, and Antonio Gramsci's writings are: *Prison Notebooks*. (New York: International Publishers, 1971). How is Henry A. Giroux's view of the teacher as a transformative intellectual an essential component of critical pedagogy?

C. Finding and Discussion

He developed a more comprehensive theory of critical education than any other thinker. This theory departs from his concern with the current situation, which makes young people, especially those from minority groups, increasingly marginalized and marginalized. According to Giroux, critical education seeks to help students, especially those from the oppressed, recognize the dominant culture because that culture is not neutral and does not defend students' interests.⁹ Giroux describes critical pedagogy as an educational movement, guided by passion and principles, to help students develop a sense of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and link knowledge with power and the capacity to take constructive action.¹⁰

In his theory, I see Giroux wanting to confirm that school must be seen as a social location with patriarchal socio-cultural complexities. This social inequality is formed in the dominant culture which contains general norms that are developed and then become the dominant ideology that is universally valid and justifies the status quo in the social, political and economic fields as something natural, inevitable, eternal, and has a beneficial impression for the public. Lots. Teachers must recognize how the dominant school culture engages in hegemonic practices that often silence minority student groups.¹¹

⁹ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*.

¹⁰ Giroux.

¹¹ Giroux.

So schools are not neutral, and if teachers are not aware of this, hegemonic practices will thrive in schools, especially in classroom learning. The inability of teachers to see and be mindful of the existence of counter-hegemonic struggles in the field of school culture will make efforts to change education end up not running optimally. The notion that schools are neutral and have nothing to do with politics has created a hegemonic trap for the domination of certain knowledge in schools. The teacher should see himself as a transformative intellectual, meaning he can change social conditions where oppression has occurred. Teachers are not technicians. The way of thinking that views teachers only as technicians have demeaned and reduced the teacher's role in the classroom. Teachers as technicians or professional performers when in school only to effectively realise every goal set for them. He is not seen as a free human being with a special dedication to increasing young people's intellectual values and critical powers.¹²

Giroux (1988) has stated since the introductory part that critical education and radical pedagogy are urgently needed to change traditional education, which peaked in the Dewey era of the 1950s and assumed schools were—the main mechanism for developing an egalitarian and democratic social order.¹³ Even though there are various domination and oppression in it by actors outside and within the world of education, according to Giroux, Deweyan's jargon is not the problem. Still, the behavior of the actors must be criticized and changed. All of this crystallizes in the figures of teachers and lecturers as the spearheads of education. Giroux's thoughts on critical education were born from the critical education movement, which emerged in the 1970s and was voiced by essential thinkers from various schools such as the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Foucault, Baudrillard, Arrendt, Bourdieu, Fraire, Derrida, Giddens, and others. But what is Giroux's specialty and contribution is his theory of the teacher as a transformative intellectual.

Giroux's theory is indeed owed to Paulo Freire, who we know has influenced his thinking a lot. In Freire's view, education is a struggle for meaning and a struggle for power relations. Education is the field in which power and politics are

¹² Giroux.

¹³ Giroux.

given fundamental expression, in which the production of meaning, desire, language, and values engages and responds to deeper beliefs about what it means to be human, to dream, and to name and struggle for the future and certain forms of social life. Education becomes a form of action that combines the language of criticism and possibility. Freire, according to Giroux represents the need for a teacher's passionate commitment to making politics more pedagogical, that is,¹⁴

According to Giroux, Freire represents the need for a teacher's passionate commitment to make politics more pedagogical, that is, to make critical reflection and fundamental action an important part of a social project that not only involves forms of oppression but develops a deep and abiding faith in the struggle. To humanize life itself.¹⁵

Freire's views sow hope and faith for teachers to see social change, education that humanizes humans. Faith as the basis of everything that is expected and the proof of everything that is not visible at this time is not a vain fantasy but is really a manifestation of conditions that are invisible to the naked eye but will soon materialize in real conditions if fought for because there are eyes that are open to see hope for better conditions. In this view the teacher should see education as a means to—produce||awareness to restore human humanity, and in this regard, education plays a role in raising critical awareness as a prerequisite for efforts to liberate. This view is contrary to the pessimistic view which says that education is nothing more than a means to reproduce unfair social systems and structures such as systems of class relations, gender relations, racism relations or other relation systems. This reproduction understanding argues that education basically perpetuates existing political, socio-economic and power interests.

According to Giroux, by combining critical discourse and the possibility of Freire combining history and theology thus providing a theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy that expresses hope, critical reflection, and collective struggle. In a critical pedagogical view, schools are understood as social places constituted by dominant and subordinate cultural complexes, each characterized by the power they must define and the legitimacy of certain views of reality. Teachers and

¹⁴ Giroux.

¹⁵ Giroux.

others interested in education must understand how the dominant culture functions at all levels of the school so as not to confirm the experience of a culture that is excluded. It also means that teachers, parents, and others must fight against student helplessness by affirming their own cultural and historical experiences. Therefore, knowledge must be related to the problem of power, which indicates that the teacher must raise questions about truth claims and the interests underlying this knowledge's function. Through collaboration with teachers, students need to understand the assumptions embedded in the form and content of knowledge, moreover the processes by which knowledge is produced, adapted, and transformed in specific social and historical settings. Teachers need to discover in students how meaning is actively constructed through some life experience formation that gives their lives a sense of hope and possibility. Giroux argues that students must learn to understand the transformative possibilities of experience. In order to increase this possibility, teachers must make classroom knowledge relevant to the lives of their students so that students have a voice, that is, affirm student experiences as part of a pedagogical encounter by providing curriculum and pedagogical content practices that resonate with students' lived experiences. With relevant experiences, students can interrogate those experiences to uncover hidden assumptions. Critical direction is needed to help students recognize the political and moral implications of their own experiences.¹⁶

In addition, Giroux also advocated for teachers to form alliances among themselves and to join and work with oppositional social movements outside of school. Within the teachers' alliance, they can arrange to engage in projects designed to understand the important role of teachers at all levels of education in producing and legitimizing existing social relations. In addition teachers can establish social projects in which they critically interrogate the existing curriculum in schools, hidden curricula, policy formation at local and state levels, the form and content of school texts, and the working conditions in which teachers operate.¹⁷

¹⁶ Giroux.

¹⁷ Stanley Aronowitz and H A Giroux, "Education Under Siege. Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers" (Inc, 1985).

Giroux persuasively shows us how the writings of Freire and Gramsci have reminded us of the various ways in which ideologies are defined and legitimized by means of multi-layered and multidirectional mediation and through the determination of culture, class, ethnicity, electricity and gender. Giroux's understanding of the dialectical relationship between social structures and human institutions disarms the notion that human subjects are reflections of some innate, ahistorical essence or that they are passive victims caught in the web of ideological formations. In Giroux's view, man is a social agent who has the ability to transcend the historical situation of the culture he has inherited. Humans should not succumb to the inevitability of traditions that make them prisoners of fixed ideas and actions.¹⁸

Furthermore, Henry Giroux criticized the language of traditional education which according to him was anchored in a rather mechanical and limited view of the world. Such a worldview is borrowed from the behavioristic learning psychology discourse, which focuses on how best to learn certain knowledge frameworks, and from the logic of scientific management, as reflected in the return to basics movement, competency testing, and systems management schemes. Such language prevents teachers from critically examining the ideological assumptions embedded in their own language and the experiences of the schools they form. Whereas the language of education is a product of a certain theoretical framework, through the assumptions that govern it, and, finally, through the social, political, and ideological relations that direct and legitimize it. Therefore Giroux argues that there needs to be an effort to rethink the direction of education which has so far been directed towards economic interests towards a new educational language. The new educational language is also called critical language because it contains human awareness efforts that try to change the face of the school so that it is more liberating or emancipatory. To support this, it is necessary to have certainty about the curriculum concept that supports the new educational language. The curriculum should not be a tool for domination by the authorities but can touch the reality of society. The new educational language is also called critical language because it contains human awareness efforts that try to change the face of the school so that it is more liberating or emancipatory. To support this, it is necessary to have certainty about the curriculum concept that

¹⁸ Aronowitz and Giroux.

supports the new educational language. The curriculum should not be a tool for domination by the authorities but can touch the reality of society. The new educational language is also called critical language because it contains human awareness efforts that try to change the face of the school so that it is more liberating or emancipatory. To support this, it is necessary to have certainty about the curriculum concept that supports the new educational language. The curriculum should not be a tool for the authorities' domination but can touch society's reality.

During the ten years following the publication of *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope* (1997), Henry Giroux used critical education theory and the concept of the teacher as a transformative intellectual to study the global culture of the technocratic capital known as *pop culture* (popular culture). Pop culture has massively invaded public space in journalistic media and on the internet since the late 1990s. When this dissertation was written in 2020, pop culture looked normal because it has become part of everyday human life worldwide.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the target of this pop culture is children and adolescents, making it difficult for teachers to deal with its effects, such as hedonic tendencies, euphoric popularity, consumptive chauvinism, opportunistic egoism, materialistic pragmatism, and juvenile delinquency and crime. On the other hand, Giroux also highlights the issues of multiculturalism, racism, violence, gender and religious conflicts that have arisen as a reaction to this pop culture, whether traditionalists, conservatives, socialists, liberals, anarchists, fanatics or radicals carry it out. The teacher's burden is getting heavier, especially if you want to be a transformative intellectual, because you have to choose between protecting yourself by just obeying the system and losing a generation.

I quote previous research about Giroux's intersection with global education, among others; I quote from Warren Mark Liew's research first. Warren Mark Liew's research looks at the context of the sexual education curriculum in Singapore which shows power relations between women and men through ethnicity, politics and society according to Giroux's lens. According to him, these educational instruments are the basis for practising freedom to fight power

¹⁹ Henry A Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling: A Critical Reader* (Routledge, 2018).

relations with critical thinking as a form of participation in a transformative world.²⁰

In the second previous research, I traced the pursuit of Zachary A. Casey and was close to the research of Michael Heise and Jason P. Nance, which included Giroux's critical thinking in the context of white supremacist tensions that were privileged with humanist rights. They include the term empowerment in a critical pedagogical context and the location of security within the scope of the school. This empowerment clearly sees actual violence--both visible and invisible--without the need to echo the term white supremacy, even though in general, violence often resides within this supremacist circle.^{21,22}

Similar to previous research, Michael W. Apple et al. saw social, economic and political inequalities that threaten the existence of global pandemics and climate change. He envisions the democratization of education as a shared commitment. Michael W. Apple et al. criticized the managerialism of business culture. Grant-oriented and profit-oriented business culture. In addition, he uses Giroux's lens to examine the destructive structures of neoliberal government in the praxis of neglecting academic freedom in tertiary tertiary institutions. According to him, if higher education is based on business, that's where the seeds of terror emerge.²³ In contrast, David Stroupe sees knowledge production as the basis of a collective society, helping children not only to know academically, but also to be able to see marginalised people, have compassion, and have sensitivity to injustice. epistemic. According to him, the lens of epistemic injustice has long been raised by philosophers, one of them is Giroux. He doesn't want to add a new term, but simply broadens the lens in today's increasingly relevant context.²⁴

²⁰ Warren Mark Liew, "Sex (Education) in the City: Singapore's Sexuality Education Curriculum," *Discourse* 35, no. 5 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2014.931114>.

²¹ Zachary A. Casey, "Whiteness Has Never Left the Center," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2025477>.

²² Michael Heise and Jason P. Nance, "defund the (School) Police? Bringing Data to Key School-to-Prison Pipeline Claims," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 111, no. 3 (2021).

²³ Michael W. Apple et al., "Reflections on Contemporary Challenges and Possibilities for Democracy and Education," *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2022.2052029>.

²⁴ David Stroupe, "Naming and Disrupting Epistemic Injustice across Curated Sites of Learning," *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 31, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2021.1977647>.

Henry A. Giroux sees opportunities for developing fascist politics in the United States (militarism, terrorism, racism [racial hatred] and ultra-nationalism). Giroux's lens considers the counter-narrative a counter-revolution through civic participation in education and agency. An example of a recent update research by Moak et al., which sees education as a solution for "youth delinquency"—which is outside the criminal justice system—through creating workspaces for young people.²⁵ In my opinion, education in a global context has seen the growth of narratives to slow down the rate of social inequality in first-world countries and the third world.²⁶ Naomi Millner sees the tension between the collective practice of curriculum decolonization (observing the history of colonialism in an observant and structured way through and in education) in tertiary institutions and the creation of the need for a sense of security in the classroom. There is discomfort not only for students, but also for teachers and school stakeholders.

He developed Giroux's (create spaces) philosophy as a resistance to oppression through scaffolding as a pedagogical ethos that embraces feeling uncomfortable.²⁷ In the same way, Jeasik Cho and Jeong-Hee Kim talk about affective knowledge in the form of (feeling) or a sense of compassion at school. Why do feelings of anger arise over the suffering of others (pro-social). Anger as compassion for the alienation, the removal of the "other." Anger as something impersonal and defensive—in this case—is an ontological-pedagogical virtue.²⁸

C. Conclusion

From the discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1. Schools are a public space for sharpening students' critical and political attitudes to create real

²⁵ Daniel S Moak and Sarah D Cate, "The Political Development of Schools as Cause and Solution to Delinquency," *Journal of Policy History* 34, no. 2 (2022): 180–212.

²⁶ Henry A Giroux, "Insurrections in the Age of Counter-Revolutions: Rethinking Cultural Politics and Political Education," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 44, no. 2 (2022): 90–120; David Peetz et al., "Control and Insecurity in Australian and Canadian Universities during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 77, no. 2 (2022).

²⁷ Naomi Millner, "Unsettling Feelings in the Classroom: Scaffolding Pedagogies of Discomfort as Part of Decolonising Human Geography in Higher Education," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2021.2004391>.

²⁸ Jeasik Cho and Jeong Hee Kim, "Compassionate Anger as a Mobilizer for Social Justice: Feelings Application in Curriculum Design," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 54, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2021.2009578>.

democracy, not pseudo-democracy in a capitalist-elitist society; Schools are seen in political language as institutions that provide important material and ideological requirements for educating a citizen in the dynamics of critical literacy and citizen courage. 2. Teachers are transformative intellectuals. This role in critical learning is critical to realizing a democratic society. 3. Teachers can act as transformative intellectuals when the school system provides autonomy and opportunities to be different, to innovate with the curriculum they develop based on multicultural knowledge.

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