The time for action is now! Anarchist theory, critical pedagogy, and radical possibilities

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> "When the rich assemble to concern themselves with the business of the poor it is called *charity*. When the poor assemble to concern themselves with the business of the rich it is called *anarchy*." Paul Richard

Rudolf Rocker (1989), a 19th century anarchist, proclaimed that anarchist theory was separate from a state driven, hierarchical socialism in that, "…when a revolutionary situation arises they [the people] will be capable of taking the socio-economic organism into their own hands and remaking it according to Socialist principles" (p. 86). Arising from the idea that small cooperatives of people could form without the need of a coercive and hierarchical state, Rocker envisioned a society that was based on cooperation, community participation, and mutual aid. Rocker's vision of society, and other anarchist-communist (or anarcho-syndicalist) theorists, is especially relevant in a time that has seen a "war on terror" that was not supported by the global community, the rollback of civil liberties with legislation such as *The Patriot Act*, and educational laws such as *No Child Left Behind* that are focusing on narrowly-defined "standards" for public schooling.

Historically, anarchists have been marginalized in academic literature, but have still been involved in radical political struggles throughout the world (Bowen, 2005; Chomsky, 2005; Day, 2004; Goaman, 2005). Within radical circles, anarchist literature has begun to gain popularity over the past several years (Bowen & Purkis, 2005). An anarchist presence can be seen in the anti-globalization movement, the "Black Bloc" protests against the IMF and World Bank, and other smaller, localized resistance efforts such as Anti-Racist Action (ARA) and Food Not Bombs (Bowen, 2005; Goaman, 2005). Unfortunately, because of the increasingly conservative nature of the mainstream media and the conservative restoration of the United States that has been occurring over the past thirty years, their voices and critiques go unheard (Apple, 2000; Bowen & Purkis, 2005).

Even in "radical" theory, anarchist theory is marginalized (Chomsky, 2005; Purkis, 2005). This is especially true in education, in spite of the success that the small school movement, the Albany Free School, and other alternative schooling practices have had towards resisting the corporatized, factory model of traditional public schooling (Gribble, 2005; Mercogliano, 1998). Although some anarchists have made significant progress in questioning traditional forms of schooling, their critiques are often unheard. Emma Goldman, Francisco Ferrer, and Paul Goodman were all involved in anarchist forms of schooling and experimenting with more authentic ways of educating children in non-authoritative ways. Paul Avrich, a radical historian, chronicled the ideas of Ferrer and the artistic, political, and educational developments that emerged from Ferrer's work with the Modern School (*Escuela Moderna*) in Spain (Avrich, 2005). Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and other noted anarchists supported Ferrer's concept of democratic and non-authoritarian schooling and were captivated with the idea of making education more empowering. Avrich also highlights anarchist communities like Mohegan, New York and Shelton, New Jersey where people tried to educate children following a less authoritarian model (Avrich, 2005). Although this is not defined as "critical pedagogy" in the way that it has been defined over the past twenty years, anarchist conceptions of schooling matches with those concerns that critical research in education has brought to our attention.

Although my own radical "roots" lie in a Neo-Marxist framework of economic and cultural critique, I find the anarchist treatment of power and direct action invigorating in a time when radical theory is relegated mostly to the halls of academia (Day, 2004; Morland, 2005). Anarchist theory, specifically anarcho-syndicalism, accounts for decentralized, non-hierarchical, autonomous, direct, and cooperative social action. This anarchist tradition will inform the theoretical base for this piece. Unfortunately, an anarchist presence has been lacking in most mainstreamed and radical educational research (Gribble, 2005; Weltman, 2000).

Thus, I have two main objectives in this paper. The first one is to highlight some of the larger themes within anarchist literature, both historical and contemporary, which is applicable to the project of education. In this way, I want to demonstrate the importance that anarchist theory can have towards making schools more enriching, revolutionary, and empowering. Anarchist theory is a huge field and is not easily summarized, as there have been historical variants that are quite diverse and eclectic.

Thus in the future, when I refer to the concept of "anarchism," I am actually referring to "anarchisms" which better captures this diverse radical theoretical tradition. I will outline some of the major anarchist principles found within social anarchism, poststructural anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, and more traditional anarchist theory. Second, I am arguing that combining anarchist theory and critical pedagogy together can move us towards action more quickly because of the insistence of anarchists on direct and spontaneous action. But I even experience some trepidation focusing solely on schools without mentioning that I share Jean Anyon's concerns that for schools to change outside systems of oppression (whether they are economic, racial, or gendered for example) must change and an educational revolution must accompany a social, economic, personal, and political one (Anyon, 2005).

Along with this though, I am also assuming that the reader is familiar with some of the main arguments of critical pedagogy. Arising from the Frankfurt School, critical pedagogy is grounded in a Neo-Marxist tradition of cultural, social, and economic critique (Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 1994). Viewing education as a political act, transforming schools towards pursuing social justice, using education to engender social change and empower educational actors (meaning students, teachers, administrators, and the community), and the idea that social change can occur through education are some of the goals of a critical pedagogy (Anyon, 1980; Apple, 2004a, 2004b; Darder, 1991; Freire, 1970, 1985; Giroux, 1988, 2000; Irwin, 1996; Kanpol, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 1994; Shor, 1992). But it is also important to recognize that critical pedagogy has been critiqued from a variety of perspectives and from several different theoretical traditions (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1992, 1993; Lather, 2001; Rochester, 2003; Weiler, 2001).

Historically, anarchist theory has shared some of the same critiques with Marxists, but has departed from them in their vision of revolutionary action and social organization (Morland, 2005). This is not to say though, that anarchists and Marxist have stood in the same protest lines, battled police brutality together, or tried to live more cooperatively with each other. Although critical pedagogy sits within a neo-Marxist framework, it can be combined with anarchist theory to produce substantial change within the way we conduct schooling and invigorate the conversation in a new and interesting way.

Anarchist theory: An overview

One of the major tenets of anarchist theory is its insistence that the state, in any form, is oppressive and has been historically used to subjugate human beings. The state is a form of tyranny that is responsible for repressing, limiting, and subordinating the individual for the needs of the rich and powerful (Guerin, 1970). Even as Western democracies are presented as "free," they are still responsible for oppression because of their rigid hierarchical and capitalist economic structures. These structures, in the complex bureaucracies that comprise the United States for example, limits the amount of participation that people have and alienates us from governing and making decisions for ourselves. Even in socialist and communist state systems, oppression still occurs because of their insistence upon hierarchical organization, instead of organizing themselves around the basis of human cooperation. According to anarchists, the state rests upon illegitimate authority and should be dismantled and remade according to more localized and autonomous free associations. As Noam Chomsky (2005) argues,

> I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children... (p. 178).

Chomsky's arguments speak well to the historical and current projects of anarchist movements that have/are occurring. This insistence upon dismantling, critiquing, and challenging illegitimate authority is a common thread that runs throughout most anarchist theory.

Linked to the centrality of the state are other systems of oppression that are resisted. Anarchist movements have been very active in protesting global capitalism in all of its nefarious forms, especially surrounding the WTO and World Bank organizations. The Seattle protests in November of 1999 demonstrated the seriousness of "Black Block" anarchists ("Black Block" referring to the autonomous, spontaneous, and anonymous personas of anarchist protestors), as well as other global protests in Prague, Sweden, and Italy against these same organizations (Goaman, 2005). Capitalism, racism, sexism, patriarchy, heterosexism, and classism are systems of oppression that

anarchists resist, and many organizations like ARA and Food Not Bombs are anarchist in their nature or have a heavy contingency of anarchist members. As Chomsky and other anarchists insist, social systems that are illegitimate must be dismantled, ushering in a society that is based on human freedom and cooperation.

But it cannot be overlooked that within a state, as well as other systems of oppression, the central figure is power. Influenced by Michel Foucault's work, some anarchist theorists have taken power as one of the central concerns of anarchist action and theory (May, 1994). Stepping away from the notion of *power over*, Foucault introduced the concept of the *fluidity* of power. Power is not something that we possess per se, but works through us. In this way, power is not always a commodity, but one that is productive for both the powerful and powerless in a given society. As Foucault (1995) argued, "power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (p. 70). In this way, power is not just in a single person but is present within the entire operation of an institution. As Todd May (1994) writes,

> power, as we have seen, constitutes for the anarchists a suppressive force. The image of power with which anarchism operates is that of a weight, pressing down--and at times destroying--the actions, events, and desires with which it comes in contact (p. 61).

According to poststructuralist anarchists, power in the cultural, political, economic, and social realm must be exposed, subverted, and destroyed. Because power is enveloped in our daily existence, anarchists stress the importance of independent action to thwart this. This poststrucuralist conception of power is seen not only in contemporary anarchist theory, but also in direct action struggles against the WTO, World Bank, animal research clinics, and global corporations that is occurring outside of academia (Morland, 2005).

Anarchists also insist that human beings have the capability of managing their own affairs without the need of top-down social structures. This rests upon the belief that people should govern every aspect of their lives and be done in a way that is as cooperative and democratic as possible. Anarchists contend that people are naturally cooperative and that social systems, such as capitalism, have conditioned us to be selfish. Instead of relying on the traditional dichotomous system of ruler/ruled,

anarchists insist on building new forms of organizations that account for self-governing. Colin Ward (1982) argues, "we have to build networks instead of pyramids...It [anarchism] advocates an extended network of individuals and groups, making their own decisions, controlling their own destiny's" (p. 22). These networks that Ward argues for would be based on the concept of free-associations instead of hierarchical systems (Guerin, 1970).

Linked to both the state and hierarchical structures, anarchists have also contended with illegitimate authority. Illegitimate authority has been responsible for bureaucratic state systems and has limited the capacity of human beings in making their own decisions. Alexander Berkman (2003), one of the most famous historical proponents of anarchism, stated this polemical message.

> OBEY! For if you will cease obedience to authority you might begin to think for yourself! That would be most dangerous to 'law and order,' the greatest misfortune for church and school. For then you would find out that everything they taught you was a lie, and was only for the purpose of keeping you enslaved, in mind and body, so that you should continue to toil and suffer and keep quiet (pp. 40-41).

This resistance to authority has come in many forms besides just vehement protests against the state. Some anarchists have also tried to change their daily lives. Polyamorous relationships, the anarchist traditions of "squatting," spontaneous "guerrilla theater," or other creative lifestyle choices and actions are all conducted to resist hegemonic social norms. Resistance is now found in various social and cultural practices that can be quite radical (Morland, 2005). Although these types of actions fall outside of the traditional "academic" forms of legitimized resistance, it demonstrates that positive social action and resistance is occurring that questions authority. But, these types of actions have not gone unchallenged. Murray Bookchin (1999) has been openly critical of "lifestyle anarchists" that choose to throw bricks through windows, refuse any type of organizational procedures, and generally just want to cause mayhem and destruction. Even though he acknowledges the importance of lifestyle decisions, he argues, "…unless socialism is an integral part of anarchism, then anarchism becomes self-indulgence" (p. 125). This type of critique is important to keep in mind as anarchists have received their fair share of negative attention as the mainstreamed media try to vilify anarchist movements.

Anarchist theory also presents us with a vision of how society could be structured. The most salient example is the insistence in anarcho-syndicalist thought on the organization of society into smaller clusters of worker-run cooperatives and organic communities. Organic in the sense that power is dispersed throughout the community, decisions are made as democratically as possible, communities form in a natural way, and that authority is legitimate (Chomsky, 2005). Rocker (1989) envisioned an anarcho-syndicalist cooperative to be formed based on the worker's trade union, in which workers were in direct control of their trade and involved in the decision-making process (pp. 92-93). As Rocker (1989) further explained,

> such a form of organization not only gives the workers every opportunity for direct action in their struggles for daily bread, it also provides them with the necessary preliminaries for carrying through the reorganization of social life on a Socialist plan by their own strength and without alien intervention (p. 94).

Although Rocker focuses on only the idea of worker cooperatives, Chomsky (2005) brings this argument to the present-day to illuminate how this new society could be formed.

> beginning with the two modes of immediate organization and control, namely organization and control in the workplace and in the community, one can imagine a network of workers' councils, and at a higher level, representation across the factories, or across branches of industry, or across crafts, and on to general assemblies of workers' councils that can be regional and national and international in character (p. 137).

The main goal taken from Rocker's and Chomsky's statements is the autonomous nature of social organization and its ties to small cooperatives of people who have direct and real investment to the community they live and work in.

These anarchist principles just outlined are some of the most pertinent examples from anarchist theory that apply to my argument. Although some of the language may be in different terms, educators that employ a critical pedagogical framework in their classrooms may not be that uncomfortable with what anarchists are contending. Combining these principles just outlined with the tenets of critical pedagogy, which is rooted in the everyday experiences of teachers and students, will allow us to integrate anarchist theory and critical pedagogy in authentic and substantial ways.

Critical pedagogy and anarchist theory: Beginning to bridge the theoretical divide

Within the field of education, the tradition of critical research is quite extensive and diverse. Critical researchers have examined a myriad of different issues, ranging from exposing ideology located in school practices, analyzing the new "accountability" movement, examining how teachers can become agents of social change, and the idea that schooling should be revolutionary and empowering. In this section I want to highlight the points at which critical pedagogy and anarchist theory intersect. In this way, I hope to demonstrate how anarchist theory and practice is compatible with critical pedagogy and can add a new dimension to this theoretical field.

Urgency and radical change; Now!

When discussing the problems of critical pedagogy, one must be careful not to overlook the work that is being done by teachers and some academics in bridging the gap between theory and practice (For an excellent example, see Bigelow; 1990, 1999a, 1999b). But, one of the main criticisms of critical pedagogy (from liberal, conservative, and even sympathetic circles) that I want to cover is that critical pedagogy is relegated to the halls of academia. This is done through using esoteric language, couching itself in the language of polemical revolutionary rhetoric, and not linking theory and practice closely enough (Rochester, 2003). Although critical pedagogy calls for teachers to become intellectuals in the sense of making the theory rigorous, this point is something we must seriously consider.

Being a young academic and teacher myself, one of the biggest struggles in my fledgling career is trying to express to future teachers critical pedagogy in a way that is exciting, welcoming, and urgent. I say urgent because all too often preservice teachers do not see the state of emergency our schools are now currently in. With the imperatives of the capitalist marketplace now expressing itself freely in NCLB and other conservative educational initiatives, the time for action is now. Under no fault of some of the theorists that work in critical pedagogy, anarchist theory brings a sense of urgency that is much needed in the current educational debate. From another perspective, liberal educational discourse is framed as "feel good" pedagogy, instead of a pedagogy that expresses the brink that our civilization is now in. Although some

may call this alarmist, we must begin to think of our radical actions in our classrooms as requiring a sense of urgency to counter the onslaught of neo-conservative and neo-liberal reforms that are currently underway and that are gaining popularity with the public at large (Giroux, 2004; McLaren, 2005).

Anarchist theory can bring a new "edge" to radical educational discourse through its insistence that the present time is the best to engender real social change. Working from the margins throughout history, anarchists have argued that social change must occur *now*. For schools, this sense of urgency is needed. As anyone who works with urban and rural schools knows, teachers in these districts are dealing with dilapidated buildings, out-of-date technology, over-worked and stressed staff, and do not possess adequate classroom supplies and materials. In schools of education, this also emerges through pre-service teachers who sometimes mean well, but come from privileged backgrounds that end up reproducing racial, gender, and class oppression (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Anarchist theory can help alleviate this in its sense of urgent and real action. This action can come in a variety of different ways. Organizing sit-ins that outlines what teachers and students expect from their education, planning and coordinating protests, to even using the classroom as a center that explores real possibilities for activism, anarchist theory can inform this practice. As Morland (2005) points out,

> By its very nature, anarchism has sought out alternative modes of opposition. Establishing communes, building free schools, publishing radical tracts, writing anti-hierarchical lyrics, planting flowers, living in trees, growing organic food, squatting in unused properties, and recycling cooking oil into green diesel are evidence of how resistance within anarchist circles assumes symbolic and cultural forms (p. 35).

But, it is important to stress that these are only suggestions and the decisions must come from the community and the schools in which the problems are situated within. Outlining all of the possibilities for resistance in this article is unrealistic, but anarchism rests upon the assumption that people can and should make decisions for themselves (Guerin, 1970; Morland, 2005).

Tying in with the concept of urgency, anarchists have always advocated for direct action against organizations, corporations, or other entities that subscribe to capitalist

or other oppressive practices. Direct action, in the form of protests, marches, or even clashes with the police, has been an anarchist trademark, especially recently after the successful 1999 Seattle protests against the WTO. Direct action can involve confrontation with authority figures, but can also mean working with a community, like feeding the homeless, or opening up a woman's shelter. The main point is that direct action does not always mean confrontation or violence (Bowen, 2005). But, the goal of direct action is always to bring about some type of social change. As Richard Day (2004) writes, "direct action…involves communities of various sorts working together in a circulation of struggles that are simultaneously against capitalism and for the construction of alternatives to it" (p. 735). Although radical educational experiences may eventually bring about the destruction of capitalism, teachers and students can begin to make small steps in making their education more empowering and see results that are meaningful. Taking cues from critical pedagogy, direct action can involve students and teachers fighting for the expulsion of a corporate influence in their schools (like Coca Cola), or allowing students to have more control of the curriculum that is taught. Whatever the issue, direct action is a strategy that can be employed, and as Day points out, direct action involves providing alternatives to our current situation.

Free Association

Anarcho-syndicalist theory rests upon the notion that free associations of people (whether that be a community or trade organization) are one of the most favorable conditions for social justice, harmony, and freedom (Chomsky, 2005; Rocker, 1989). Free association means that people come together freely by nature without the need of a state structure. This also means that when people do come together, it can be cooperative. Although by no means are entire schools ready for this type of free organization, this concept can be inserted into the discourse of critical pedagogy.

For example, critical pedagogy seeks to resist dominant power by exposing and subverting it within schools (Kincheloe, 2004). This is done both in the interactions between teachers, students, and the community, but also by what Kincheloe (2004) calls "naming names," meaning being specific on who is responsible and benefits from racial, gender, or class discrimination (p. 35). Adding to this resistance,

anarchists argue for the formation of free associations with people to solve specific problems in the school or its community. This means teachers, parents, and students form freely (in groups or small cadres) and solve a particular issue that needs a resolution. This could be something as simple as organizing parent involvement in a school night to something as complex as obtaining external funding for more educational initiatives. "Naming names" is part of this, as students can discover who benefits from systems of oppression. Whatever the situation, free associations could be formed that help demonstrate human beings can organize cooperatively. Although we form free associations, in some level, every day with other people, they can become revolutionary in their attempt to address social inequalities. Thus, like the resistive element in critical pedagogy, free association can bridge the anarchist notions of non-hierarchal modes of organization with the resistive element of critical pedagogy.

Autonomous Action

The idea of autonomy resonates powerfully within most of the anarchist literature (Berkman, 2003; Bowen, 2005; Chomsky, 2005). Autonomy, from an anarchist perspective, must be thought of in terms of social justice. The pursuit of anarchists has always been a just society that is fair and democratic as possible. The first instinct is to criticize anarchist theory based on the notion that human beings are naturally selfish creatures and this faith in autonomy will lead to theft, murder, and mayhem. But, anarchists contend, as do I, that human beings are in fact conditioned to be that way, instead of it being some innate, "natural" inclination. Capitalism has been deeply ingrained into our psyche and will take effort and time to unlearn these inclinations that it has engendered within us. But this can be done, as communal living that occurs, as well as mutual aid associations, demonstrates. This also matches with the notions of social justice that is a common thread in most of the literature surrounding critical pedagogy and critical literacy (Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 1994, 1997; Pinar, 2004; Shor, 1992). For educational purposes, autonomy can be viewed from several different perspectives that relate to my argument.

First, anarchism stresses the importance of the individual in society. Although some anarchist thinkers have fallen into the category of egoists who are mainly concerned

with individualized pursuits (see19th century writers like Max Stirner for an example of this), the autonomy I am arguing here is the tradition that people can and should be able to make their own decisions without the need of others for "approval" or "direction." In this way, if a person finds an injustice that s/he wants to dismantle, that person should be able to pursue it without the need of someone telling them what to do. The faith in individual, cooperative groups, and individualized, autonomous action is empowering. Unfortunately, we are taught a dependence on hierarchical organizations and wait for others to take action. Anarchists argue that the best time for action is right now and that individuals interested in achieving a goal should pursue it.

When individuals have determined that cooperation among others can best achieve a goal (like forming a community or tackling an environment issue), a cooperative and autonomous free-association with others can be highly desirable (Rocker, 1989; Ward, 2004). In this way, the individual and community benefit from this free association. Because anarchists have faith in individual direct action, this can also be said of free-associated communities, and the belief that groups of people can and should solve problems cooperatively. In this sense, from a logistical sense, there are groups of people solving different issues in their communities that are directly affecting them and their neighbors. But, how do both individual and community autonomous actions relate to our project of linking critical pedagogy and anarchist theory?

If we begin to think of the structure of a school district, one immediately recognizes their hierarchical organization. The decisions to be made are usually made from a top-down formula, while working this way in individual schools as well. Most change must be "approved" by an authority figure and teachers have very little control over what occurs in their classrooms. Although by no means am I advocating that a teacher should/can do whatever he or she wishes that is not safe for the students, if there is going to be a governing body for teacher decisions, it should be comprised of the school and its community (i.e. principals, teachers, staff, students, and parents/guardians). In this way, informed by anarchist notions of free-associations and autonomous actions and critical pedagogues insistence on how schooling should reflect community concerns, schools could be radically altered in their composition. The hierarchical and rigid structures should be dismantled in favor of autonomous

schools that serve to not only educate youth, but also serve as a center for the community for educational, health, and social services. Schools could form larger governing bodies that are in close proximity to each other and work cooperatively at solving issues that the larger community at whole is encountering. This would mean that decisions and actions that schools take would be as communally made as possible. Although this example is a theoretical one, there are schools that do have a more community flavor to them and are very much in the tradition of anarchist schools (see Mercogliano, 1998 for a more complete example).

This type of organization also falls into anarcho-syndicalist visions of social organization and is quite compatible with the work done in critical pedagogy. Chomsky (2005), writing on how society could be structured, found a similar type of national organization could occur and is worth quoting at length.

> Bakunin and Kroptokin and others...had in mind a highly organized form of society, but a society that was organized on the basis of organic units, organic communities. And generally they meant by that the workplace and the neighborhood, and from those two basic units there could derive through federal arrangements a highly integrated kind of social organization, which might be national or even international in scope. And the decisions could be made over a substantial range, but by delegates who are always part of the organic community from which they come, to which they return and in which, in fact, they live (p. 133).

Although Chomsky is specifically talking about a new form of government, this type of concept is applicable to my example. These "organic units" that Chomsky discusses very much could be individual schools, and the fact that these organic units are part of a larger social organization (possibly a school district) could cooperatively make decisions that would affect schools at the city, town, or state level. By questioning the hierarchical nature of schooling, this autonomous organizational idea could also help begin the discussion of the equal funding of public schools, more community involvement, and begin the dialogue about the purposes of schooling in a democratic society. Decentralizing schools could also vastly improve classroom instruction by allowing the school to pursue methods and materials more appropriate for their students that reflect their cultural, academic, social, and economic diversity. By utilizing the ideas of critical pedagogy to also inform practice, the school could potentially become more revolutionary, in whatever form that may take. Breaking out

of the mold of hierarchical structure might also prove to be beneficial in our development towards learning and force us to reexamine authority in a whole new way.

Cooperation and Mutual Aid

A key component to anarchist theory, as well as to any critical pedagogy, is the concept of human cooperation. Teaching children how to share or how to work together is no easy task as capitalism teaches us the exact opposite: consume, compete, and win at any cost. But, within anarchist theory and critical pedagogy is a deep hope in humanity and the belief that we all are naturally cooperative. This has led anarchists and critical pedagogues to argue for more cooperative living arrangements, work environments, and personal relationships. Linked to the project of schooling, this would mean stressing the importance of cooperation in establishing a school community, finding new ways of classroom evaluation, and modeling cooperative behavior in school organizational structures. In some form, critical pedagogy aligns with all of these projects, and various ideas on how to achieve these have come from a wide variety of authors (Apple, 2004a; Bigelow, 1990; Darder, 1991; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988; Irwin, 1996; Kanpol, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; Pinar, 2004; Shor, 1992). Cooperation is the center of any nurturing pedagogy and most anarchists agree that it is both a natural human inclination and necessary condition to achieve social justice (Berkman, 2003; Guerin, 1970).

Like the concept of cooperation that is found in critical pedagogy, mutual aid within anarchist theory represents the potential for a new form of social organization. Although mutual aid is never mentioned within critical pedagogy, it is something that aligns with its conceptions of social justice and cooperation. Mutual aid is a concept that Peter Kropotkin argued existed in the natural world in which animals are naturally inclined to help each other. Kropotkin argued that cooperation is also a natural instinct among us, citing that systems of oppression are responsible for our selfish and destructive behavior. Mutual aid then, is a voluntary system of the exchange of goods and resources for the mutual benefit of all of society (Kropotkin, 2002). In various anarchist communities and organizations, mutual aid is a very important feature. People use the concept of mutual aid to trade organic fruit and

vegetables, lend services to fix a bike or car, or other skill that can be exchanged for other goods or services.   In this way, currency does not have to be the central feature of exchange. Kropotkin's view applied towards economic organizations, but can also be applied to schooling as well.

Mutual aid could be adopted in schools as part of their autonomous structures. Schools could offer academic or parenting courses, bring in volunteers from the community to provide services, invite members from the medical community to offer clinics on the weekends, or offer childcare during the week by opening a childcare center. In exchange for these service provided by the school, parents and other members of the community could offer their services, in whatever capacity that may take. This could be something substantial as renovations and upkeep of buildings, teaching classes that they specialize in, or something as helpful as monitoring during lunch and other free periods. Mutual aid would help the school form more of a community by bringing in people from outside of the school and showing the reciprocal nature of mutual exchange. This idea is not entirely new and has/is occurring in schools modeled after anarchist principles worldwide (Gribble, 2005; Mercogliano, 1998). What mutual aid really calls on us to do as educators is to rethink the cooperative, organic and symbiotic relationship that a school can have with its community.

Combining Activism and Education

One of the main concepts from both anarchist theory and critical pedagogy is activism. Within critical pedagogy, teachers have combined activism with learning in a number of interesting and significant ways. From analyzing media and advertising, questioning the traditional view of historical knowledge (like Columbus), or finding a way to integrate community problems into the classroom to find possible resolutions, critical educators have always taken an activist stance towards addressing social problems (Bigelow, 1990, 1999a, 1999b; Darder, 1991; Finn, 1999; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988; Irwin, 1991; Kanpol, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; Lather, 2001; Loewen, 1995; Shor, 1992). Critical pedagogues have also argued that any truly empowering educational experience must include an activist approach to learning because of the need to link the classroom to outside social problems so that students learn their

capacity for social change (Horton & Freire, 1990; Giroux, 1988; Kanpol, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004; Shor, 1992).

Like critical pedagogy's insistence on social change, anarchist strategies of direct action speak to the needs of activist educators who want to solve problems in their communities and the schools in which they work. Critical pedagogues and anarchists have always stressed the need for an activist approach to solving social problems. Although this has occurred in schools with anarchist principles, most anarchist action is always direct: meaning that anarchist strategies are employed at protests against organizations like the G8 or World Bank, conducting food programs for the homeless like Food Not Bombs, or to even micro-level strategies of resistance such as cooperative housing or communal living. Whatever the format, anarchists have always employed a strategy of getting the issue resolved now, with whatever means will be most productive (Bowen, 2005). As was discussed earlier, direct action can assume forms at both the macro and micro-levels of social action.

For example, anarchists have been concerned with how changing our everyday life practices can influence change at the individual and institutional levels (Bowen, 2005). As James Bowen (2005) argues, it is,

> more useful if we think about anarchism as not simply being about the redistribution of wealth (by certain historical forces at particular times) but also involving a change in our relationships with each other, institutions, technology, and our environment. This is therefore where I believe the anarchist project begins, with the boring, small-scale, mundane business of making positive, non-alienated relationships with our friends and neighbors and remaining open to new people and ideas (p. 119).

This "boring, small-scale, mundane business" of the "everyday" is where I believe that anarchism and critical pedagogy become a powerful force together. Although critical pedagogy and anarchist theory are concerned with larger social systems, they do also concern themselves with the "every day." As stated earlier, critical pedagogy has been criticized for not linking theory to practice enough, but anarchist practice could be a model that helps link how our personal choices can model effective behavior that resists hegemonic ideological practices. Learning to live cooperatively, sharing resources, teaching ourselves strategies of resistance, forming reading circles,

teaching literacy skills, and finding ways to live sustainably with our own natural resources are all skills and forms of knowledge that we can acquire at schools. Henry Giroux's insistence on making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical speaks volumes on how anarchist strategies combined with critical pedagogy in the classroom can make the political climate our new form of pedagogy and making our lifestyle choices pedagogical as well (Giroux, 1988). Although I am by no means arguing that all we have to do is change a few of our practices (by not shopping at stores like Wal-Mart but going to other large retail outlets), combining the anarchist micro-strategies with the foundations of critical pedagogy can help instill direct action into critical pedagogy that is often criticized for not linking theory with praxis.

Where do we go from here?

Although this paper is too short to outline all of the schools worldwide that are guided by anarchist principles, it is beneficial to note that many do operate and are successful under principles that are anarchist in nature. This can mean decentralized schools, democratic processes for making school decisions, non-hierarchical modes of operation, or less authoritarian approaches towards knowledge. Worldwide, such schools as the Albany Free School, in Albany New York, or the Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts, and internationally schools such as the Democratic School of Hadera in Israel or la Fundación Educativa Pestalozzi in Ecuador, all demonstrate the potential of non-authoritarian schools (Gribble, 2005). These schools, which operate under different procedures, social settings, economic conditions, and cultural settings, follow a tradition that probably already instills aspects of anarchist theory and critical pedagogy into their operations. Although I only mention these schools in passing, it is important to note that there are successful examples that are looking for new ways to educate children.

But we should not stop there. We can use anarchist theory in our teacher education programs and see if it can inform how we teach our own content areas. Combining anarchist theory and critical pedagogy in the individual classroom could be quite powerful, and introducing students to these critical traditions may help bring change much more quickly to public schools. But, what I also hope this paper illuminated

was the fact that critical pedagogy and anarchist theory have many striking similarities, even though they come from different theoretical traditions. But, what anarchist theory brings is a sense of urgency and faith in individual and cooperative direct action that is lacking in many of our radical discourses surrounding schooling and our educational experiences in the United States. If we want to enact real change, it is our job as academics to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and make radical discourses accessible to those people who need to understand how systems of oppression work. This is not going to be an easy task, but it is becoming alarmingly urgent. Conservative, neo-conservative, and neo-liberal educational reforms are gaining momentum and the political and ideological "right" has been quite successful in making their arguments clear, concise, and heard. Although there are outlets that make it easier for their voices to be heard because of who benefits from their policies, we must work more cooperatively and harder to make sure teachers, students, and communities hear our critiques and visions for social change.

I am well aware this is not going to be an easy task. Anyone who has progressive or radical views knows that working with pre-service teachers is difficult, especially with their entrenched ideas about what it means to be a teacher. We hear all to often, "It will never work!" But, examples of real schools operating under more radical guiding principles demonstrate that alternative methods can work, and are working worldwide. It is our job to highlight these and further explore through research *how* and *why* they are working. Only then will we uncover new modes of teaching, learning, and the ways in which we "do" schooling that our practices will be truly empowering and revolutionary.

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