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Politics of Teaching

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ARTWORK BY MEREDITH STERN, "INVEST TO EDUCATE, NOT TO INCARCERATE" (2014) LIBERATING LEARNING PORTFOLIO, JUST SEEDS

Is progressive education progressive? What kind of a future does it have? I will approach these questions by looking very briefly at the politics of rebellion and reforms since 1965 in post-secondary education, at what is left of those reforms now, and at the conditions for change in the time to come.

By "politics of teaching," then, I mean relations between and among the individuals, groups, and social roles that are involved in formal teaching and learning -- for instance, in the conduct of a credit-bearing college course.[1] Some of these relations are built into the institution. An instructor (sometimes more than one) supervises the work of some students over a specified period of time. The instructor, an employee of the college, is paid to do this. As customers, students pay for it to happen. The instructor has a credential that qualifies him or her to teach a subject and rate students' achievement. The students have been admitted to the college and enrolled in the course. Some body of faculty members has approved the course. And so on.

Other relations -- an infinity of them -- are like rules. The syllabus typically makes some of them explicit: attendance requirements; due dates for papers; a schedule of tests, exams, problem sets, oral presentations, lectures, and the like; standards to be applied in judging the work of students. Many rules are improvised along the way. Many others (including who sets the rules and how) are conventional, and often beneath conscious awareness: e.g., how a class begins and ends; who can be where in the classroom; who can talk when; who can introduce a topic or terminate a discussion; whose voices carry authority; what kinds of talk are in and out of bounds; whether students speak only to the instructor, seeking his or her approval, or respond to one another, too. You or I could extend this list indefinitely.

To understand it as a list of political as well as of pedagogical relations will not seem strange to most readers of this magazine, and I will take only a moment to say why I favor extending the core meaning of "political" in this way. First, the people taking a college class, though not its citizens, do enter, for a term or a semester, into a small system of governance, where power is exercised, members have certain rights, laws are made and enforced and broken, disputes are resolved, and so on. Second, pedagogies convey lessons about governance that may influence the way students later act as citizens, and what sorts of politics will win or lose consent across a whole society. A single course will rarely be so consequential. But the politics enacted in an academic field, in a whole curriculum, in higher education generally, and of course in K-12 schooling, may significantly shape the way a generation does politics in the conventional sense, later on.

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I know, I know: educators often hugely overestimate the effects of what we do. Compared to what kids learn about authority, power, rights, and freedoms, from church, from commercial culture, and above all from family, what they learn in school and college may be less than decisive, and what they learn from pedagogy only a small part of their whole political socialization. Teaching has content, too, after all, and it may be possible to instill democratic beliefs through a pedagogy of fear, or raise up a generation of monarchists using the methods of Summerhill. But if pedagogical relations have political consequences at all, they are worth taking seriously for that reason, as well as because they make a difference in how well students learn.

From time to time, on grounds both educational and political, activists and reformers have objected to practices of teaching that seemed pointless, rigid, stupefying, oppressive, invidious, and so on. One such period of rebellion began around 1965 in American universities. Pedagogical discontent rode in with the student power movement and the vague but pressing demand for "relevance" in college courses. Student power advocates generally welcomed and affiliated with the civil rights and black power movements, despite obvious conflicts in goal and strategy. The anti-war movement added its critique of university complicity in devastating Southeast Asia, and of illegitimate power and authority that permeated all our institutions, including the classroom. The women's movement brought a more exact and thoroughgoing critique of pedagogical relations, including those among teachers and students in academic programs, as they made educational and administrative decisions. (Remember "collectives"?) If you were around a college in those years, you know that there was plenty of dissonance among and within these movements, on pedagogy as on everything else. Nonetheless, there were some points of agreement, and in any case, I must simplify. So here is a portmanteau, late sixties critique of traditional classroom relations.

They were undemocratic. The professor and still more remote authorities decided everything from details of course content to what points of view were legitimate. Once in a course, students could only follow where the professor led. A closely connected complaint: relations of teaching and learning were hierarchical, reproducing in miniature the dominations and privileges that obtained in American society generally. This charge opened out into a critique of the whole curriculum (it was white, male, and upper middle class, with no recourse for the excluded) and of the academic profession (it organized its knowledge of the world in impersonal, abstract formats meant to guard academic authority and suppress other perspectives and interests). As a result, college education failed to address or even connect with the deepest concerns of students. Nor, in a time of war, domestic conflict, and injustice, did college courses acknowledge, much less explain, the pathology, or point to actions that might reverse it.

Finally, there were two complaints that sat uneasily together. One: competitive individualism ruled in the class and the college, as in the whole society. Pitted against one another by custom and the grading system, students strove to excel. They did not listen to or build upon the contributions each could make to a shared inquiry. And of

course, male voices drowned out female, black students were silenced, upper class assurance won out over first-generation timidity, and so on. The other complaint -- a holdover from the 1950s I believe -- was that schooling required students to act and think alike. It denied their individuality and along with it the habit of open-minded inquiry that drives all genuine learning.

Clearly, this analysis damned many conventions that had seemed natural in undergraduate teaching through the postwar period: the lecture course with its passive or absent students; the discussion section, where students tried to guess the right answer or defeat classmates in combat; the inflexible syllabus; the spit-it-all-back examination; the paper topic demanding that students adopt disciplinary rhetoric and interests as their own; the system of evaluation that distilled an A- or C+ from all particular striving, and converted learning or its lack into a numerical rank-in-class, a dried-out credential. In addition to routines of coursework, the critique took on curricular assumptions about what constituted respectable subject matter, and what students must do to qualify for graduation -- in particular, take required courses.

Now, as I have spelled it out, this critique made little distinction between educational and political virtues. Teacher-centered pedagogies would produce shallow and alienated learning, movement people thought; egalitarian pedagogies would foster critical thinking and strong motivation. I don't recall reading or hearing the argument in just that form, but believe that the equation of political principle with educational efficacy was common -- in spite of abundant evidence, to be sure, that some students learned well in conventional lecture courses, and, from about 1968 on, that a class run on democratic lines could get lost in a pathless wasteland. It took a while to sort these matters out, in the whirlwind of critique and reform that blew through the university.

Well, actual reform ranged from the systemic to the local, and an adequate survey would certainly include such national, disciplinary upheavals as the one in my own and neighboring fields that drew attention away from masterpieces, traditional canons, great men, and great events, in order to privilege forgotten texts, multiple voices, subordinate groups, the not-so-short and simple annals of the poor -- as well as dissident ideas, from feminism to post-colonial theory. The reason I would group these broad shifts in curriculum and scholarly interest with changes in classroom dynamics is that both proceeded from challenges to the exclusion of most social groups and their values. And of course, those challenges derived in turn from social movements that had made their way into the university, along with previously excluded or demoted populations.

Another target of reform was the set of rules governing courses and credits and instruction. It will be obvious how the abolition or reduction of requirements answered to the political critique I have summarized. Democratic learning meant students taking responsibility for what they would study, and when -- in consultation with faculty mentors but not on command of the faculty as a legislative body. Likewise, faculty members had been the sole generators and certifiers of courses and majors. Where I taught, at Wesleyan University, the faculty abolished requirements in the late sixties. It became possible around 1970 for students to initiate small courses through a system of group tutorials, and to conduct their studies partially independent of faculty direction. "Education in the Field" allowed individual students to convert off-campus projects and internships into academic credits, and a "University Major" provided a way for them to draw from several disciplines in planning and carrying out their main courses of study, rather than following the major program of any department. Pass-fail grading gave students more choice in how their work would be assessed and in how they would divide their energies among courses -- to the disgruntlement of many reformers, who found students taking their liberated courses pass-fail so as to ace biochemistry or allocate half their study time for a semester to Professor Hannibal Lector's famous political science course. In the late sixties, too, through teaching evaluations, students gained a formal role in assessing the work of their instructors, and thus influence over methods of instruction.

As for pedagogical strategies within individual courses: these were and are varied, shifting, and more or less private at Wesleyan. However, at many institutions, including Portland State University and the University of Louisville, people have thought about and, in collaboration, reconfigured in-class relations of students and instructors. According to descriptions of a program called University Studies at Portland State, much of the effort in first year courses goes to establishing small learning communities, each one comprising a faculty member, a peer mentor, and a group of students. Their roles are different, but not sharply separate or hierarchical. The relation between mentors and instructors is a "partnership." Mentors learn the matter of the course deeply, and help plan it out, week to week. They learn from the faculty how to facilitate, how to build community, how to teach collaboratively. Over time, the faculty member also learns to teach more effectively: from the mentor, and -- partly through his or her mediation -- from the other students: what needs more discussion? What frictions or anxieties may be getting in the way of learning? Mentors work with students in small, cooperative groups that include no instructor. Learning in such a group depends heavily on interaction of each student with the others. Students' lives, the conditions of their learning, are granted a role and a hearing. The assessment of students' work is also a collaborative venture, not the impersonal assignment of a grade. Students rewrite the learning goals of the program to their own needs, and reflect on their progress toward those goals each term. They build portfolios to document and share it. What will ultimately be evaluated is their individual progress.

Now I realize that the rhetoric of program descriptions tends toward untroubled cheerfulness. But if what I read and heard of University Studies at Portland State is even half true, a student-centered pedagogy has been naturalized there. Besides, even if the descriptions were a shameless PR job, it would be historically interesting that they proclaim the goals of the program in a language of democratic pedagogy that came into universities 35 years ago: learning communities, mentors, teams of peers, student-centered learning, active learning, collaboration.

Similar ideas and practices are alive in the respected composition program at the University of Louisville, to judge from its handbook and articles on its procedures. Consider how the University prepares teachers of writing, especially through the course required for all new teachers, English 602, "Teaching College Composition," team-taught by Brian Huot (thanks to him for sending me the materials upon which I draw, here) and three grad students, and through administration of the program by the same four people. As this arrangement suggests, this program seeks equality across formal lines of authority and rank. It casts the assistant directors as "developing professionals," asking them to share administrative tasks and collaborate as equals in designing 602 and in leading classroom activities. A journal article -- also a collaborative effort -- describing this arrangement is aptly titled "Breaking Hierarchies."[2] The course syllabus addresses beginning teachers, too, as professionals who will build their own theories of language and pedagogy, and take part in collaborative, small-group learning.

"Collaborative learning," "collaborative teaching," "sharing" -- the ideal mode of their relations is, unsurprisingly, imagined as communitarian. The team tries to foster "a sense of teaching as a public act" and an "open-door environment" in which students "respond to each other's teaching and writing," says the syllabus. Working as an administrative group, the team strives for consensus on "teaching strategies or programmatic polity" by "trading perspectives," thus overcoming barriers of authority. The administrative group, both in its own work and in 602, favors critical reflection in working with divergent views and values. It takes "resistance" as an invitation to negotiate change in the way things are done, not as a disruption to be overruled or overlooked.[3]

Well, these egalitarian and democratic politics may govern only small parts of the curriculum at Louisville and Portland State, but they are core segments. It's suggestive, if hardly a proof of anything, that ways of learning and teaching forged in 1960s conflicts and movements remain as part of institutional commitment in two urban, public universities, as well as in the expensive private college where I taught, and are still attached to progressive political goals.

Nearly forty years have passed since the onset of this educational movement, which, amorphous and decentralized though it was, not only changed pedagogical relations in a thousand classrooms, but pulled itself together for campaign after campaign on one and another front: the foundation of black studies and women's studies programs, the opening up of canons, the loosening of requirements, the participation of students in governance and in evaluating faculty work, the search for alternatives to the grading system, and so on. Most of those campaigns met resistance at the time, and have been vigorously contested since, including by well-funded conservative foundations, by spin-off groups such as the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and the National Association of Scholars, and by high officials such as Lynne Cheney and William Bennett. How deep and extensive were post-sixties reforms in the university? How have they held up over time? Are Louisville, Portland State, and Wesleyan typical or unusual in having retained the innovations and the rhetoric briefly described above?

A broad study would be valuable to those working for educational democracy. For now, my brief, informal, and conjectural reply to these questions is:

1. Some changes in curriculum were substantial and lasting, especially those that led to various "studies" programs, brought multiple voices into the syllabus, and established other-than-dominant perspectives as legitimate, and indeed urgent. A comparison of humanities, arts, and social science listings in course catalogs today with those of 1965 will readily bear out that generalization.

2. Academic requirements have made something of a comeback, but fulltime undergraduate students in traditional universities still have more say in planning their courses of study now than they did 40 years ago.

3. Classrooms are more participatory in most institutions. In a few disciplines that had not yet staked out their own domains in the late sixties, student-centered pedagogies are the professional standard. Rhetoric and composition is the clearest example, and an important one, because almost every college student passes through its gateway. Women's studies is another. Needless to say, the old, mass-production methods persist alongside newer ones -- but perhaps more because of cutbacks and budgetary stress than on principle.

In short, although some of the movements that stimulated reform are nearly forgotten, their academic heritage lives on in the face of strong counter-movements to regiment the young as never before and defend them against any taint of critical thinking.

How might this conflict develop in the future? Any prediction will depend on how one characterizes the future and understands its connection to the present and past. I first note that once before the 1960s, an American movement gathered for which the social relations of teaching and learning were a primary issue. I refer to progressive education, which was first identifiable as a movement in the 1890s. Grounded in schools, not colleges, it rose in response to crowded classes, especially in the elementary grades; to authoritarian teachers and learning by rote; to a curriculum little changed since the arrival of the McGuffey readers; and more generally to demands imposed on the common school by the growth of cities, millions of immigrants, the factory system, and depopulation and poverty in the countryside. The reformers insisted that schooling should start not from a potted curriculum but from children's actual life-worlds, their "real interests and ends," in John Dewey's words. It should seek integration of experience, putting to work the child's "innate" desire to explore, interpret, and create. Thus, it should proceed through active learning ("by doing"), not memorization and drill. Freedom and responsibility should be its means.

This last principle slides over into the explicitly political: progressive educators sought enlightened relations in the classroom, less for their own sake than as educationally generative, and to prepare the young for active participation in civic life. Dewey's most systematic and influential book is called *Democracy and Education*; in it he argues for free exchange among culturally diverse groups, for schools that would help overcome economic inequality, and for teaching that would foster peace by showing the common interests of all nations. His analysis and program resemble those of sixties reformers in many ways – though the latter took no leads directly from progressive education, and seemingly knew little about it except as it had been embedded in their own experience of school. (I attribute this amnesia in part to the desperate rush of sixties reformers responding to crisis after crisis, and in part to the routine skepticism or even contempt of university people for anything coming out of public schools or schools of education.)

In addition to striking similarities in pedagogical and political doctrine, one other bears emphasis. Although the educational uprising of the 1960s and after has no name -- such as "progressive education" -- to give it historical presence, it, like its predecessor, was an educational movement within a more comprehensive movement for social change. The student, civil rights, antiwar, and women's liberation movements gave birth to it. Only the student movement was grounded in the university to begin with. The others arose to challenge injustice and war, and then developed academic branches and projects.

Progressive educational reform was also part of something broader, the progressive movement itself. The school reformers' vision of social progress was congruent with that of the urban planners, the advocates for public sanitation and health, the enemies of child labor, and so on. Indeed, these were often the same people. Jane Addams not only fought disease and malnutrition among the poor, supported unions, helped launch the profession of social work; she also promoted an idea of "socialized education" beginning with the dangers and resources of the city, and served four years on the Chicago Board of Education. Walter Hines Page promoted modernization and humanization of the industrial system in his magazines, *The Forum* and *The World's Work*; sat on a commission to alleviate rural poverty; and proposed to regenerate the South partly by improving its schools. Progressive educators were there at the formation of the progressive movement, and their goals were integral to its project of building a rational and decent industrial society on the foundations laid in the early days of the republic.

In short the meaning of "progressive" did derive from that of "progress"; and this may be a critical difference between the two episodes of reform. Progressives around the turn of the last century, unlike 1960s radicals, by and large rejected neither the principles and institutions of American democracy nor its great transformation by machine production and industrial capital during the post-Civil War decades. They felt confident that they were adjusting a process of liberatory development that had advanced farthest in the U. S., but been diverted by malefactors of great wealth, by poverty, by corrupt city machines, by militarism, and by other identifiable pathologies. These could be remedied through the application of reason, science, expertise, and disinterested good will. In this project, education had an obvious role to play: liberating children from ignorance and servility, and preparing them to contribute, as adults, to social improvement.

How in fact did progressive education fare in the new social order it helped to create? Here are some conjectures I'd explore if I were digging into this subject. First, the movement in which progressive education played a small part did succeed in rationalizing and thus stabilizing capitalism in its new corporation-led form, which I'll call Fordism. But within that social order, progressive education relaxed its transformative ambitions. After a brief surge of radicalism in the 1930s, around Teachers College and the journal *New Frontier,* it mutated from a political into a strictly educational movement, valued by parents and groups who wanted both critical education and social privilege for their kids. In this phase it did well in some private schools and in model, suburban enclaves of the professional-managerial class such as Winnetka, Illinois and Shaker Heights, Ohio -- where, I now discover, I myself was progressively educated, without having been aware of it at the time. (I might add that, returning for a 50th reunion, I found few signs of politically progressive consciousness among my classmates.)

I further propose that vague ideals of student-centered education, grafted onto professional-managerial class feeling, contributed to 1960s rebellions against cold war ideology, "conformity," the multiversity, and "irrelevant" education there. By the end of the decade, educational revolt along these lines had fused with civil rights and antiwar movements, and then gained new force from the nascent women's liberation movement. These and other rebellions gathered into a broad attack on major premises of Fordism, and so provoked a "conservative restoration" (Ira Shor's term, in *Culture Wars*) that went from campaigns for basics and "excellence" to the 1990s campaign to repudiate multiculturalism, free the university from "political correctness," and reestablish truth and virtue (as in Lynne Cheney, *Telling the Truth;* William Bennett, *The Book of Virtues).*

The counterattackers went after progressive pedagogy, too. In the public schools, they have won sweeping victories under the banner of standards and accountability. That regime tends to squeeze out student-centered teaching and any politics of learning that interferes with performance as measured by tests. In colleges, post-sixties curriculum and democratic teaching are less vulnerable to political assault. But a parallel economic movement could once again drain the political energy from progressive education, leaving it a quiet backwater. I refer to the remaking of capitalism in the U.S. and globally into a flexible, shape-changing system wherein the staid, Fordist corporation must become agile or die, where mergers and takeovers and startups proceed breathlessly, where technologies, products, services, and markets proliferate, and where capital vaults electronically across national boundaries, outflanking the old, unionized, well-paid, benefitted, and secure Fordist workforce and scattering it among the global, reserve army of casual labor.

This new economic order is aggressively bringing higher education within the scope of its transformative power.[4] Universities have long taken the lead in use of casual labor, and that process goes on apace. In a fresher development, the traditional, non-profit university behaves more and more like a business, adopting corporate methods such as performance measurement, program budgeting, productivity incentives, subcontracting, outsourcing, and so on. In addition to these practices of cost-cutting and slimming, universities have cultivated new sources of income. To mention just two that have gained much attention: since the Bayh-Dole act of 1980, which permitted universities to patent and sell discoveries made in government-sponsored research, universities have entered into a dazzling variety of deals with corporations, and have often themselves become brokers or venture capitalists, establishing "incubators" for start-up companies and even whole campuses where new businesses can reside. The other bundle of schemes involves exploiting students' wants and purchasing power, via such arrangements as exclusive contracts with Coke or Pepsi, from which universities have received tens of millions of dollars over five or ten years; or through the sale of students' attention directly to advertisers, as when portal companies provide a college with software to use in registration, course enrollment, campus announcements, and so on, while planting advertisements and offers along the electronic pathway.

Of course. the chief commodity that universities market is still education itself, but presented now in a mushrooming of new formats such as online courses and tutoring services, as well as in old formats such as continuing education. Adults now account for half of all enrollments in college courses. Some of these offer old, liberal arts subjects, but most package knowledge and skills that the student hopes will lead to advancement at work, a change of jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, and the like. Certificates, a related kind of parcel, are big business in themselves -- New York University, for example, offers more than 100 different certificates, usually to people who already have degrees and are further specializing their labor power. In short, post-secondary education comes in ever smaller and precision-marketed units, for customers who are often refashioning themselves to meet the needs of employers. In this sense, too, universities have privatized their work. Income from sale of these units becomes an ever-larger element in the budget. Famously, tuition payments from regular, full-time students have also outpaced inflation.

So the funding of education in public and private universities now comes increasingly from market transactions, and less and less from taxation and philanthropy. Those older methods of funding in effect transferred big chunks of the social surplus to colleges and supported higher education as a public good. Today, by contrast, it makes rough sense to speak of privatized knowledge and commodified learning. And that's without even considering the for-profit sector of higher education, with 2000 corporations like Motorola and General Electric running internal "universities" to retool their workers, and with proprietary institutions like DeVry Institutes and the University of Phoenix sprouting campuses everywhere: Phoenix has over a hundred, more than 100,000 students, essentially no tenured faculty, and curriculum constantly changing to meet the demand of individual and corporate customers. These companies may be modeling the university of the future. Without question they are reconfiguring higher education along the lines of the agile, post-Fordist company. In short, as American capitalism has remade itself since 1970, the structure and practices of post-secondary education have changed in homologous ways. In the process, control of curriculum is passing out of the faculty's control, out of the institution's control, and into a market where effective demand is directly or indirectly responsive to the needs of business.

To push this oversimplified analysis a bit farther: with higher education ever more commodified and with business indirectly paying the piper, the curricular tune changes. Not that demand for programs and perspectives derived from sixties movements diminishes a lot in absolute terms, or even at all. Many students want and will pay for some of the critical knowledge, some of the bracing demystification, lodged in the university by activists 35 years ago. Historical and anthropological and literary questioning of the status quo will continue to feed doubt and Utopian hope, and will even have some oblique economic value for young students on their way to leadership roles that put a premium on "thinking outside the box," as the current cliché goes -- just as traditional liberal arts education has long provided intellectual suppleness and cultural capital for that same group.

Yet the share of enrollments going to liberal arts courses has been in a long decline, even in traditional universities (where 35 years ago most students cited the acquisition of a "philosophy of life" as their main reason for going to college, and where now, the leading reason is to get a well-paying job). Naturally, liberal arts enrollments make up a much smaller share in the burgeoning proprietary and public sector, where most of the adult students seek economic advantage, and business's needs determine what studies will yield that advantage. There are no figures on the demand for critique and demystification in that sector, but I think it a fair guess that few students attend DeVry or Phoenix to learn about class, gender, and power in the U.S. and around the globe.

Does it follow that student-centered and other progressive pedagogies have dim prospects in the new economic order? A few quite general thoughts, now, on that question.

If we conceptualize the transmission of knowledge and skill as a series of small and large transactions undertaken by buyers on at least a tacit reckoning of material cost and benefit, and if a corporation is directly or indirectly the buyer, it will want a learning packet that brings the best return on investment, and will want that packet delivered (!) in the most effective way. Exactly the same holds for students taking information technology or product design or, for that matter, seeking to improve their chances in specific job markets, or qualify for advancement where they already work. In the education marketplace, they will want to buy the right stuff at the best price. The implications for a democratic politics of learning seem obvious: precisely to the extent that students (and other buyers) base their

educational choices on the market advantage they hope to gain -- to that extent, they will disregard other educational values they might have, such as the wish to work in cooperation with other students, or to initiate and control their own learning process, or to understand and fight inequality. If that's all there were to it, my argument would have a simple conclusion: in a time of market-driven higher education, there will be little demand for democratic ways of learning.

But neither history nor students are quite so easy to read as that. Let me pursue this chain of ideas just one step farther, by noting that even from a narrowly self-interested point of view, the best price for a package of skills and knowledge need not be the lowest: no point in buying a paralegal course at bargain rates, if it fails to teach you what you need to qualify for the job. In the open market for useful learning, pedagogy does and will have value.

You can probably guess where this thought leads. I said earlier that the critique which drove innovations of the sixties and after made "little distinction between educational and political virtues," assuming that the latter would lead to the former. I myself believe that this equivalence does often hold. That is, students working out of their experience and needs, learning by doing, working collaboratively in self-governing groups, taking joint responsibility for the results, and so on, not only learn to be social in ways well fitted to democratic citizenship, but learn sociology, chemistry, or philosophy more deeply and confidently than they would on, say, the old lecture and exam plan -- the banking model. But there's no reason to limit the point to liberal arts subjects: these pedagogies will work in management theory, tax law, computer programming, and accounting. And although I have not investigated the matter, I have seen enough sidelong references to make me think a fair number of people who teach in for-profit or corporate universities, and in credential-oriented programs everywhere, are in fact pragmatically using methods that were improvised 25 to 35 years ago, with the overthrow of the system in mind.[5] On this premise, one would predict a continuing place in the agile university and even in corporate culture for democratic relations of pedagogy, so long as they answer to criteria of efficiency. Where they can be justified chiefly on civic or moral grounds, they lose out. And of course, where they are retained for utilitarian reasons, they are necessarily detached from any ideal of resistance, any strategy for social transformation, any vision of a more decent world, any ideal of human agency outside the universal market. In that case, how will students or teachers identify good learning with any social principle at all?

Now I can make explicit an answer to the question with which I began. Progressive educational methods are not in themselves politically progressive. They do, I think, encourage students to be active learners and critical thinkers, but these qualities can -- in different circumstances -- be mobilized for the advancement and privilege of a social class; or to help some people manage others; or to teach the skills that local businesses want. Progressive education may in fact serve democratic and egalitarian ends chiefly when its advocates are already stimulated and empowered by movements for peace, equality, justice, and so on. (And even there, the choice of progressive methods is hardly inevitable.) If this tentative conclusion is right, what else might one guess about the future of democratic relations of teaching and learning?

That they will survive in settings where education is not wholly or simply market-driven and in professional fields with a strong ethos of democratic public service -- writing instruction, as previously mentioned, and maybe K-12 schooling, until the apostles of accountability exorcise from it, too, the spirit of professional integrity, along with the ghosts of Jane Addams and John Dewey. Otherwise, I anticipate no surge of fresh energy into the remaking of pedagogy until that happens as part of some wider movement comparable to the uprisings of the 1960s, in the U. S.

But -- in a more optimistic swerve with which I'll end this essay -- I think we can all glimpse possibilities for the awakening of such movements. After the attacks of 9/11, for instance, there was a surge of curiosity about Islam and the history of Central Asia and the Middle East, leading to teach-ins, forums, and many quickly improvised college courses. The question, "why do they hate us so much?" was heard everywhere, including in the mainstream media, last September. That question became even more urgent in 2003, as we read the public opinion poll figures on what people around the globe thought of the war on Iraq, and as we saw crowds on television burning American flags. The precarious future of U.S. foreign policy could launch an inquiry on campuses and elsewhere into other cultures, and into American and corporate global policy over, say, the last fifty years. In my view that would in itself be an enormous gain for education in the cause of citizenship. Americans on average are sadly ignorant of history, not just of dates and names but of the forces that have brought us where we are and will carry us helplessly into the future unless we can understand them better. Likewise, most peoples and nations of the world are pretty much a blank spot in our mainstream media and in national awareness. These are matters where civic interest and education come urgently together.

Look also at the contradictions and conflicts around globalization: environmental degradation through free trade in its present form; corporate demands for an energy policy that perpetuates our dependence on oil from the Middle East or Central Asia or wherever; the search for cheap labor, from the maquiladoras of Mexico to the sweatshops of Indonesia to the ranks of adjuncts and grad students in the North American university; the need our leaders feel to police the globe and the homeland in the name of a limitless war on terror; the propping up of tyrannical regimes (such as that of the Baath Party in Iraq) that are supposedly on "our" side, until they mysteriously turn evil; the support of insurgent groups like the Taliban who turn out to be tomorrows tyrants.

You don't have to imagine movements contesting the new world order, because they already exist -- the anti-globalization movement, and then the astonishingly strong international movement against war on Iraq, and maybe against war in general. We'll see whether such groups will fade away now, or grow, make common cause with others, and act in a democratic spirit. If the latter, a progressive

politics of teaching will likely be one of their methods and achievements.

Notes

1. Henry Abelove, Donald Tyree, and Tom Van invited me to give talks at (respectively) Wesleyan University, Portland State University, and the University of Louiville. Thanks to them and many of their colleagues and students who helped me develop the argument presented here.

2. By Susan Popham, Michael Neal, Ellen Schendel, and Brian Huot, in Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser, ed., *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook), 2002.

3. See Katrina M. Powell, Cassandra Mach, Peggy ONeill, and Brian Huot, "Graduate Students Negotiating Multiple Literacies as Writing Program Administrators: An Example of Collaborative Reflection," *Dialogue*, 6:2 (Spring, 2000), 82-110.

4. I have made this argument at length in my *Politics of Knowledge: The Commercialization of the University, the Professions, and Print Culture* (Middletown, CT; Wesleyan), 2003. See especially the essay called "What's Happening to the University and the Professions? Can History Tell?"

5. See for example Jim O'Loughlin, "Questioning the 'Success' of Collaborative Learning," *Socialist Review*, 27:1+2 (1999), 29-47.

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