Inhuman Powers and Terrible Things: The Theory and Practice of Alienated Labor in Urban Schools

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Abstract

This paper looks at how teachers in low-performing New York City schools are experiencing the labor process, using the idea of alienated labor as an explanatory lens through which to understand the problem. Section I is an extended overview of how the theory of alienation evolved through the work of Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. Section II explores some of the ways that the historical/philosophical theory informs current critical educational discourses. In this section, contemporary critical theorizing is set alongside the voices of teachers currently teaching in low performing urban schools. This theory/practice juxtaposition highlights two aspects of educational reality, reproduction theory and alienated labor, in order to reveal important contradictions in urban education policy.

Introduction

Marxist and neo-Marxist theorizing have provided education scholars with compelling theoretical frameworks with which to analyze the interrelationships of schooling and the political economy. They have applied this analysis to a number of educational problems: textbooks [1], curriculum [2], literacy [3], teaching, [4] etc. In this paper, I focus on how teachers in low-performing New York City schools are experiencing the labor process, using the idea of alienated labor as an explanatory lens through which to understand the problem. For those interested in the historical/philosophical origins of the theory, I include a somewhat extended overview of how the theory of alienation

evolved through the work of Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. Readers more interested in contemporary issues can skip to section two, where I discuss some of the ways that the historical/philosophical theory informs current critical educational discourses. In this section, I set alongside contemporary critical theorizing the voices of teachers currently teaching in low performing urban schools.

Two intentions inspire the effort to understand the current working conditions of teachers in light of this theory/practice juxtaposition. First is to underscore the idea that capitalist education is dedicated to the reproduction of a differentiated work force, disciplined to contemporary modes and needs of production, and thus to read current policies directed at poor children skeptically as serving the present and future necessity for a large reserve pool of labor for the deskilled jobs of the new 'service economy' and military service for the new imperialism. Second is to remind critical educators that capitalism is characterized by, and exists upon, alienated labor.

Teachers who work in low performing urban schools, and increasingly, in schools everywhere, experience some degree of alienation under the new standards and high stakes testing regime. It is important to examine these aspects of educational reality (reproduction and alienated labor) alongside each other, to reveal important contradictions in education as well as to strategize resolutions to the contradictions.

SECTION I.
HISTORICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES ON ALIENATION

Beginning with Hegel

Hegel's concept of alienation was a metaphysical one, proposed as a critique of the dominant theology of the time—a theology that posited an absolute separation between the earthly and the divine. Hegel, in contrast to the existing dualistic philosophy, conceived of the reconciliation of the infinite spirit (God) and the finite human spirit, and was critical of the prevailing religious consciousness that projected this possibility of reconciliation into the far-off future (a reconciliation which did not imply a 'becoming' but rather a 'being with'). Hegel proposed the concept of an Absolute Idea, or Mind, as a dynamic Self engaged in a circular process of alienation and dealienation. God (the Absolute Idea) becomes alienated from itself (externalized)

in nature, then returns from its self- alienation in the Finite Mind. In other words, human beings are the Absolute in the process of dealienation. Self-alienation and dealienation are in this way the form of being of the Absolute. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is, in essence 'the itinerary of the soul, which rises to spirit through the intermediary of consciousness.' [5] This circular process is a history of consciousness engaged in experience, a negative dialectic similar to Plato's moment of skepticism in which naive consciousness is purified. In order to understand the role of negation in this process (a determinate negation which engenders new content), one must assume that the whole is always immanent in the development of consciousness. The movement of consciousness is seen as a continual transcendence, a going-beyond-itself in which knowledge is disquieted, a disquiet that remains unassuaged as long as the end point of the process is not reached. This end point, or goal, is a point at which consciousness discovers itself, and beyond which knowledge need not go. The whole development is characterized by an immanent finality, glimpsed by the philosopher. [6]

In his *Early Theological Writings*, Hegel assaulted historical Christianity as a corruption of the original teachings of Jesus. His interpretation of these teachings was one of the self-actualization of man as a divinely perfect being, an actualization that he believed Jesus to embody. To him, Jesus did not represent God become man, but man become God. This became the key idea upon which the edifice of Hegelianism was constructed, that:

> There is no difference between the human nature and the divine. They are not two separate things with an impassable gulf between them. The absolute self in man, the homo noumenon, is not merely Godlike, as Kant would have it; it is God. Consequently, in so far as man strives to become 'like God', he is simply striving to be his own real self. And in deifying himself, he is simply recognizing his own true nature. Such recognition is preceded by 'faith' which is a middle state between non-recognition and recognition of the self as divine; it is a 'trust in one's own self'. Beyond it lies full scale recognition; when divinity has pervaded all the threads of one's consciousness, directed all one's relations with the world, and now breathes throughout one's being. [7]

Hegel perceived 'culture' and 'alienation' as kindred concepts. The first moment of development is one of immersion in nature, and is a moment that demands negation- 'the self can gain its universality only through that opposition - the alienation which is

culture.' [8] For Hegel, self can only be realized through the mediation of alienation or estrangement, a process which is not an organic, harmonious growth, but one of rediscovery through self-opposition and separation. Culture thus becomes the result of the alienation of natural 'man.' Hegel presents us with an educational moment in which the self becomes unequal to, and thus negates itself, thus gaining universality [9] —that educational moment is the moment of alienation, or estrangement. Robert Tucker neatly summarizes this process for us by the application of a well known, if oversimplified triadic formula:

> ...the given world-form or creative self-objectification of spirit is the 'thesis', the world apprehended by the knowing self as an alien and hostile object is the 'antithesis', and the world repossessed by the knowing self as a mental content is the 'synthesis'. [10]

Feuerbach's inversion of the Hegelian dialectic

Ludwig Feuerbach was associated with the group of disciples of Hegel known as the Young Hegelians, the most prominent of whom were Karl Marx, Freidrich Engels, Arnold Ruge, Bruo Bauer and Max Stirner. These young men engaged in a criticism of State and society during the reactionary period in Prussia following the July Revolution of 1830 in France. Feuerbach contributed an incisive critique of religion with *The Essence of Christianity* and subsequent writings in which he posited the notion that religion represented an inverted picture of reality, and he called for a 'religion of man in place of God.' [11] This theme dominated Feuerbach's work from the initial critique of religion through his attack on orthodox (Christian) philosophers, and finally in the inversion of Hegelian idealism, for which Marx attributed to him a general theoretical revolution. [12] Tucker claims that Feuerbach was the 'fulcrum of the movement of thought from Hegelianism to Marxism...he freed Marx's mind from its bondage to (Hegel's system)...by suggesting that it was an inverted representation of human reality, a reflection in the philosopher's mind of the existential condition of man in the natural world.' [13] Wartofsky considers Feuerbach to be much more than a transitional figure between Hegel and Marx; rather, 'an epochal figure in the history of philosophy, for the originality and fundamental character of his critique of the philosophy itself.' [14]

Hyppolite notes that 'Feuerbach preserves religion only to negate its essential elements.' [15] Indeed, he considered the critique of religion to be essential to human emancipation, for it was within religion that he believed he had found the paradigm for the process of alienation. Rather than accepting the notion of Hegel's Absolute Idea, which alienates itself as nature, then proceeds on a journey of self-discovery, transcending its alienation, Feuerbach posits an oppositional formula which takes the real, earthly human, embedded in natural forces, as a primary reality - an earthly reality that Feuerbach argues is philosophical 'in the sense that processes imputed by Hegel to spirit are actually operative in man.' [16] Religion is a primary source of alienation, according to Feuerbach, because 'man (severs) from himself those powers and capacities which were at least potentially his; he had projected them into a God or fetish. He had thus made himself a slave to one of his own creations.' [17]

Feuerbach considered alienation to be a form of intellectual error, which could be cured by an analysis of its content. In *The Essence of Christianity*, written in1841, he details the valuable attributes of humanity that have been ascribed to a Being set over and above humanity: love, understanding, mercy, compassion, justice, will and intelligence, to name but a few 'species characteristics' that have been converted into this Divine Being. [18] By projecting all of the positive qualities and potentials of the human species into the transcendent sphere and objectifying them as God, man, he argues, reduces himself to a pitiful, miserable, sinful creature. Feuerbach goes so far as to suggest that 'all of the horrors of Christianity have flowed out of faith and out of the associated doctrine that only God has dignity and man is sinful.' [19] Creation and miracles are portrayed by Feuerbach as acts of imaginative will, indifferent to causality, which provide a fantasy-gratification of man's desire to master nature and escape from causal necessity.

Feuerbach was not opposed to what he perceived as the 'essence' of religion - the longings and ethical valuations expressed in religion. He insisted that the element of alienation, of setting over and above oneself what rightly belongs to man, increases as religion reflects upon itself and acquires a theoretical base - as it becomes theology. Theology, to Feuerbach, represented the final severing of God from man, thus consummating the alienation of humankind's highest qualities from itself and depressing even further the incomplete (thus sinful) man that is left over. [20]

Feuerbach's critique of dogmatic belief was accompanied by an attack on orthodox (Christian) philosophers, whom he condemned as anthropomorphizing philosophers, bound to the finitude of sense-imagery, and unable to transcend the faculty of imagination to engage in reason. His first postdoctoral published work, *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*, was an open attack on theology in the service of a police state, and its revolutionary content put the seal on Feuerbach's hopes for either an academic or a literary career. He turned thereafter to philosophic work, most of it accomplished in rural isolation. His critique of religion served as a foundation for his critique of speculative philosophy, which he considered responsible for intensifying the alienation and abstraction begun by ordinary religion.

Some analysts consider Feuerbach a foundation stone of modern atheism. Indeed, the God of the theologians and the Being of Substance of the metaphysicians are, to Feuerbach, nothing but human consciousness of its own nature, or human self-consciousness formulated in an alienated way. However, he does not reduce humans to a conglomerate of atoms, but rather raises them up from the status of a divine reflection to the status of conscious, sensate individuals who achieve universality by their activity. He understood religion to be a stage of growth in human self-consciousness, and in this sense was neither a positivist nor an atheist, 'but an 'emergentist', for whom religion is a serious, (and dialectically necessary) expression of a certain stage of human self-understanding.' [21] This is remarkably similar to Hegel's evaluation of religious consciousness.

Feuerbach and Marx

Karl Marx 'saw in Feuerbach the anti-Hegel who had accomplished single-handedly the revolutionary overthrow of 'the system'' and considered Feuerbach to have led 'the way out of the wilderness of Hegelian Idealism to real man in the material world.' [22] But Hegelianism retained a certain truth-value for Marx as it did for Feuerbach—albeit an inverted one—and he perceived the world of Hegelian philosophical consciousness, in which spirit is alienated from itself and engaged in a process of transcendence of alienation as nothing but a mystical representation of the condition of humans in the real world, the earthly reality being man's estrangement from himself. The main subject of Marx's early work thus became the self-alienation of humans. One of the principal themes that began to emerge in his work was that 'man's

ultimate end is simply to become fully human, which he cannot be so long as he remains alienated from himself in religious fantasies of self-realization.' [23] He develops the Feuerbachian thought that religion is but a consolation for man's failure to achieve full humanity, a theme which underlies the well known and much misunderstood statement that 'Religion is the opiate of the people.'

However great Marx's debt to Feuerbach, he quickly began, true to the spirit of critical thought, to engage in criticism of his associate. In 1843, he joined with Bakunin and Ruge to plan the radical Deutsch-Franzo Sische Jahrbucher of 1844, 'in which he launched himself on the path from Feuerbach to Marxism.' [24] His disagreements with Feuerbachian thought are explicated in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, written in the spring of 1845 as he and Engels began their collaboration on *The German Ideology*. One essential difference between him and Feuerbach was the importance Marx placed on 'human sensuous activity, practice,' [25] the revolutionary transformation of existing social conditions as opposed to Feuerbach's focus on the reorientation of thinking. Feuerbach's emphasis was on 'turning inward in search of a solution for self-alienation, whereas... (Marx's focus was on)...the need to turn outward against the world.' [26] Marx demanded the radical alteration of existing life situations in state and society in order for full human nature to be realized. [27]

In the seventh thesis (on Feuerbach), Marx accused Feuerbach of a failure to see that 'religious temperament itself is a social product and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs to a particular form of society.' [28] Within this thesis lies one of Marx's primary criticisms of Feuerbach's thinking--that as concrete and naturalized as Feuerbach's conception of man is, it lacks the historical, social and developmental categories that would concretize the notion of 'species-being' (a concept that will be elaborated later in this paper). This criticism leads Marx to the position, enunciated in the eighth thesis, that 'all social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which urge theory into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice' [29] Marx believed that 'there is no way of ending alienation short of revolutionizing the world in which man finds himself existing in an inhuman condition.' [30] As he states in his eleventh thesis, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world differently, the point is, to change it.' [31] Marx conceived of religion as the theoretical form of alienation, but recognized the many diverse

practical forms of alienation present in every single sphere of human activity--the state, the law, the family, morality, and not least of all, economic life. Thus he enlarged and extended the concept of human alienation, providing a sociological frame of reference, and began a life-long critique of existing political, economic and social conditions.

With the inversion of the Hegelian dialectic brought about by Feuerbach's revision, humans, rather than an abstract Absolute Spirit become the central subject of the historical process. With this inversion, the 'abstract, universal subject is recognized as an alienation itself.' [32] This reform of the Hegelian dialectic and the re-evaluation and discussion of the problems at the root of Hegel's philosophy informed the foundation of Marx's emerging economic/political theory as developed in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. Contained within these manuscripts is both a critique that reveals the inadequacies and mistakes of the existing political economy and the basis and justification for the transformation of these conditions. In it, Marx develops the science of the necessary conditions for the communist revolution, a revolution that signified not just a realignment of economic factors, but the

> ...positive abolition...of human self-alienation...the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man...the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. [33]

The potential reconciliation of contradictions implied in the above quote indicates that Marx was committed to the conception of a logically prior, universal alienation from which minor empirical alienations derive. It is around this broad generic sense of alienation as a logical concept that much of the confusion about Marx's thinking centers. Part of the problem stems from the residual Hegelianism contained in the manuscripts. According to Gregor, Marx here uses the concept of alienation to identify 'the necessary process by which man objectifies himself as a species-being and thereby creates his world...' [34] The result of this human sensuous activity is spoken of a 'private property' but in a broad, undifferentiated sense, not in the narrow sense of political economy. He can thus state that though private property appears to be the cause of alienated labor, it is really the consequence (when alienation is

conceived in its ontological sense). At this point in his thinking, Marx conceived of human sensuous activity as having the same developmental and dialectical character attributed to the Absolute Spirit by Hegel. To some critics the idea of self-alienation is untenable because it implies a fixed and unchangeable human essence or nature. But Marx conceived of alienation, not from an 'ideal' but from historically created human possibilities and humanity's own capacity for freedom and creativity. [35]

Marx utilizes both a biological and an historical model to define human nature. Within the biological model people are distinguished from the animals by their intellect, emotion and will, their ability to reflect upon themselves and their environment, and to consciously create and produce. [36] The key words that express this biological conception of humanity are 'powers' and 'needs.' 'Natural' powers and needs are those s/he shares with other living beings. 'Species' powers and needs are those that humans alone possess, that set them apart as a 'species-being' (a phrase coined from Feuerbach). Powers exist in humans as faculties, abilities, functions, and capacities, and distinctive needs are created at different stages of history. As a 'species-being', man has an awareness of his individuality, a self-consciousness. [37] In addition to this general theory of human nature based on the biological model, Marx introduced the notion of specific, historical criteria that determine not immutable, but changeable characteristics. Most misinterpretations of Marx's theory of human nature are probably due to a failure to distinguish between the two components of human nature, the biological and the historical. [38]

Marx consciously avoids speculation as to initial causes, dismissing the question of creation as a product of abstract speculation. For him, nature and humans exist on their own account, the result of spontaneous generation, and for Marx, all history begins 'with the social activity of natural man; everything begins to exist for man at the moment when his natural being (i.e. powers) begin to work on and in nature in order to satisfy his natural human needs.' [39] It is characteristic of natural powers to seek fulfillment in external objects, hence the relations between needs and powers. Man feels 'impulses' (needs), his abilities enable him to realize his powers, which satisfy needs, and his 'tendencies' direct this realization toward certain goals.

In his early writing, Marx reminds us that individuals stand in interaction with each other, but it is in *The Grundrisse* that he postulates that human interaction is

qualitatively different from that of the animals. The proof of this difference, for him, is that humans are capable of producing objects that can satisfy other's needs, thus reaching beyond their own individual needs. As further evidence of the social nature of man, he writes:

> If man is confronted by himself, he is confronted by the other man...in fact, every relationship in which man (stands) to himself, is realized and expressed only in the relationship in which man stands to other men. [40]

Walliman suggests that the biological model and the historical model, while mutually exclusive, are not irreconcilable but complementary. While the biological model determines those characteristics that distinguish man from the animals, and thus defines human nature, the historical model alone can explain differences in human behavior (human 'nature') over time.

Alienated Labor

There is considerable discrepancy in the use of the related terms, *alienation* and *estrangement* by both Marx and his many translators. Walliman presents evidence based on careful linguistic analysis to show that while *entausserung* is used predominately to describe 'any situation which somebody divests himself of something, be it property in the form of a thing, land, or one's own labor power,' and is predominately translated as *alienation*, the word *entfremdung* (estrangement) appears to designate a particular, stronger form of alienation, in which the previous owner of a thing is affected in a way which is beyond his control. [41]

Work, in Marx's view, is the essence of human life, the process by which humans create the world and thus create themselves. Any productive activity thus constitutes a generalized type of alienation, or externalization. With the involuntary division of labor and the advent of private property, labor loses the characteristic of being expressive of humans' unique powers and assumes 'an existence separate from man, his will and his planning.' [42] *Alienation* thus becomes *estrangement* when people cease to exercise direction over their own productive activity. The object produced under coercion (for under the system of capitalist relations, most people have no choice but to 'work for a living') becomes 'an alien being, a power independent of the producer.' [43] Labor becomes embodied in an object, a physical thing, and this

product thus becomes an *objectification* of labor. Just as Feuerbach thought that human beings diminish in relation to what they attribute to God, Marx contends that humans diminish in relation to the life they pour into the creation of such objects.

Thus work becomes extraneous to the worker's true desires and does not fulfill, but denies a person's innermost needs. In this way, people are prevented from fully developing their mental and physical powers**,** and the relations between a worker's activity and her powers remain at a low level of achievement. When people create objects under conditions of estranged labor, objects take on a certain power by distorting the normal relations between a person and his or her objects: the worker must adjust to the demands of the product and the mode of production (re: the need to match the worker's rhythm to that of the machine in factory work, or the need for the teacher to stick to the script or teach to the test).

So, the concept of alienated labor has two main components: the relation of the worker to the activity itself and the relation to the object created, or the product. Alienation to the activity occurs because of the contradiction between a person's free, reflective, autonomous nature and the exploitation of her labor and powers by an alien force outside herself:

> Alienation is apparent not only in the fact that my means of life belong to someone else, that my desires are the unattainable possession of someone else, but that everything is something different from itself, that my activity is something else, and finally (and this is also the case for the capitalist) that an inhuman power rules over everything. [44]

Labor ' life activity ' now becomes only a means for a satisfaction of a need, the need to maintain physical existence, not the central meaning-making activity of life. Marx considered it an essential aspect of human nature to reproduce itself by appropriating external nature and expressing itself in the creation of real, sensuous objects. This 'objectification' is a pre-condition for the self-conscious development of people. The conflict occurs when people relinquish the object as part of his or her essence, allow it to become independent and overpowering, a possibility that becomes a reality under conditions of estranged labor and private property. [45]

Though some Marxist analysts maintain that the concept of alienation and estrangement disappeared in Marx's later work, to be replaced by such concepts as

reification [46] or by terms such as private property, class domination, exploitation, and division of labor, [47] others, such as Fromm, contend that the concept remained the focal point in the thinking of both the 'young' Marx who write the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and the 'old' Marx who wrote *Capital.* [48] Becker believes that while not abandoning the concept, Marx shifted ground from the ideal to the possible. [49] The assertion that Marx abandoned the concepts in his later work is weak on at least two counts, according to Walliman. [50] First, although a certain vocabulary distinguished these ideas in his early work, Marx's theory of estrangement is derived from his definition of human nature, a definition that remains consistent in both his early and his later work. Secondly, in response to those who maintain that Marx abandoned the terms 'alienation' and 'estrangement', Mézáros shows that he actually continued to make use of the terms in his later writings, though not as frequently as in the *Manuscripts. [51]*

SECTION II.
ALIENATED LABOR IN CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL DISCOURSES OF SCHOOLING

> Educators at the public school levels are under massive assault in this country. Not only are they increasingly losing their autonomy and capacity for imaginative teaching, they increasingly bear the burden, especially in the urban centers, of overcrowded classes, limited resources, and hostile legislators. [52]

Although Marx's theory of alienated labor was conceived at a time when 'labor' was analogous to 'factory work,' contemporary critical scholars have applied the major concepts to aspects of the work of teaching. In this section, I note some of the major themes in this work by highlighting the voices of the teachers in an urban teacher preparation graduate program, focusing specifically on the contradiction presented by policies supposedly designed to promote social equity for students, which have, in effect, produced a condition of alienated labor for the teachers who work with them daily. Here I draw upon Bottomore's notion of an 'historical (or temporal) dialectical contradiction'; that is, a situation in which forces of non-independent origins operate in such a way so that one force (A) tends to produce or is itself the product of conditions which simultaneously or subsequently produce a countervailing force (B), tending to frustrate, annul, subvert, or transform A. [53] In this case, for example, I consider the implementation of a highly structured, rigidly controlled curriculum

(ostensibly applied to mitigate the achievement gap between poor, mostly students of color and their more white middle class counterparts) as one force, alongside the deskilling of their teachers, many of whom are themselves people of color from the working classes, and pose the possibility that these forces countervail, or cancel each other out. In other words, if the stated social goal of an educational initiative is greater equality, but one of the major components of the program entails the deskilling of teachers, creating a teaching force engaged in alienated labor, is this progress? Or do the effects neutralize the ostensible intention?

In this section, I turn from the theoretical/historical dimensions of the concept of alienation to practical/concrete contemporary manifestations, highlighting six concepts (deskilling, proletarianization, objectification, intensification, reification, and resistance) drawn from my understanding of Marx's theory of alienated labor and from neo-Marxist work that emerged from the theory, that seem linked to how teachers talk about their labor in interviews, and in their reading journals and critical papers written for graduate classes. The concepts are not discrete; in fact they overlap and interpenetrate. In this analysis, I rely not on some authentic state of 'being' from which teachers feel universally alienated. This is a philosophical problem of some magnitude that thinkers have wrestled with for centuries (re: Rousseau's effort to describe a 'natural man' in an unalienated state). Rather, I will keep with Marx's notion of alienation as not from an 'ideal' but from historically created human possibilities and humanity's own capacity for freedom and creativity. In these terms, the very concrete problem is that low income and minority children are being taught by teachers who work under oppressive conditions, subject to a tyrannical management paradigm that stifles their professional growth and thus undermines genuine and long lasting improvement of their schools. [54] So, for the purposes of this paper, I want to conceptualize 'de-alienation' as a moving horizon defined by continuous intellectual growth, the refinement of craft, the integration of conception and execution, enhanced creativity, and consistent use of and improvement in the quality of professional judgments. I will address this further in the conclusion.

The teachers whose voices appear in this section are all graduate students in an urban teacher preparation program. They mostly live and teach in the surrounding Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Bushwick, Flatbush, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New

York, Crown Heights, Sunset Park and Brighton Beach. Eighty percent of the students in the program are people of color, fifty one percent of African descent, eighty-two percent are women, virtually all are working class, and many are recent immigrants from the Caribbean, Russia, China, Korea, South America and elsewhere. Many are bidialectal and/or bilingual. Eighty five percent of the program's graduate students are uncertified teachers working in city schools. The program has been designed to capitalize on the cultural and linguistic strengths the students bring with them to the task of teaching in urban environments.

In their program, these students are encouraged to be systematically reflective about their teaching, to innovate in their classrooms based on ideas of best practice and student and teacher interests, and to carefully document student work and their own teaching practice. There are strong threads of critical pedagogy, social justice, the valuing of difference, and educating for democracy running through all of their courses. Many of the students suffer tremendous internal and external conflict between a teacher preparation program dedicated to the development of wise judgment, reflection, and autonomy, and work situations in which they are expected to refrain from exercising judgment, in which they have virtually no time for reflection, and in which they seemingly are expected to function as automatons. It was in listening to their stories that I began to revisit this notion of alienated labor.

In New York City, a massive restructuring is taking place that has effectively centralized administrative control over city education and standardized much of the curriculum, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics. Possibly not since the unification of all New York City schools under one administrative roof in the early years of the twentieth century, resulting in what Tyack called 'the one best system,' [55] has such a massive restructuring taken place. The issues today are very similar to the issues of that time: city schools are filled with large numbers of poor children, immigrant children, children who do not yet speak English, and now, children of color, in contrast to the largely Catholic Irish and southern European immigrants of the last century. Policy changes include the reconstruction of the Department of Education's management structure into a unified, streamlined system, the adoption of a single, coherent system-wide approach for instruction in reading, writing and math, and the creation of 'parent engagement boards' to replace democratically elected

community school boards. Two hundred top scoring schools have been exempted from the standardized curriculum. Reasons given for the changes are the continued low performance of city schoolchildren on standardized tests, and related to this, the problem of high mobility of children who live in poverty, including well over 16,000 homeless children in New York City. There is a high turnover rate of teachers in low performing schools, as well as many new teachers working without credentials or teaching out of their area of certification. More rigorous top down controls on curriculum and teaching are intended to solve these problems.

In this current iteration of school reform, in New York City as elsewhere, the principle of 'accountability' is the preferred weapon in the arsenal of the conservative educational restoration. Testing, particularly, is the mechanism of accountability; it is the means by which we ensure that teachers are performing their teaching function properly, that administrators are performing their supervisory functions properly, and that students are complying with the curricular expectations of the state. Accountability, says David Gabbard, 'implies hierarchical institutional structures and a certain economy of power requisite to the maintenance and vitality of those structures.' [56] The pressure to improve test scores ripples throughout the system, and in this paper I examine some of the results of this on teachers' professional lives. The accountability discourse has a Janus-like nature: [57] while elite voices speak from one face about fixing failing schools, providing equity and access, raising the standards for all, and leaving no child behind, the muted voice of the hidden face reminds us that it is the nature of the modern administrative state to disperse power (accountability) 'in accordance with a mode of rationality which dictates that any such dispersal must ultimately result in a strengthening of that power.' [58] A Marxist analysis, therefore, requires that we examine the hidden face of Janus, the ways in which contemporary reform efforts, while couched in language of equity, liberty, and excellence, may, in fact, result in the consolidation of state power and the perpetuation of the status quo (a two-tiered system of education, split along predictable class and color lines).

Deskilling

Deskilling is, in simple terms, the separation of conception from execution, and is internally related to the all of other concepts that follow. 'Skilled' labor is analogous to

the work of the pre-industrial craftsperson who creatively conceived of the design and form of his or her work and carried out the project from start to finish, in contrast to the modern mass production laborer, who neither conceives of nor designs the product that they labor to produce, and who only performs a fragment of the production process. While teachers are not factory workers, some scholars have drawn analogies between the 'technique' of the artisan, the factory worker, and the teacher, pointing out the ways that the work of teaching, as it becomes less an art and more a technical process, comes to resemble mass production. Michael Apple has written extensively about the deskilling of teachers, noting that teachers have been

> more and more faced with the prospect of being deskilled because of the
> encroachment of technical control procedures into the curriculum in schools. The
> integration together of management systems, reductive behaviorally based
> curricula, pre-specified teaching 'competencies' and procedures and student
> responses, and pre and post testing, (leads) to a loss of control and a separation
> of conception from execution. [59]

Patrick Shannon has applied this analysis to reading programs throughout the United States, demonstrating the ways in which reading 'experts' and basal textbook publishers have assumed the function of the conception of reading instruction, while instructional guidebooks, with their prepared scripts, worksheets, and tests have 'stripped teachers of the skills of their craft.' [60] And this 'legislated learning *makes teachers more accountable to the state than ever before*', (emphasis mine) as 'new state initiatives attempt to standardize the goals, monitor student progress closely, and regulate teaching methods.' [61]

N. is a new, and very skilled kindergarten teacher who is in our literacy graduate program. She describes her work in terms of this deskilling:

> 'the superintendent of my district took the reading curriculum that we use, and
> she devised her own lesson plans on the ways we should teach, what we should
> say, how we should have our charts printed, how they should be hanging in the
> room, and what the children should know if she should come and question them.
> The superintendent … said we must do it the way she scripted it in two folders
> that she gave us. They go right down to what we should say to introduce the
> follow up, what the follow up should be, and what the children should be
> assessed on once it's the end of the week.

The requirement to 'have the charts in the right place' and to use the correct color of markers highlighting the 'To Do' for the day is pervasive, indicating the degree to which teachers are not even trusted to perform the most mundane classroom tasks without specific guidelines. Teachers can no longer even exercise the 'skill' of deciding how to make educational charts. Deskilling, says Barry Kanpol,

> is at its peak when teachers are denied or have much less autonomy and less control over the teaching process than they think they have. By making teachers accountable for state-mandated curriculum (such as basal reading materials) and by promoting competency-based education, system management, and employing rigid and dehumanizing forms of evaluation along with numerical rating scales, teachers are controlled and simply march to the tune of the state. [62]

Deskilling is not merely a professional issue, then, it is a political issue, as it is employed not just to control the labor of teachers, but also to ensure conformity of student thinking. Scripted teaching is just what it sounds like: there is a script that teachers are expected to not deviate from, there are prescribed student responses, predetermined 'prompts' to get students to answer correctly, and no opportunities or support for divergent, lateral, connected, or critical thinking. The 'teacher-proof curriculum' serves the interests of those who would control the flow of information, limit access to ideas, structure the forms of acceptable thinking, and shape the consciousness of a generation.

Proletarianization

Proletarianization is the movement of sections of the middle class labor force into the working class by nature of the character of their labor. If class is defined by one's relation to the processes of production, then teachers occupy a somewhat ambiguous class position. Most consider themselves professionals, and indeed their level of schooling signifies professional status. At the same time, they are supervised by managers, suggesting that their labor belongs more in the 'working class' category. I suggest here that the class status of teachers cannot be generalized, depending as it does on variables such as the state in which they teach, the leadership in their district and school, their experience and their credentials. However, for the teachers I work with, most of whom are teachers of color in low performing city schools, hierarchically structured command and control systems characterize their labor, and their working conditions are characterized by increasing loss of control over the labor

process and a extraordinary lack of autonomy. A distinct class of managers, including supervisors, superintendents, principals, staff developers, and trainers, oversees a class of teacher/workers, creating a sort of class warfare involving surveillance, threat, punishment, and public shaming:

> 'we are told time and time again you must be doing this, you must be doing it. And I don't know of anyone who's experienced the consequences, but they say you get a letter in your file. They just simply say, you must be doing it … so, to some degree, you get singled out in staff development when you are not doing it correctly. Where you could almost tell which teacher they are talking about. Like they'll say 'well I went in this second grade teacher's room.' They'll make it where you could pretty much decide, as professionals, who they are talking about. So you get called out in professional development if you are not doing it, and you get threatened that you will get a letter in your file if you vary from the curriculum (Interview with E., 4th grade teacher in East Harlem).

Shannon notes the ways in which administrators 'seem content to let the basal publishers choose the goals, methods, and assessment for reading instruction, focusing their efforts on *managing* teachers' use of the chosen materials in order to render it more effective and efficient in raising students' test scores.' [63] In this way, the managerial/supervisory class become *enforcers*, ensuring that teachers stick to the script and march in tune to the curriculum drum. From the perspective of estranged labor, teachers working under conditions of surveillance and threat are prevented from fully developing their mental and physical powers, and the relations between a worker's activity and her powers remain at a low level of achievement.

Objectification

Objectification is the idea that under conditions of alienated labor, there is estrangement from the object created, or the product. The notion of students as products has a long and unsavory history in education, dating back at least to the oft-cited words of Elwood Cubberly:

> Our schools are in a sense, factories in which the raw materials are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of the twentieth century civilization, and it is the business of the school to build its pupils to the specifications laid down. This demands good tools, specialized machinery, continuous measurement of production. [64]

What is the product in the teaching/learning relationship? The student? Knowledge? Student products ' writing, artwork, worksheets, tests? Under conditions of alienated labor the 'product' is a constellation of all of these things, but most important now is the ubiquitous test score. Teachers and schools increasingly are expected to produce ever-higher test scores, and their labor in this regard is reminiscent of the assembly line (ask any fourth grade teacher preparing for the ELA [65]). When test scores are the primary indicator of successful teaching, as is true now for many city teachers, students become objects to be manipulated within a narrow set of regulatory processes. Teachers are prohibited from responding authentically to the full humanness of their students. Student work becomes an 'alien object' produced under coercion; unconnected to desire or genuine need it is 'an alien being, a power independent of the producer.' [66] One teacher (L.) writes in her reading journal:

> We are considered a low performing school because our children don't reach the standards that were written for them by people outside the classroom … people who do not know our children write these standards; they do not know their needs 'we, as teachers, are handed a list of things that we have to teach to children and time limits to teach it. They give us this information without even taking into consideration what prior knowledge the students have or what topics they are interested in—something needs to change to help these children succeed.

L. clearly understands that if 'work' is not related to what students already know or to topics that they have some interest in, teaching and learning will not be effective—and these students will not succeed. Teaching is, at its most basic level, about relationship. Warmth, connection, and caring are essential to the endeavor. When teachers are under duress to make their students 'perform', when one's career is on the line with student test scores the deciding factor of success, the teaching and learning relationship is reduced to one of coercion. Students and their thinking become objects to be manipulated towards predetermined ends.

Intensification

Intensification, or acceleration of labor, occurs when the pace and timing of labor processes are speeded up to accommodate new production demands. Because schools are not factories, nor are they profit-making enterprises with balance sheets of gain and loss, one would think, as Shannon suggests, that they 'should have escaped the

logic of production which seeks to increase profit margins by manipulating variables in the productive process'to keep expenses at a minimum and productivity high.' [67] But schools are dependent upon taxpayers for their operating funds, and these taxpayers, living as they do in an increasingly *commodified* society, expect a reasonable return on their investment. Because test scores are an efficient, if not particularly meaningful, measure of student learning, 'these scores become the equivalent of the profit and loss statements in business ledgers.' [68] In this way, pressure flows downward in the educational hierarchy, subjecting instruction to the same logic of production as the assembly line. The intensification of labor oriented toward increased production (higher test scores) is even felt in the early elementary grades. In E.'s first grade classroom in East Harlem, there is no more 'constructive playtime,' no blocks, no clay, no music, no painting, and no recess:

> They go to lunch then they get to go outside and run around for 15 minutes and that is it. And they are lucky if they get that. And they just run' there's no supervised play, no equipment, there's nothing, it's just a big asphalt yard that they run around in' they work really hard during the day. It just feels like they are in the military sometimes, it's one thing after the other and it's just work, work, work.

One must ask, what is the cost of this intensification? Perhaps test scores will rise. Or perhaps this is a vivid example of Jean Anyon's thesis concerning the social stratification of school experience. [69] Are these children being prepared, even in the first grade, for a life of mundane, repetitious labor or for service on the front lines of the military, like so many of their brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and cousins? This denial of the most basic needs of young children for music, art, play, hands-on experiences, and fresh air would certainly not be tolerated just a few blocks south in Manhattan's best schools. Even in N's kindergarten classroom, the mode of production (instruction aimed at higher test scores) is shaping the consciousness of very young children:

> Friday is test day for kindergartners through fifth grade we are told that the problem in the school is that they don't test well, they need to get used to being timed, so we were told to start timing these tests we give to kindergartners on Fridays. Well for a long time I disagreed, I didn't buy the timer. I was doing the test but I didn't buy the timer. The teacher trainer noticed that I never bought the timer, and she told me you have to buy the timer, and I must start timing my children on Friday test day.

> I just want to go back to what's becoming of them from all this testing … they are becoming very competitive at the age of five. My children understand the difference between getting seventy and one hundred on a test, to the point where they are laughing at the kids who get sixty and seventy. They already have the mindset that 'that's bad, you got a seventy and I got a hundred.' Getting competitive is not where I think kindergarten learning should be.

A memo was recently circulated to this teacher, suggesting that she devise tests for her kindergartners in which they would fill in the bubbles in a multiple-choice format. Schooling in capitalist America, at least in capitalist inner city New York, appears designed to cultivate cutthroat competition at the tender age of five, and to foster competitive individualism as opposed to social solidarity. And though teachers may resist in small ways (not buying the timer on time), they face retribution for not following orders.

Reification

Reification is a special form of alienation, signifying the process by which human relations, actions and characteristics take on the characteristics of *things*, which then become independent and come to govern human life. *Curriculum* is a profoundly human endeavor ' it is the deeply felt transaction between, as Dewey put it, the *knower* and the *known*. The teacher, in the school setting, acts as mediator in this transaction, as she (under favorable conditions) comes to know the child, discerns his or her interests and needs, critically assesses the state of the world to decide what's worth knowing, and then guides the child toward more complex thinking and organized forms of knowledge. When the curriculum comes from outside of the learning exchange, in the form of textbooks or scripts, essential characteristics of the transaction are eliminated. The curriculum is not connected to student needs or interests, it therefore lacks meaning, it is only 'developmentally appropriate' in the most rudimentary and universal terms, what's worth knowing is decided by bureaucrats or textbook editors, none of whom have any knowledge of the specific circumstances of the students' lives, and perhaps most egregious, the curriculum lacks internal coherence, so that nothing in the script connects to anything else, but rather presents information in a fragmented, reductive way.

T. teaches third grade in a low-performing school and works under a strict mandate not to deviate from a timed script that allows 20 minutes for 'Read-aloud' and

'accountable talk.' The text that he was reading to his class was 'Terrible Things' by Eve Bunting, an allegory of the Holocaust. In the book, the animals of the forest are carried away, one type after another, by the Terrible Things. The message of the book is that it is important to stand up for what you believe in, to not look the other way in the face of oppression and threat, and to stick together. T. writes:

> As the children finished putting away their coats and came to the rug, I assigned partners. I then asked them to think about terrible things that had happened to them, or happened to others. As the children first started talking in pairs, I overheard T. say to K. 'Like Martin Luther King being shot.' J. said 'When Rosa Parks was arrested.' When we started to share with the whole group, I decided to have my note pad to jot down what was being said. This was partially to keep track of who was speaking to be sure all were getting a chance to participate. I also wanted to record some of the specific comments of the students.

> After recounting some of the historical events related to what had been covered in Black History month (slavery, segregation, assassinations, etc), the students began to recount some of their personal 'terrible things.' A. spoke about when her mother was pregnant with her baby sister and she saw her fall down the stairs and break her arm. She had to call the ambulance. K. mentioned his great grandfather being hit by a car. S. told of playing with her grandpa who had asthma. When he stumbled and fell, S. thought he was just playing with her as he lay motionless on the ground. She soon realized that he had died and she had to run for her mother. T. mentioned his uncle who was shot 'for no reason' standing on a street corner. R. remembered running into a pole when he was riding his bike and hurting his head badly. Five other students all mentioned grandparents or uncles who had died.

This reading and conversation went well over the mandated 20 minutes, to fill 45 minutes of the morning. The children, totally engaged in this lesson, then wrote responses to the book, connecting some of their own experiences to the text, or imagining what they would do if they were a character in the story. If a supervisor had walked in on this morning's lesson, T. would have been 'written up' for not sticking to the timed script. I will leave it to the reader to judge the merits of the experience, in terms of learning that might actually make a difference in the lives of children.

Under conditions of reification, the curriculum becomes a *thing,* it behaves according to the logic of the *thing-world*, and most important, *it transforms both teacher and student into beings who behave in accordance with the logic of the thing-world.* And what about rich, deeply meaningful dialogues and connection-making that must be cut short in the interest of the timed script? How many teachers, when they do present

new and worthy knowledge, are asked 'will this be on the test?' What about N.'s kindergartners, who already judge the worth of their classmates by their Friday test scores? These students have become governed by the logic of the dead curriculum, the curriculum that is devoid of life energy, and they know, in the end, what must be done to survive in their high-stakes, Darwinian world. This, I believe, is a Terrible Thing.

Resistance

Resistance theory, articulated most explicitly by Paul Willis in his study of white working class youth, [70] is a neo-Marxist theory that challenges the determinism of the base/superstructure model in Marxist reproduction theory. Resistance, according to Kanpol,

> involves the conscious and unconscious attempt by anyone (but for our case, particularly teachers and students) to challenge the dominant and/or hegemonic values in our society …critical theorists look at resistance as possible acts of social and cultural transformation … resistance entails acts that counter the oppressive race, class, and gender stereotypes as well as challenges to other dominant structural values such as individualism, rampant competition, success-only orientations, and authoritarianism. [71]

Thankfully, I could cite numerous instances of resistance as the teachers in our program attempt, against the odds, to work in ways that are caring, critical, and just. From these, I chose the following, because I particularly liked the embedded metaphor of the skydiver. Z., a 6th grade teacher who claims multiple identities (Puerto Rican of African descent, religious Muslim), who has been teaching for four years in a low performing school in Harlem, works within a strictly articulated set of guidelines and under pressure to raise test scores. She talks, in an interview, about the ways that she subverts the system when she feels that her (predominately African-American) students would benefit from diverging from the script:

> We were reading about a woman who ran away from her husband because he was beating her and we were doing what's called a 'Touchstones' discussion and a student said 'the woman had to be white' and I said 'why would you say that?' And she said 'well, because she kept going towards the danger as opposed to …like throughout her trials while she was running away she ran into these different obstacles and as opposed to just fleeing from them she tried to stay and resolve them.' Well, the child took that and not fully understanding what the moral of the story was, which was perseverance; she said 'whenever I watch scary movies, the white woman is always staying to see what's happening instead

of running away.' This turned into a little bit of a discussion about what white people do versus what black people do. And I said 'There's nothing that a white person can do that a black person can't do.' She said 'of course …black people don't skydive.' Everyone was like … yeh, black people don't skydive" as though it were a FACT'as though everyone knows that (emphasis hers).

Z. made a point of seeking out someone in her community who had been skydiving. Fortunately, the custodian had been skydiving recently and had videotaped it, which Z. was able to bring into her class and show her students. She felt that it was important enough, in working with these children, to transform their sense of possibilities, even if it meant sacrificing drill time for the upcoming tests:

> A lot of times, I feel like those things are so important that I'd rather just get in trouble about being off schedule than not provide them with the experience. It's unfortunate that that's the choice I have to make.

This was a small act of resistance, a pedagogical act that challenged the internalized race stereotypes of a group of children. It is acts like these, however, multiplied by thousands in classrooms across the country, that could inhibit the totalizing effect of capitalist (and racist) hegemonic structures and consciousness.

I want to close this section by highlighting one important theme that keeps surfacing in the experiences of these teachers, which is related to the Marxist concept of **bureaucratism**, or **bureaucratization**, and that is the theme of *compliance*. In many cases, supervisors and managers exhibit much less concern about the actual *content* of what is going on in classrooms than they do about whether *procedures* are being followed. One teacher noted that the supervisors check to see that the charts are hanging in the right place, but do not take note of whether they have been changed from September through March. S. discusses what the role of teacher feels like, and what she senses is valued by her managers:

> I often feel that they think if your classroom is quiet the children are learning. If they stand in line and they can't be heard in the hallway, then you're a wonderful teacher. Classroom management is key ' it's a statement I've heard over and over again. Because of that, what happens is as long as your class is well behaved and your room is pretty and you have all the rubrics up and everything that is supposed to be up is up, they really don't bother you as much. Because of that you will be able to have more freedom'

Play by the bureaucratic rules, don't make waves, make sure the rubrics are posted, ensure compliance. Then perhaps, just perhaps, you can close the door and teach in accordance with your principles.

CONCLUSION

Marxist theories of education took shape in the United States with the publication of Bowles and Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America*, [72] which developed the argument that schools in a capitalist society reproduced the skills, forms of knowledge, and differentiated status necessary to the existing labor hierarchy in the society. Critical of the determinism of this work, scholars such as Michael Apple, Paul Willis, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren developed the ideas of human agency (the idea that a simplistic base/superstructure model failed to account for human will and desire) and resistance (the idea that teachers and students, working critically together, could resist oppressive educational and social policies and practices), successfully demonstrating that the reproductive tendencies in education are never complete and are subject to conflict and transformation. Unfortunately, Marxist and neo-Marxist theorizing has had relatively little impact on the nature of contemporary schooling, due to a number of factors: the inaccessible language of the major theorists, the primary location of the organizing ideas in universities and academic journals (with notable exceptions, such as the work of the *Rouge Forum*, [73] and teacher-oriented journals such as *Radical Teacher* and *Rethinking Schools*), the increasing bureaucratization and standardization of the curriculum through the standards and high stakes testing initiatives, the inherent conservatism of the institution of schooling, and perhaps most important, the totalizing effects of capitalist mentality permeating the various structures and institutions of society. It will take a great deal of imagination, commitment, and savvy strategizing for critical discourses to make an impact on contemporary schooling.

One site for struggle is university teacher preparation programs such as the one I have described in this paper that support the development of conscientization, [74] defined for this purpose as the awareness of one's position in the Master/Slave relationship and a sense of the possibilities for overcoming, or transcending that relationship. A dialectical approach to teacher conscientization must start with given conditions, a clear understanding of one's alienation ' a *thesis*. Then it must present a vision of

possibility ' the possibility that education does not need to be oppressive, stifling, competitive, and demoralizing for both teachers and students. Teachers and students need to understand that education could be (indeed, has been, at moments) dedicated to, and characterized by creativity, care, social justice, equity, and critical awareness of the world ' an *anti-thesis*. A dialectical form of teacher education, based on Marx's historically grounded idea of species-being, would be dedicated to the development of human powers, creative expression, and a complementary mix of autonomy and solidarity ' a *synthesis*. While Hegel assigned this reflective activity to Absolute Spirit, operating in and through human beings, and Feuerbach assigned it to critical/cognitive transformations of consciousness, Marx assigns the development of human creative powers to humans themselves, fulfilling their needs through their labor processes. Reflective teaching, informed by both imagination and critique, could form the conceptual basis of such a dialectical form of practice. Through the development of sophisticated forms of inquiry, teachers can develop their capacities for informed judgments in the context of the uncertain and complex environments of classrooms. With the confidence of judgment that comes with the ability to gather data through careful observation, assess consequences, and make decisions based on evidence as well as the research literature, teachers can assume the moral authority to challenge and resist what is not in the best interests of their students. [75] One teacher, writing in her reading journal, expresses such emergent critical consciousness about scripted teaching:

> I have heard many inexperienced teachers express gratitude for the structure provided by these carefully scripted lessons, finding them time savers, useful and supportive. The sad reality, however, is that these materials are often not used as guides or suggestions, but as gospel, to be followed by rote and without deviation. Under such a system, *both* the teacher and the child become objects upon which the 'system' works its magic …such an approach serves to clearly mark the lines of authority …such an approach discourages students from developing and exercising the critical skills needed to participate fully in a democratic society …students participated more, and more energetically, when their views and answers were validated and discussed, even when (perhaps especially when) those views are 'against the grain.' The central issue, though, then becomes how do we, as teachers, work effectively within 'the system' when it appears that the system's goals and purposes are *diametrically opposed* to enabling the students to develop those essential 'critical skills?'

The problems of city schools are enormous. Given such conditions as high poverty, the mobility of students due to the economic instability of their families, under-prepared teachers and high teacher turnover, the efforts to standardize, centralize, and supervise the curriculum are understandable (if misguided). Test scores, however, are not the only important outcomes of schooling. Teachers are primary role models for children, and the working conditions and social relations of the school constitute an important part of the hidden curriculum. If the intention is to relegate poor students of color to the margins of the economy, in which they will be expected to carry out menial, low skilled, alienated labor, then their teachers are performing important roles as models of such labor. If, however, the desired outcome is really to close the achievement gap, and educate all students for active participation in a democracy as well as meaningful roles in the work force, then it is counterproductive to create conditions of alienated labor for their teachers. It presents an untenable 'dialectical contradiction.' What would be a more fruitful model would be to prepare teachers to be free-thinking intellectuals, models of critical thought, creatively engaged and caring individuals who are responsive to student interests, and whose full cognitive and affective powers were evident in the quality of their professional judgments. Then, perhaps, just perhaps, we could find other jobs for the curriculum police.

The recognition, however, that the 'system' may be diametrically opposed to the development of students' intellectual powers suggests that more than individual efforts and better preparation of teachers will be needed to change the existing situation. There are many current structures, policies, and initiatives that are calculated to divert teachers from their common interests: union-bashing, merit pay schemes (some of these based on students' test scores), lack of time for shared planning, competition for scarce resources, and the privatization of education, to name just a few. If teachers are going to regain some measure of control over their labor, they are going to have to mobilize and organize their energies and their efforts to resist the latest incursions upon their profession. As well, they will need to understand that the problems of schools cannot easily be separated from larger social issues of poverty, inequality, and injustice. In order to truly transform schools, and thus transform the conditions under which they labor, teachers will have to join with other activists and intellectuals in broader movements for economic and social justice, and work collectively for

democratic, 'dealienated' workplaces. Only then might they prevail over the Inhuman Powers and the Terrible Things.

Notes

[1] See Michael W. Apple, Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul,1986).

[2] See William B. Stanley, Curriculum for Utopia: Social Reconstructionism and Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Era (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).

[3] Patrick Shannon, *Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1989).

[4] Barry Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* (Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1994).

[5] Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 11.

[6] Ibid., 17.

[7] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 226.

[8] Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit,* 385.

[9] Lewis P. Hinchman*, Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment* (Tampa, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1984), 250.

[10] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 60.

[11] Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), x.

[12] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 95.

[13] Ibid., 97.

[14] Marx W. Wartofsky, *Feuerbach* (Canbridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1.

[15] Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 532.

[16] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 96.

[17] Eugene Kamenka, *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 114.

[18] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (George Eliot, Trans., Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1841/1989).

[19] In Eugene Kamenka, *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach*, 52.

[20] Ibid., 54.

[21] Marx W. Wartofsky, *Feuerbach*, 6.

[22] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 95.

[23] Ibid., 99.

[24] Eugene Kamenka, *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach*, 117.

[25] Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, 197.

[26] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 101.

[27] Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*.

[28] Ibid., 199.

[29] Ibid., 199.

[30] Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 102.

[31] Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, 199.

[32] John Somerville & Howard L. Parsons, *Dialogues on the Philosophy of Marxism* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974), 293.

[33] Karl Marx, quoted in Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*(New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961), 127.

[34] In Somerville & Parsons, *Dialogues on the Philosophy of Marxism*, 295.

[35] Bottomore, T., with Harris, L., Kiernan, V.G., & Milliband, R. (Eds.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[36] Isidor Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), 12.

[37] Bertell Ollman, *Alienation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 74.

[38] Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*, 21

[39] Kostos Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Techn? in the Thought of Karl Marx* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1976), 218.

[40] Karl Marx, quoted in Isidor Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*, 17.

[41] Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*, 42.

[42] Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, 47.

[43] Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: International Publishers, 1961), 95.

[44] Ibid., 151.

[45] Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1972).

[46] See Joachim Israel, 'Alienation and Reification,' in Geyer & Schweitzer (Eds.), *Theories of Alienation* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

[47] Bottomore et al, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*.

[48] Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, 51.

[49] Ernest Becker, *Beyond Alienation* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1967).

[50] Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor.*

[51] Istuan Mézáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1972).

[52] Henry Giroux, 'The Business of Public Education',
http://www.zmag.org/ZMag/articles/girouxjulyaug98.htm

[53] Bottomore et al, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought,* 110.

[54] Andy Hargreaves & Michael Fullan, *What's worth fighting for in your school?* (New York: Teachers College Press., 1996). Hargreaves and Fullan argue that lasting and meaningful school reform needs to be aligned with approaches to professional development that build upon teachers' capacity to make informed judgments.

[55] David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[56] David A. Gabbard (Ed.), *Knowledge and Power in the Global Economy: Politics and the Rhetoric of School Reform* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 54.

[57] Janus was the Roman god of doors and gates; since doors and gates face in two directions, he was sometimes depicted as having two faces.

[58] Ibid., 55.

[59] Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in E*ducation, 32.

[60] Shannon, *Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth-Century America*, 84.

[61] Ibid., 85.

[62] Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 38.

[63] Shannon, *Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth-Century America*, 87.

[64] Elwood Cubberly, *Public Education in the United States* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), 503.

[65] The Elementary English Language Arts Assessment, a fourth grade standardized test in NYC.

[66] Marx, *Capital*, 95.

[67] Shannon, *Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in Twentieth-Century America*, 76.

[68] Ibid., 77.

[69] Jean Anyon, ' Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work' *Journal of Education* 162, No. 1 (Winter 1980): 67-92.

[70] Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour,* (Hampshire, England: Gower, 1981 [1977 edition by Saxon House, Farnborough, England]).

[71] Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, 37.

[72] Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[73] Rouge Forum URL: http://www.pipeline.com/~rgibson/rouge_forum/

[74] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (New York: Seabury, 1968/1970).

[75] See James G. Henderson & Kathleen Kesson, *Curriculum Wisdom: Educational Decisions in Democratic Societies* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice-Hall, 2003).

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Kathleen Kesson is Associate Professor of Urban Education at the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, where she teaches courses in the foundations of education and teacher research. She is the former Director of the John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, at the University of Vermont. Kesson is co-author, with Jim Henderson, of Curriculum Wisdom: Educational Decisions in Democratic Societies (2004) and Understanding Democratic Curriculum Leadership (1999). She is also the author of numerous book chapters, book reviews, and academic articles in such journals as *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, English Education,* the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, Curriculum Inquiry,* and the *Holistic Education Review.* Her interests are in the areas of democracy in education, critical pedagogy, aesthetics and education, and teacher inquiry and reflection.

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Inhuman powers and terrible things: The theory and practice of alienated labor in urban schools. Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, 2 (1). Retrieved November 26, 2006, from http://www.jceps.com/ ?pageID=article&articleID=22. Knirk, F.G., & Gustafson, K.L. (1986). Â Instructional design and human practice: What can we learn from Grundy's interpretation of Habermas' theory of technical and practical human interests? In R. Muffoletto& N.N. Knupfer (Eds.), Computers in education: social, political and historical perspectives (pp. 141-162). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. Streibel, M.J. (1998). Information, technology and physicality in community, place, and presence. Theory into Practice, 37(1), 31-37. The IEEE Learning Technology Standards Committee. Inhuman Powers and Terrible Things: The Theory and Practice of Alienated Labor in Urban Schools. News Analysis: Pentagon's New Social-Science Program Stirs Old Anxieties. Assessing What Matters. Poverty mars formation of infant brains. Taking Play Seriously. Why Traditional Stereotypes Don't Help to Deal with Youth Crime. Avoidable Losses: High-Stakes Accountability and the Dropout Crisis. Hidden Trauma: Studies Cite Head Injuries s Factor in Some Social Ills. Inhuman Powers and Terrible Things: The Theory and Practice of Alienated Labor in Urban Schools. Jan 2004. Kesson. Kathleen. Kesson, Kathleen. 2004. " Inhuman Powers and Terrible Things: The Theory and Practice of Alien-ated Labor in Urban Schools.Â What is the epistemological and political status of the nation-state in the current practices of Cultural Studies? What is the relationship between the transnationalization of capital/super-stares and the transnational turn of Cultural Studies? Through analyzing discursive sites of 'regionalization', 'the Postcolonial', 'globalization', this essay attempts to pinpoint unquestioned assumptions in the critical phase of 'internationalizing' Cultural Studies.