

# THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY: CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE ENGLISH LITERARY TRADITION IN 'POST-COLONIAL' ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

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**ABSTRACT** Drawing on post-colonial theory, the study offers a critical reading of the current status of the 'Middle Eastern' educational systems, the English literary education, in particular. It also considers the contribution of post-colonial theory in educational and literary studies by exploring possibilities to challenge hegemonic ideologies and relations of power in education. I argue that being at the heart of colonial relations, 'post-colonial' educational systems are still largely entrapped by a modelling approach which was rooted during the era of colonialism and further consolidated by the unequal contemporary world relations. The creation of this capitalised structure has established an enduring relational system between the *centre* and the *margin*; and in the long run, keeps the latter cleaving to the values of the first. In the literary sphere, such ideologies still perpetuate their regulation and dissemination of the 'high cultural' or 'canonical' traditions. In an attempt to address these inherent problems, the study explores the possibility of forwarding the post-colonial critical tenets by curving out wholesale the notions 'Hybridity', 'Third Space', Diaspora and Dialogism in the context of Critical Pedagogy. The study contributes to a wider debate in critical educational and literary studies by means of disrupting and problematising the meta-narratives and discourses of universality and standardisation. It also contributes to theory and pedagogy by exploring strands of theories so far believed to be discrete.

## ABSTRACT (ARABIC)

المستخلص: باستخدام نظرية (ما بعد الاستعمار) تقدم الورقة البحثية بعنوان "السياسة والتعليم و المنهج النقدي: اعتبارات من واقع دراسة الأدب الإنجليزي في السياقات الأكاديمية لمجتمعات (ما بعد الاستعمار)" دراسة نقدية لواقع دراسة الأدب الإنجليزي في بعض المؤسسات التعليمية في "الشرق الأوسط". كما تستعرض مساهمة نظرية (ما بعد الاستعمار) في الدراسات التربوية والأدبية وذلك عن طريق نقد مفاهيم الهيمنة الأيديولوجية ومنطق علاقات القوة في هذه المؤسسات. تقدم الدراسة جدلية تخلص إلى أن بعض هذه المؤسسات والمنظومات التعليمية لا تزال عالقة في الأطر والنماذج الغربية التي تأصلت إبان مراحل الاستعمار كما أن هذه النماذج التعليمية لازالت تتعزز بمواطن علاقات الهيمنة غير المتكافئة في هذه المجتمعات و بين مراكز القوة الاستعمارية (الغربية). لذلك فإن هذه العلاقات – التي تقوم على أسس الراسمالية الغربية – أوجدت علاقة "تحاملية" بين "المركز" و "الهوامش"، ومع مرور الوقت أصبحت هذه الهوامش متعلقة ومرتبطة بالمركز ارتباطا وثيقا لا تستطيع تجاوزه. تخلص الدراسة إلى ما يلي: في إطار الدراسات الأدبية، لا يزال تأصيل هذه الأيديولوجيات هي الثقافة السائدة حيث يتم من خلالها اتباع ونشر وتطبيق المنظومة الكلاسيكية (الكانون) والنظرة "الأرنولدية" (الثقافة العليا) للأدب الإنجليزي. وفي محاولتها لتقديم فهما أوسع لهذا الواقع، تستخدم الدراسة أبعادا لأطر نظرية لثلاث نظريات: (ما بعد الاستعمار) وخصوصا مفاهيم (الهجانة والفرغ الثالث)، و النظرية الحوارية، إضافة إلى المنهج النقدي وذلك عن طريق تعزيز مواطن الالتقاء في هذه النظريات. وبذلك تقدم الدراسة تحليلا ونقدا لهذه السياسات وذلك عن طريق (تفكيك) خطاب "العالمية" و"المعيارية" و"الأفضلية" للأدب الكلاسيكية الغربية التي يتبناها دعاة هذا الخطاب. تقدم الدراسة مساهمة أصيلة في جدييات الدراسات التربوية والأدبية، كدالك تساهم في توسيع الأفق ومد الجسور بين نظريات طالما نظر إليها على أنها غير متجانسة.

**KEY WORDS:** Post-colonialism, Educational and Literary Studies, Critical Pedagogy, Dialogism, Diaspora

## Introduction

In this paper, I draw on several observations and theoretical frameworks within the broader repertoires of post-colonialism to explore a stance of critical pedagogy in some countries with former experience of colonialism (henceforth; 'post-colonial'<sup>1</sup> contexts). Rather than providing a unified area of discussion, I draw these observations and arguments from a variety of disciplines and schools of thought including my personal, academic and professional experience. The central premise I engage with in this paper is the operation of interdisciplinary approaches including post-colonial, educational and literary studies, Critical Pedagogy, Diaspora Studies, and

<sup>1</sup> I use the concept of 'post-colonial' context(s) to denote what is referred to as 'Third World' so as to avoid using the later as involving political and contestable connotations.

Dialogism. I, however, highlight the case of the English literary tradition in the English departments in some 'Middle Eastern' countries as my literary education, previous research and experience in the field invite empirical evidence to support my overall argument.

Therefore, the main thrust of this paper is threefold. Firstly, I review the role of post-colonial theory in educational studies. Secondly, I illustrate within a broad interdisciplinary and historical framework the adoption of Western educational models accompanied by Eurocentric knowledge systems which were implanted during the era of colonialism, and argue that these models still largely prevail in these contexts. In particular, I discuss the status of English literary studies in the ex-colonies of Britain in the 'Middle East.' In the remaining part of this paper, I review the works of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux regarding Critical Pedagogy and Educational Studies in the context of these emanating and outgoing 'new times'. I also explore the possibility to advance their argument by drawing on relevant studies of Hybridity, Diaspora and Dialogism. In this section, I outline these observations as follows:

Education is a crucial ideological apparatus through which certain values are held as the best or truest. During the era of colonialism, colonial educational institutions were used to augment the perceived legitimacy and propriety of colonial rule and to help maintain its power. Today, 'post-colonial' contexts still largely entail such ideologies (Mulenga, 2008). Although these countries have gained their political independence, I argue that post-colonial educational institutions are still marked by Western modernism and still work within the Eurocentric

infrastructure of a society with different values and motives.

Educational research draws our attention to the fact that the residues of the colonial era remain at work in several post-colonial educational systems. Chrisman and Williams (quoted in Fincham and Hooper, 1996, p. xii) observe that “the dismantling of colonialism and the achievement of independence by Europe's ex-colonies has been replaced by a continuing Western influence, located in flexible combinations of the economic, the political, the military, and the ideological”. McQuaid (2009), furthermore, draws attention to what she calls ‘racialised thinking’ as one of the most perilous colonial legacies. ‘Racialised thinking’, according to her, refers to a generally accepted standard in cultural discourse, education practice, and theory. Taking up the role of language as constructing, rather than representing meaning, the term ‘race’, for example, no longer represents or defines meaning but becomes a meaning-making construct that is inherited and woven into the social fabric. Willinsky (1998) asserts that the construction of ideas such as race has been perpetuated from colonial eras, which have influenced our tendency to divide the world and reinforce the notion of Western cultural superiority, which “had a profound influence on education past and present and on the future for education systems” (p. 12).

Nonetheless, in our *liquid* (Bauman, 2000) post-modernist condition, where identities and societies are fragmented through the spread of globalisation, cyber-cultures, diasporas, internet, media and migration as well as the emergence of new forms of political and social conflicts, a re-embodiment of the *signs of hope*, which Freire spoke about, is needed more than ever before.

Specifically, in this particular juncture in the history of the 'Middle East', the 'Arab Spring' has become an outstanding and celebrated event that has changed or expects to change the political and social scenes in a region so far believed to be beyond any possibility of reform. The 'Arab Spring' has provoked an emergence of new political, sociological, cultural and educational discourses that speak about freedom, social and political justice, equality and democracy. Cultural production including arts, literature and music are believed to play a significant role to cement solidarity in the quest for justice and peace in the region, to disseminate dissent and opposition to prevalent discourses on gender, politics, religion and sexuality, and to challenge the dominant political discourses in these societies. Laachir and Talajooy (2013) contend that what might be believed as a 'sudden' massive uprising of a region that shares profound historical commonalities is "cultural practices and products in the Middle East [that] have been transforming the nature of public life in Middle Eastern societies for decades and preparing the grounds for such widespread shows of desire for change, justice, equality and democracy" (p. 2). Not only the arts but all social spheres, including educational settings, have their own influence in the promotion of critical awareness that escort discourses of resistance and struggle in the region.

In the realm of English literary studies, the legacy of colonialism is one of the most prevalent, particularly in the English departments in several post-colonial contexts including the 'Middle East'. The 'Anglo-American literary canon' is deemed by many educators in these universities as having an eternal and everlasting universal value that surpasses boundaries of time and geography (Abu-Shomar,

2013). Within the claims of standardisation and universality, as loci of perceived power, the Anglo-American canon has been the most predominant and domineering tradition in these contexts (ibid). Zughoul (2002) goes further to observe that not only literary curricula but also the whole university structure passes off as 'tradition'.

The current 'Anglocentric literary project', as Sadiq (2007) explains, is maintained through a threefold process: first, devaluing the literatures other than the Anglo-American tradition including World or post-colonial literatures written in English. Second, this process is achieved partly through the creation of a colonised class of mimics who maintain their perceived power by securing and propagating the status quo, and third by establishing English departments in these countries as a replica of those in the centre.

My personal and professional outlook in this paper stems from the fact that I perceive myself as a product of the 'glocal' currents of colonialism, decolonisation and post-colonialism. I, therefore, wish to bestow some insights from my own experience of the post-colonial condition to reflect on these educational settings. My homeland is the occupied Palestine, but I was born and raised in Jordan which fell under British mandate from its establishment until 1957. In the era of decolonisation, I received my primary and secondary education in the schools of UNRWA<sup>2</sup>, and took two degrees (in English language and literature) from a Jordanian university that was established by a British commission. Before and after my PhD, my job has been that of instructor of English (literature) in several countries all of which are ex-colonies of Britain; I have

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<sup>2</sup> UNRWA (the United Nation Refugee Works Agency) provides basic services – education, health, relief and social services – to 5 million registered refugees in the Middle East.

experienced a trajectory of the post-colonial world. Yet, in my World, not much has changed since my early years of schooling.

Building on these observations, I further explore the current status of the post-colonial stance in educational, critical pedagogy and literary studies in these contexts. My primary concern in this paper is motivated by the old inquest; why doesn't it work? Or the concern is with addressing a more daring investigation into the claims that perpetuate old-fashioned and chauvinistic infrastructures that dominate educational systems in the region. Because I attempt to answer issues around educational policies, world relations, perceived power and Anglo-American literary tradition, I rehearse the established arguments of classic educational literatures regarding all these repertoires and foster new voices and research that concerned itself with countering the hegemony of westernised education in these contexts. Therefore, in addition to responding to the old argument regarding the hegemony of the colonial roles and their influence in the once colonised countries, I move away from middle-of-the-road doctrines into more ad hoc and context-specific arguments.

Specifically, I attempt to answer questions that include: 1) What is the current status of educational systems in countries with a colonial history? 2) Why do educational systems still sustain colonial legacies? More precisely, why do universities in 'post-colonial' settings privilege the Anglo-American literary tradition? 3) What might this tradition embrace or promote in terms of consolidating a national self-autonomy? and 4) Does the perseverance of this tradition obviate the need for meticulous reform regarding other alternatives? In my

conclusions, I perceive answers to these questions in an endeavour to move the long-established tenets of critical pedagogy and post-colonialism into a further reading in light of the dynamicity, hybridity and fragmentation of post-colonial societies in the 'new times'.

### **Post-colonialism in educational studies**

A growing body of literature on education explores the potentials of the post-colonial theoretical perspective in myriad domains ranging from global relations to the localities of classroom practices. Post-colonial theoretical tenets have drawn attention to previously under-researched areas and have provided an epistemological challenge to existing theoretical 'frameworks' that normally guide educational studies. Post-colonial forms of analysis, for example, are used "to provide an account of the construction of racialised and stereotyped identities through the colonial curriculum and how these were implicated in the maintenance of a colonial world view and ultimately of colonial power itself" (Crossley and Tikly, 2004, p. 149).

More importantly, post-colonialism's contentions surrounding the relationship between knowledge and power are linked directly to education, both as an institution, where people are inculcated into hegemonic systems of reasoning, and as a site where it is possible to resist dominant discursive practices (Rizvi *et al.* 2006).

A consistent theme in post-colonial literature in education is its work towards a critical review of relations of power, and its attempts to unfold the bitter insinuations regarding claims of homogeneity, universality as well as the



Euro-centricity of canons.<sup>3</sup> Post-colonialism's major interest in this regard is to offer a reappraisal and exploration of the pervasive impact of colonial power over colonised people in cultural, political, social, economic, educational, and intellectual domains. Currently, the fundamental assumptions of the post-colonial theory are grounded in its interest in the histories of the European colonialist and institutional practices and responses, whether resistant or otherwise, to these practices on the colonised societies. In this vein, three strands of the theory are identified: literal description of formerly colonised societies, description of global relations after the colonisation period, and a description of discourse informed by epistemological orientations (Kumar, 2000). For the particular interest of this paper, I review how the theory has proved compelling arguments in its exploration of the directions of educational reforms, and how it has drawn attention to policy makers at the 'periphery' who are immersed in the dilemmas of the colonial legacy, while also engaging with the rapid demands of globalisation (Hickling-Hudson, 2003; Tikly, 2001).

Post-colonialism has informed research into critical reviews of the taken-for-granted narratives in both global and local educational contexts as well as the relational flow from the 'centre' to the 'margin'. Rizvi (2005) views post-colonialism as a forceful means to question and deconstruct the notion of globalisation as 'a global context' and its implications for education. He claims that the hegemonic role it plays in organising a 'particular way of interpreting the world' is often unnoticed and accepted as if unproblematic. The basic idea which Rizvi argues against

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<sup>3</sup> The notion of canons could be optimised as authoritative texts (whether literary or otherwise) holding unique and everlasting moral, aesthetic, and trusting value.

is the seemingly 'ubiquitous' notion of 'the global context'. He points out that the hegemonic nature of the idea of 'the global context' becomes obvious when applying the concept to developing countries, since it basically means the global spread of Western ideas. Therefore, when thinking of education as becoming almost universal, 'the global context' means the domination of a set of imperial assumptions entrenched on these contexts. Such policies, whether borrowed or imposed on developing countries, misinterpret cultural and political globalisation and tend to steer national policies into the 'same neo-liberal direction'. Rizvi reasons: "institutional disciplinary definitions and hierarchies, legitimizing publications, and institutional authority reside mostly within the core, with 'the periphery' left simply to mimic the core's dominant discourses and practices" (p. 11).

He concludes that most education occurs at the local level, but localities have never been more connected to outside forces, a fact captured to some extent by the phrase 'deterritorialization of culture and politics'. However, these forces do not simply exist in some reified fashion, to be simply read off for their implications for educational policy and governance. They need to be understood historically as being linked to the imperialist origins of globalization, not in some uniform way but in ways that are specific to particular localities. It is only through this kind of "complicated" understanding that it will be possible for us to elaborate new modes of imperial power and to devise ways of resisting it in and through education. Building on this, it might be concluded that the term globalisation obscures more than it reveals, and metaphors regarding the term depend on who is talking about it.

For less powerful countries or the ‘peripheries’, it resonates with the former colonial discourses that propagate a world full of promises of better opportunities, higher standards of living, expanding markets and democracy. Yet, at the same time, it evokes feelings of fear of superpowers threatening to destroy local cultures by means of imposing the former imperialistic enterprise with the aim to enslave people in a materialistic technological world. Since the seeds of globalisation go back to the impacts of the industrial revolution, and are embedded in the development of global distribution of resources, World government, Cold War, United Nations, foreign trade and world trade, such macro-dynamics of world relations perform the domineering role of a powerful former imperial state that seeks to open up overseas opportunities via political and economic powers.

In recent times, the multi-trajectory of global relations and the diverse metaphors through which the term is used augment the obscurity of the term. Western ‘liberal-democratic’ discourses, for example, claim the spreading of liberal democratic values over the globe with the prospect of a world that is entirely liberalised and democratised. Nonetheless, Western states push forward across the globe a new world order in which state sovereignty is made conditional upon states respecting Western values of democracy. Or, according to Gowan’s *et al.* (2008), Western liberal democracy is very similar to “a dog licence in Britain [...] you can have a dog in Britain – on condition – that you treated it right. If you treated your dog badly, the British authorities would remove your dog licence and end your right to a dog” (p. 5). In a similar manner, countries in the ‘Third World’ will face an ‘international community’ that is, above all, the means of coalition of the Western states

centred on the USA. The employment of concepts such as ‘international community’ or the ‘global context’ would cloak the hegemonic nature of globalisation discourses. Therefore, the ‘international community’ will grant these countries sovereignty as far as they comply with its democratic values, but, if these states do not follow these values, the sovereignty licence will be taken away, and, in many cases, the ‘international community’ will intervene in various ways within the ‘delinquent’ countries.

As such, it could be maintained that discourses of globalisation reiterate the former colonial ones that claimed that they were spreading civilisation to people around the world. As Said (1978) reminds us, colonial discourse and the production of ‘knowledge’ about ‘the Orient’ was an ideological accompaniment of colonial power, which aimed to justify the colonisers’ desire to perpetually subjugate colonised societies. He applied the concept of ‘discourse’ to examine how the formal study of the ‘Orient’ in key literary and cultural works to create ‘objective’ knowledge supported by various disciplines, such as philology, history, anthropology, philosophy, archaeology, and literature. Said asserts that these works were accredited by Western academic consensus. Therefore, “the authority of academic institutions and governments” can create

... not only knowledge but the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it (Said, 1978, p.94).

Within this understanding, post-colonialism reveals how discourses of former colonialism and the current phenomenon of globalisation intersect with power, language, and knowledge to create an understanding of the world, and embody the values by which one lives, either willingly or by force. Thus, post-colonial repertoires draw attention to how meanings and discourses such as 'global context' or 'international community' are demystified in a way that blurs the lines between ideological and objective. This is, according to Said, is a 'political vision of reality' that incorporates informed assumptions that legitimise its practice over the colonised. In sum, this analysis opens further possibilities to trace connections between the visible and the hidden, ideas and institutions, and the dominant and marginalised in the context of globalised educational contexts. It also shows how power works through language, literature, culture, and the institutions that demonstrate authoritative assumptions about 'other cultures'.

In addition to offering an alternative understanding of the colonial discourse, post-colonialism provides compelling interventionist approaches to address concrete educational problems. Crowely and Matthews (2006) use post-colonialism to establish reconciliation and anti-racism in the classrooms of South African schools. They deem their 'pedagogical intervention' of anti-racism, especially when connected to post-colonial thoughts, a workable model for establishing trust between the white inhabitants and indigenous black Africans. Similarly, Smith (1999) explores the issue of representation of Maori students in New Zealand to assist them in their struggle as subaltern subjects to speak for themselves. Adopting Freire's 'pedagogy of hope' and post-colonialism, Lavia (2006, 2007)

examines issues of identity, subalternity and representation in the academic settings. She argues that to enable the teachers, as subaltern professionals, there is a need to promote social awareness of teaching as a form of 'critical professionalism'. However, she insists that "post-colonial aspirations for education require consideration of practice as the convergence of philosophical and methodological endeavours in which the personal, collective and professional can be understood" (p. 328).

Furthermore, post-colonialism adapts miscellaneous theoretical frameworks, such as new historicism, subaltern studies, and feminist theory. The notion of 'discursive practice' (see below) is central to post-colonialism where eclecticism as a discursive epistemological position presents the theory, "rather than a coherent project of proposition, [but as a critical stance that] offers a persistent questioning of power, knowledge, culture and identity that de-universalises the project of the Enlightenment and displaces the mythologies and discourses of modernity and development that shaped these practices" (Andreotti, 2006, p. 10). Young (2003) perceives this eclecticism by maintaining that

[p]ost-colonial theory, so called, is not in fact a theory in the scientific sense [...] It comprises instead a related set of perspectives, which are juxtaposed against one another, on occasion contradictory. ... Above all, post-colonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the west as well as the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different people of the world (p. 6-7).

In a similar vein, the theory expands its theoretical perspectives to affiliate with other similar theories including feminism, subaltern studies and deconstructionism to respond to various social and cultural problems including education. From a feminist-deconstructivist standpoint, Spivak (1985) explores how to recover the voices of those who have been made subjects of colonial representations, particularly women, and read them as potentially disruptive and subversive. She uses the concept of imperialism to emphasise that colonialism is still at work in different forms. Her interest is in examining “not just imperialism in the nineteenth-century sense, but as it was displaced into neo-colonialism and the international division of labour” (Spivak, 1985, p. 7). In her analysis of colonial discourse, she problematises the speech act between the speaker and the listener on the grounds that it is determined by the relational conditions of their interaction. She argues that voices seen as unworthy of circulation (the subaltern) do not exist in isolation from the systems of representation, but are conditioned by them. The listeners are also conditioned by these systems, which determine how they listen (Spivak, 1988).

Employing a self-reflexive approach, Spivak (1988, 1993) analyses the practices of representing women in once-colonised societies. Reflecting on her position as a privileged academic woman living in the West, she problematises the relationship between ‘Third World’ women and their representation via ‘First World’ scholarship. Her basic assumption is that Western scholarship, ignoring the diversity, heterogeneity, and the overlapping nature of subaltern groups, follows fundamentally essentialist premises. And any elitist

position aiming to voice these groups cannot avoid this essentialism, since the very act of defining them as a subaltern group, differentiates them from the elite.

In her analysis of the position of Indian women, Spivak concludes that the 'subaltern cannot speak'. She contends that there is no way in which an oppressed or politically marginalised group can voice their resistance. Her argument is that "no act of dissent or resistance occurs on behalf of an essential subaltern subject entirely separate from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks" (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995, p. 219).

Educational research informed by Spivak's arguments unfolds the psychological damage of identity that canonised literatures have produced on foreign learners particularly women. Although there is a plethora of research and literatures in this field, I exemplify by one study from the British Columbian context. Kouritzin (2004) utilised her own diaries to deconstruct the literary canon as represented in a literature course (British Columbia 12) she studied twenty years ago. Working with feminist theory and post-colonialism, she analysed the cultural dominance of English literature and its representation of the 'other'. She perceives that her experience of studying this course was coloured by "misogyny, violence against women and children, sexual degradation, bestiality, and pornography" (p. 204). Reflecting on her undergraduate literary experience, she recalls how she was seeking meanings in literary texts she studied through which she could identify herself with: "I learned to identify with statements made by people at different points in history from different social classes... I thought I learned to be a humanist. I thought I



‘understood’ something deeper and more powerful than my life” (p. 191). Within such phrases, she comes to realise later that her adolescent responses and evocations regarding literary meanings transform her into a Westernised ‘humanist’ subject. Kouritzin goes on:

I know the power of literature. I know what it means to have a room full of young, eager students and to share with them the power and passions of poetry. There is a bond created that can so easily be confused with sexuality. Although I never confused that bond with love, I know many who did. Teaching, with its nurturing, encouraging, and enveloping power relationships is both sensual and sexual. In the moments of shared insight, in the moments when intimate thoughts and ideas are formed and given birth, it is so tempting to fuse in Shakespeare’s “marriage of true minds” (Shakespeare, “Sonnet 116”) with someone younger who flails and flames more strongly than yourself and thus finds immortality. How many of us have implicitly acknowledged this, saying: “My students will do anything for me”? (p. 206).

As can be observed from this quick survey, educational inquiry informed by post-colonialism has acknowledged the ‘gaps’ and ‘discontinuities’ that unified theories fail to notice. The discursive and the multi-trajectory nature of the theory enabled research to examine the ‘shifts’, ‘developments’ and omissions’ that, in their pleas for coherence, positivistic theoretical frameworks

discount. The proliferation of epistemologies that the theory affords is not simply academic in fashion; it is rather a response to substantive changes in the way we perceive what it means to provide a claim for knowledge and meaning-making, from the most private and intimate to the most exoteric and global.

As Sadiq (2007) observes, post-colonialism is contemporaneous with the post-modern era as it assumes similar locations within intellectual traditions informed by unequal relations of power represented by European humanism and its epistemologies. She argues that the theory has developed in response to the imbalance of forces in the world relationships that have given birth to post-modernism in the 'First World' and to post-colonialism in the other three. Appiah (quoted in Sadiq, 2007, p. 19) asserts that in the term 'post-coloniality', the prefix is similar to that in the term 'post-modernism' in that both challenge "earlier legitimating narratives"; the difference is that post-coloniality challenges these narratives for ethical, rather than philosophical, purposes. Therefore, post-colonialism also challenges postmodernism and Appiah believes the latter could learn from the former. Likewise, Carter (2006) deems post-colonialism's unique area of inquiry and its critical appraisal of dominant and subordinate relations to have the potential to offer the science of education a different vantage point from which to view issues of multiculturalism, diversity, boundaries, identity, representation, and pluralism. It has opened spaces to generate discussions about cultural work within the science of education, and offers 'interventionist approaches' to explore the unconsciousness in textual knowledge, which can reveal the often obscured colonial practices that are ingrained in educational normative

scholarship and practice. In sum, the theory functions “within a framework of hybridity and ambivalence as hybridised and fluid, always in the making, and recasts culturally diverse students’ homogenised identities into multiple, mobile and provisional constructions, more accurately attune to conditions of living and learning under the indeterrminacy of the transforming global world” (p. 689).

### **Analysing 'post-colonial' educational systems**

Having this quick review of educational research informed by post-colonialism, I utilise this section to review the current educational systems in countries with former experience of colonialism. I discuss how these systems still, to large extent, adhere to colonial legacies through cleaving to Western educational models. I argue that ‘neo-colonial’ metaphors still largely prevail in our policies where education remains one of the areas where colonial legacies are mostly still at play. As I pointed above, the ‘colonial discourse’ or, more precisely, ‘regime of truth’ is a system of knowledge and beliefs through which the relationship between the coloniser and colonised is recognized; it still reiterates in our current times. It, however, regenerates a new language that in turn replicates the former ‘colonial discourse’. As Ashcroft *et al.* (1999) insist, “education is the most insidious and in some ways the most cryptic of colonialist survivals, older systems now passing, sometimes imperceptibly, into neo-colonialist configurations” (p. 426).

The current discourses of development and modernisation surrounding issues of education, I argue, still incorporate the landmarks of colonial ideologies. Notions such as ‘national integration’ and ‘nation building’ bear the genealogy of European 18<sup>th</sup>-century imperial

ideologies. As Spivak (1993) contends, the role of education in 'Third World' countries marks a continuation of colonial ideologies. She argues that as power shifts from the centre to the margin, the margins simply replicate the colonial systems, creating 'neo-colonial' educational systems. She asks: "does not participation in such a privileged and authoritative apparatus require the greatest vigilance?" (p. 85), calling for vigilance to ensure neocolonialism does not prevent decolonisation. Thus, she recognises the difficulty inherent in conceptualising a post-colonial space without an adequate historical referent but stresses the importance of advancing the decolonising agenda and identifies the central issues:

the political claims that are most urgent in decolonised space are tacitly recognised as coded within the legacy of imperialism: nationhood, constitutionality, citizenship, democracy, even culturalism (p. 60).

The most underprivileged category in these educational systems are the learners who lack voice to express their real interests and are thus excluded from decision-making regarding their own education. It seems that the three decades that separate our contemporary times from the work of Freire regarding the promotion of the '*Pedagogy of Hope*' have left us with traditional and oppressive models of education that continue to adopt totalising and static approaches to knowledge, and espouse rehearsal approaches to normalise and subdue voices of learners.

As Freire (1985) observes, learners are the most disadvantaged and oppressed category as they are excluded and made invisible in mainstream education. By adhering to the ideology of colonialism that nurtures the class division and widens the gap between those in power and those who lack it, policy makers have privileged their own interests at the expense of the majority of the society, including the learners. They fail to inculcate their 'enlightening' education to a class of powerless and voiceless learners. Consequently, most educational systems in these countries are dysfunctional and weak in organisation, pedagogy, curriculum, policy making, and planning (Hickling-Hudson *et al.*, 2004).

The banking model of education, for example, sees students as empty vessels that teachers fill with 'appropriate' knowledge without consideration of their needs, which projects education as a practice of domination (Freire, 1989). Currently, Fiedler (2007) perceives these models as persistent in the 'Third World's' educational sites claiming that they adopt "a notion of knowledge that can be compartmentalised into different academic subjects with clearly defined boundaries and power relations between them" (p. 50). Such a notion, he contends, fails to prepare the learner for the diversity of the modern world:

for a learner this means that learning is mainly about taking in and storing what has been taught [...] in order to be assessed at a later stage by standardised tests. Education in other words is ultimately not about how we learn but what we learn and as such it is failing to

prepare learners to live in a diverse and globalised society (p. 50).

He argues that in the so called 'knowledge societies', knowledge is seen as a 'thing', a 'product' introduced as a factual outcome that is stored in learners' minds. Conversely, Apple (2000) maintains that "knowledge is never neutral; it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power" (p. 42). The means and ends involved in educational policy and practice are the results of struggles between powerful groups and social movements. Both attempt to make their knowledge legitimate, to defend or increase their patterns of social mobility, and to increase their power in the larger social arena. Hence, "it is naïve to think of school curriculum as neutral knowledge" (ibid, p. 43). Foucault (1983) warns that, in its distribution, education, in what it permits and in what it prevents, follows the well-trodden paths of social conflict. To him, every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers that carry it.

Indeed, such arguments are robustly relevant to present educational discourses and practices. In their adoption of post-colonial analytical frameworks, those writers draw out attention to culture, power and discourses of teaching and learning, and call us to engage with views of education that contest the modernist globalised or neo-colonised paradigm of education.

In the remaining part of this paper, I exemplify such a 'post-colonial moment' by drawing some implications from

English literary education in English departments in post-colonial settings, particularly those in the 'Middle East'. I argue that the voices of undergraduate learners of English are suppressed and kept hidden by the hegemony of an Anglo-American literary tradition that is rooted in Eurocentric education. I argue that a class of 'cultural capital' elites, who circulate the claims of standardisation, still propagate the Western or, more precisely, the Anglo-American literary canon as the only 'valid' literary tradition to be taught in these contexts. I also argue that this class perceives its power through maintaining the status quo.

### **An enduring hegemony of English literature**

English Literary education in post-colonial settings, I argue, revolves around two traditions: avoidance of political and cultural issues, and/or adopting Eurocentric models of textual interpretations; both of which project the Anglo-American literary canon as a colonising agent. Hall (2005) contends that "the strict 'Beowulf to Virginia Woolf' approach of old-style Oxbridge English study was uncritically exported to the colonies and beyond" including Egypt, Jordan and the West Bank (Palestine) (p.146). He claims that the literary curriculum in these contexts tends to be "conservative, over-specified in terms of excessive reading loads of prescribed canonical works, but under-specified in terms of educational aims, as if the value of literature was obvious" (p. 146). Similarly, Kouritzin, (2004) observes in the context of the British Columbian context, "the study of English literature, as traditionally conceived in high schools and universities, reinforces Eurocentrism, racism, [and] elitism" (p.185).

In the era of colonisation, colonial education was principally dependant on English literature to 'educate' colonised subjects in the norms, values and cultures of the coloniser. In addition to using the power of English literature as a vehicle for imperial authority, and vital process of socio-political control, English literature itself is propagated as having a unique universal human value, and perpetuates "the humanistic functions, traditionally associated with the study of literature, for example, the shaping of character or the development of the aesthetic sense or the disciplines of ethical thinking" (Viswanathan, 1987, p. 2). Other World literatures or literatures of non-White people written in English are often referred to as lacking these universal values, and of being unable to meet the literary 'standards' of those of the centre, and are, therefore, often marginalised or excluded. As Viswanathan reminds us, "in the colonies, English studies substituted for prestigious Latin and Greek studies, setting in place a form of British culture to which colonials might aspire" (p. 20). If British literature took the place of the classics in the colonies, then 'other literatures' became what English literature was to England, "a less prestigious variant of English studies" (p. 22). This has created a hierarchy of cultural capital with classical European literature as the most respectable and colonial literature as the least.

In addition to its role as a colonising agent by means of text selection, the study of English literature provides ways of reading and interpreting texts to nurture Eurocentric ideals and to mute the voice of those on the margins from being heard. Analysing the educational systems in the countries with history of colonialism, Viswanathan (1989) concludes that teaching English literature in the colonies is complicit with the maintenance



of colonial power. She reasons that English in colonial institutions has gained a particular importance as it "took on a more moralistic, humanistic function" (p. 85). She points out that the study of literature as an expression of the culture has led to a historical approach to literature which served two purposes:

first, to develop a historical awareness of the cultural moments in which those usages, precedents, and conventions are especially strong and second, to reclaim those moments as exemplary instances of truth, coherence, and value (p. 119).

In her experience of studying English literature, Kincaid (quoted in McLeod, 2000) recalls that "the Brontës, Hardy, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats ... were read to us while we sat under a tree". McLeod contends that "[t]he teaching of English literature in the colonies must be understood as part of the many ways in which Western colonial powers such as Britain asserted their cultural and moral superiority while at the same time devaluing indigenous cultural products" (p. 140). Christian morality, furthermore, was indirectly taught in these settings through English literature.

McLeod points out that "English literary texts were presented in profoundly moral terms, with students invited to consider how texts conveyed 'truths' at once universal and timeless, yet entirely correspondent with Christian morality" (p. 142). Loomba (2005) believes that even those texts which are arguably seen to be distant from colonial ideologies, can be made so through the educational

systems that devalue other literatures, "and by Eurocentric critical practices which insist on certain Western texts being the markers of superior culture and value" (p. 75).

Currently, such colonial ideologies have found currency among educators in the once colonised countries who, according to Ghandi (1998) have enabled a hierarchy of literary value that established the English literary canon as the normative embodiment of beauty, truth, and morality and as a textual standard that enforces the marginality and the inferiority of other literatures compared with the great English tradition. University English departments in the 'Middle East' have developed the habit to construct a particular brand of 'standards', not by teaching literature written in English, but rather by insisting on teaching the 'best' works represented by the 'classics' of English literature (Zughoul, 2003; Hall, 2005; Balzer, 2006; Abu-Shomar, 2012).

In addition to canonical selections, the process of reading English literature provides ways of interpreting and understanding literary texts that nurture Eurocentric ideals. Since theory regulates how literary meanings are derived, current literary theories, with Western genealogy, construct Eurocentric views of knowledge and discourse. Therefore, literary interpretations governed by literary theory are not neutral and objective (Eagleton, 2008); but socially and culturally constructed. As Balzer (2006) contends, Western literary theory is embedded within power/knowledge/culture configurations. When literature is established as an academic subject, theories developed to guide readers' interpretations of texts turned the study of literature into a search for meaning using theories shaped by European philosophies and epistemologies.

Thus, the production of criticism became “the central activity of the culture industries of the imperial centres, especially those in institutions of higher education” (Mitchell, 1995, p. 476).

Towards the mid-twentieth century, modernism has been used almost exclusively in the teaching of literature until the introduction of reader-response theory in the 1980s. Both of these however deny students the opportunity to read with other than Western eyes (Ghandi, 1998). Other diverse critical theories including New Criticism or Formalism, which also occupy a large place in the literature-classroom, have practiced a remarkable role in reinforcing the power of the English literary canon.

As Ghandi (1998) points out, "New Critics postulated the text as a sacrosanct object, hermetically sealed from the contaminations of both rational enquiry and materialistic world which occasioned such enquiry" (p. 160). One result of this monolithic methodological approach to textual analysis has projected an interpretation tradition that preserves the creation of a putative 'universal' reader. As Mukherjee (1995) observes, students focusing on the universality of human experience erase "the ambiguities and the unpleasant truths that lie in the crevices" and forget that "society is not a homogenous grouping but an assortment of groups" (p. 450).

Mukherjee speaks of his disappointment by his Canadian students' responses to a short story by Margaret Laurence entitled *The Perfume Sea*; a story that aims at exposing "the nature of colonialism as well as its aftermath" (449). He expected his students to criticise the hairdresser salon owner in Ghana after independence for making "the African Bourgeoisie slavishly imitate the

values of its former colonial masters" in beauty and fashion (p. 448). The students' analysis digressed and focused on how 'believable' or 'likable' the main characters are and on how they found happiness at the end by accepting change. He blames the 'source' of his students' 'universal' vocabulary, the 'literary critics and editors of literature anthologies' who rather than facing the realities of power, class culture, social order and disorder, hide behind the universalist vocabulary that only mystifies the true nature of reality.

Literary theory that is founded in the imperial centre, and critical theory that aims to invite post-colonial readers to challenge the notions of European modernism and universalism, should consider the cultural particularities of those readers. To achieve this aim, there should be a need to develop and promote other alternative ways to empower readers beyond the Eurocentric traditions. Post-colonialism, according to Mukherjee (1995), is the world's theory that pronounces these voices. He believes that post-colonialism "makes us interrogate many aspects of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted, enabling us ... to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical location" (p. 2-4).

Since, post-colonial approaches to reading and writing are primarily concerned with geography, the promotion of learners' voices in the 'peripheries' becomes possible. Said (1993) reminds us to consider: "the geographical notation, the theoretical mapping and charting of territory that underlies Western fiction, historical writing, and philosophical discourses of the time" while engaging in a process of reading and writing (p.6). As Said urges us to do,

individually or together, we (educators) need to offer to our learners “a kind of geographical inquiry into human experience” (p. 6). In brief, the act of reading of literature should in post-colonial contexts create conditions for readers to broaden their understanding of social and cultural diversity, and develop reading approaches around Critical Pedagogy and post-colonial repertoires. These beliefs about learners’ education and literary experiences would help transform the decision-making map to include a wide variety of stakeholders including learners in a process of emancipation and liberation.

### **Critical pedagogy and signs of hope**

In these post-colonial times, when at least some of the earth’s humans struggle to undo the material and symbolic harm rendered in the era of European imperialism and continued in the present era of neo-colonialism, educators have a great deal of searching to do if they hope to rid their ethical, political and educational principles of colonial legacies. Yet, new languages or critical discourses are not inevitably the ideal ones to remedy inherent problems in ‘post-colonial’ educational contexts.

Perhaps a re-conceptualisation and a re-contextualisation of old ones might provide us with workable solutions. For many of us, educators concerning ourselves with regaining the sovereignty of our educational systems and overthrowing the colonial heritage, the incredible work of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux continue to offer hope, for their work might be viewed as early post-colonial arguments. In their seminal texts, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1989), *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994) and *Border Crossing* (1992), Freire and Giroux have provided us with a lifetime of practice and theory devoted to helping formerly

colonised peoples throw off the yoke of oppression and determine the direction of their own lives.

In critical educational studies, the word 'hope' is often associated with the work of Paulo Freire. In fact, the entire philosophy of education for Freire was established on the 'ontology of hope'. For him, "Hope is rooted in men's incompleteness from which they move out in constant search" (Freire, 1972b, p. 64). At the same time, "it is in our incompleteness, of which we are aware, that education as a permanent process is grounded" (Freire, 1998a, p. 58). Both education and hope share the same root and feed each other both ontologically and epistemologically. Yet, the meaning of hope, which Freire talks about, is one that is associated with action, struggle and the desire for change.

At the same time, actions without hope are pessimistic and fatal or constitute a 'pure scientific approach'; "the attempt to do with hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion" (p. 52). For Freire, the very possibility of the act of education is grounded in this understanding of hope as a constant search born of the human consciousness of its own incompleteness. Webb (2010) argues that what is important is not only the possibility of education that is grounded in hope but also its purpose, for if hope is characterised as a constant search then the purpose of education is to act as its permanent guide" (p. 327). It is for this reason that Freire perceives the need for a 'kind of education in hope' that is so "important for our existence, individual and social, that we must take every

care not to experience it in a mistaken form” (Freire, 1994, p. 3).

Elsewhere, (1989) he argues that viewing education as a neutral entity is a contradiction in terms since whether at the university, high school, primary school, or adult literacy classroom, the very nature of education has the inherent qualities to be political, as indeed politics has educational aspects. In other words, an educational act has a political nature and a political act has an educational nature. Dominant groups in society create situations, where, even if there are compromises and accords to include the less powerful, they are ones who benefit from such concessions. Freire argues that education and politics feed on each other. The way the curriculum is designed is political in the sense that certain material is selected that has to be taught to preserve the values and interests of certain groups.

In a similar vein, Giroux (1992) calls for the development of a Critical Pedagogy, "through which educators and students can think critically about how knowledge is produced and transformed in relation to the construction of social experiences informed by a particular relationship between the self, others, and the larger world" (p. 98-99). He refers to the conditions in which "both educators and students can rethink the relations between the centres and margins of power structures in their lives" (p. 99). *'Border Pedagogy'* creates conditions for teachers and students to respect and understand their differences while working towards a common goal. It calls for shifting borders that undermine and re-territorialize different configurations of culture, power and knowledge. It also links the notions of schooling and the broader category of

education to a more meaningful struggle for a just society. In order to achieve this goal, he contends that a number of theoretical considerations need to be unpacked.

For him, the category of border "signals a recognition of those epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power, and difference" (p. 28). It also "speaks to the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms, and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within the existing configuration of power" (p. 28).

Giroux recognizes Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' and hopes to counter culture as 'an object of unquestioning reverence' by calling for a new notion of culture as a "set of lived experiences and social practices developed within asymmetrical relations of power" (p. 99). The pedagogical approach that enables teachers and students to critique and challenge the notions of cultural capital is political and begins with liberation and empowerment. His notion of critical pedagogy calls for a critique of canons to acknowledge the colonising of differences through the representations of the 'other'.

He contends that canonical literatures typically represent the 'other' from a deficit perspective; in which the humanity of the 'other' is posited either as cynically problematic or ruthlessly denied. For emancipation to occur, Giroux's *pedagogy of difference* unravels "the ways in which the voices of the Other are colonised and repressed by the principal of identity that runs through the discourse of dominant groups "and enables the Others to



reclaim "their own histories, voices and visions" (p. 103-104).

Both Freire and Giroux view education as a setting where a genuine dialogue must be established between those who 'offer' knowledge and those who 'receive' it. Yet, for this dialogue to take place, it has to acknowledge education as a site of political powers, to work on the deconstruction of these matrices of relations of power, and to reconfigure positions of its parties so that the once powerless category could gain voice. Failing to liberate the marginalised, it would not be possible to free these contexts from their problems and dysfunctionality.

Freire (1989) suggests that cultural invasion can be reversed if the educator "asks himself what he will dialogue with the later [students] about" (p. 82) and begins to consider education as liberating by inviting learners to recognise and unveil real criticality (Freire, 1985). The dialogical relationship between the educator and the learner encourages a more just and liberating education that alters the relationship between the invaders and the oppressed, the coloniser and the colonised, in an effort to work toward a more equitable society. For Freire's conception of dialogical education to succeed, all parties must be interested in and committed to entering into dialogue.

Having this review of Freire and Giroux, I move to examine the possibility to reconceptualise their arguments in the context of the contemporary post-colonial educational scene. I argue that, with the broader lines of Hybridity, Third Space, Diasporas and dialogism educators, policy-makers and learners can establish a common ground for dialogue with the aim to search for better

possibilities for their education. Before moving to discuss the intersectional areas of Critical Pedagogy and these concepts, it might be noteworthy to briefly introduce these concepts.

### *Hybridity and Third Space*

The notions of ‘Hybridity’ and ‘Third Space’ occupy ‘a central place in post-colonial discourse’ (Meredith, 1998). In the aftermath of the Empire and more in keeping with our current times, the notion ‘culture’ as providing a unified description of peoples’ lives is largely contestable. Said (1993) asserts: “partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic.” (p. xxix)

The basic assumption of hybridity is that diversity replaces authenticity; confirming that ‘cultures are inevitably hybridised’ (Ashcroft et al., 1995). The idea of hybridity is also positioned as antidote to “the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define the whatness of a given entity” (Meredith, 1998, p. 2). Post-colonial discourse takes up the notion that any culture or identity is disputable or rejected, and Bhabha (1994) is aware of the dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities arguing that the intermediate spaces in-between subject-positions are loaded as the locale of the disruption and displacement of hegemonic colonial narratives of cultural structures and practices. He posits hybridity as such, as a locus of in-between space, where the cutting edge of translation and negotiation occurs.

A third space of hybridity is a position that brings differences into creative contact. Third Spaces are intrinsically critical of essential positions of identity and a conceptualisation of the 'self'. The importance of hybridity, Bhabha argues, is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third space emerges; it is the third space, which enables other positions to emerge. It is a mode of articulation, and a productive possibility or a reflective space that interrupts, interrogates and enunciates forms of meaning. It is a unique locale of utterance that goes beyond the realm of binary thinking and oppositional positioning, providing a spatial politics of inclusion, rather than exclusion. In sum, positioned within a third space of enunciation, hybrid existence is a 'lubricant' in the conjunction of difference that encodes a counter-hegemonic agency and normalising ideologies, and opens up a third space of/for re-articulation and meaning.

### *An Epistemology of Diaspora(s)*

Diasporic epistemology is embedded in the concept of Diaspora or the 'scattering of people over spaces'. Historically, the concept of diaspora refers to dispersion of people whether by force or voluntary from their traditional homelands. The history of the term was closely related to a collective banishment or trauma of particular ethnic, religious, or national groups leading to their geographical dispersal and associated with displacement, victimisation, alienation and loss (Vertovec, 1999).

Scholars have thoroughly examined the concept of diaspora, its origin, and relation to cultural, political, social, educational, psychological representations among others. Although adopting different historical and theoretical modalities, they have a common denominator:

the opening of the term that has been thought of as embodying specific referents. As Brubaker (2005) contends, discussions of diaspora(s) have branched out to include various domains in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space. Currently, the concept is used across a broad range of disciplines including: Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Cultural and Literary Studies, Migration Studies, and Politics International Relations (Adamson, 2008).

For the particular interest of this paper, I engage with a new theoretical strand that emerges to explore what is referred to as ‘diasporic epistemology’. Diasporic epistemology is an impetus of epistemic loci of emaciation informed by the conditions of diasporas. Mishra (1996) perceives diasporic epistemology as centred in the realm of hybridity and third space as these concepts constantly confront ‘cultural regimes’. She refers to diasporic epistemology as a constantly contesting antidote to cultural knowledge and other forms of hegemonic regimes informed by ethnocentric modalities. Close to this line of thought is the notion of diaspora as transitional cultures or what Clifford (1997) refers to as the “contact zones of nations, cultures and regions” (p. 283).

Similarly, Bonnerjee *et al.* (2012) perceive diasporic knowledge as a result of transitional links as well as a multiplicity of belongings and identity where fixity and fetishism invoked by ethnicity can be challenged. It is the idea of the difference between the ‘homeland’ and ‘host’ or the connections between ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Clifford, 1997) and the ‘historical rift between locations of residence and locations of belonging’ (Gilroy, 2000, p. 124) where the points of reference in attempts to theorise an epistemology

of diasporas. Beyond this line of thought, emergent voices seek to establish an epistemological stance of diasporas beyond the general idea of split and oscillated identities and between the binaries of 'home'/'host'. 'Diasporic Philosophy' (see Gur ze'ev, 2005 and Abu-Shomar, 2013) transcends diasporas beyond the idea of the 'scattering of people over the globe' by reconfiguring the notions of 'home' and 'host' land to argue that such a philosophy can embrace people who never experience dispersion in the physical sense.

### *Dialogism*

While the notions of hybridity, third space and diasporas provide a philosophical ground of being, knowing, and thinking, Bakhtin's (1981) Dialogism offers a move from dialectic, dualistic, binaries and opposition discourses into dialogic ones where the formula of 'self/other' is configured. Dialogic relationships also shape the nature of knowledge in a mediatory triangle of the 'self-other-sign'. Bakhtin argues that human learning takes place within dialogue that invites all parties to see things differently at once: "for each participant in a dialogue the voice of the other is an outside perspective that includes them within it. The boundary between subjects is not, therefore, a demarcation line, or an external link between self and other, but an inclusive 'space' of dialogue within which self and other mutually construct and reconstruct each other" (p. 353).

Furthermore, dialogue enables language to become more than a medium of communication or instruction. It becomes a mode of interaction vis-à-vis an exploration of difference, critical reflection, and consistent revisions of one's own subject positions where 'double-voiced' rather

than 'single-voiced' discourse is enabled (Bakhtin, 1986). In 'single-voiced' discourse, the speakers adhere to their own view point, paying no attention to the possibly of conflicting voices, and without attempting to perceive themselves as others see or hear them, while 'double-voice' discourse calls the social construction of 'the self in relation' and speakers see the 'self' not as a signifier of one 'I' but the coming together of many 'I's' and the intra- and inter-subjective voices are made possible (hooks, 1984).

While dualistic binaries that focus on pure identity miss the value of the blurring boundaries between such binaries, those whose identity is defined through dialogic interaction continue to negotiate dialectical history in ways that are invisible to dialecticians. Dialogic meaning-making transcends a relation that occurs outside that dialectic binary by revealing a wider field of intersecting binaries, each altering the others. As such, single binaries are transcended through dialogue to a multi-dimensional field and thus transcend and infuse new alternatives as they go through a complex cultural exchange instead of binary absorption or resistance between the 'self' and 'other', between white and non-white, or between coloniser and colonised.

Moore (1994) foregrounds resistance in the 'nexus of change' that is embedded in dialogue: 'resistance' would equal a dualistic pattern; 'absorption' would equal a dialectic pattern; and a 'nexus' of exchange would equal a dialogic. Thus resistance would be two monologisms in dualistic competition; absorption would be two monologisms in dualistic cooptation; and exchange would be a dialogism of multiple voices in collaboration, not in a utopian sense but in the sense of mutual cultural

dynamics rather than hegemonic cultural domination or inertia (p. 18).

## **Conclusions**

Having provided this brief review of these concepts, I move to address the possibility to foster these theoretical engagements in the context of Critical Pedagogy. I discuss how these concepts can collectively inform the creation of a common ground for individuals involved in desired educational reforms. The key theme that is shared between these concepts in relation to resistance is the creation of new spaces and conditions which enable endless creative possibilities to emerge while challenging doctrinaires of ideology, canonicity, marginalisation, dogma, ethnocentricity, and counter violence. I outline these common themes with their practical applications, regarding educational reforms, as follows:

*Theme One, being-towards, becoming, and transcendence:*

While totalising resistance projects aiming at reform and empowerment acknowledge ends, contradictions, abysses and self-constitution, hybrid, diasporic and dialogic improvisers find incompleteness as the sign of hope where hope is realised as a constant and dynamic search for new possibilities. This understanding of resistance negates pleas for ends, totalities and 'coherent' dogmas. Since the globalised era is characterised by the proliferation of epistemologies and fragmentation of identities where the stance of knowledge is constantly in flux, resistance should

take the aim of inclusiveness and incompleteness as the ultimate aims of reform.

On the one hand, this would enable ‘minorities’, subalterns and muted voices to be recognised in the hybridised spaces. By loosening monolithic discourses, singular authority in meanings and particular ways of seeing the world, deconstructing sites of power becomes a shared and ultimate aim of reform. The creation of these dialogic and hybridised spaces enables individuals to perceive themselves as incomplete subjects who exist in a constant search for hope through education since it is “human hope that rendered education possible, necessarily and necessarily possible” (Webb, 2010, p. 327).

*Theme Two: A reconfiguration of ‘I/’We’ formula via dialogism and Diaspora:*

In the creation of third spaces and dialogue, individuals are enabled to question the otherness of the ‘other’, and the authenticity of the ‘self’. Similarly, constant border crossing enables cultural, political, racial, national, and gender differences to be hybridised in a ‘third space’, thence, further ontological individuals (learners and educators) could be created.

Through reconfiguring the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ in a dialogic act, intimacy, hope and resistance could be reconstructed, reshaped, and promoted at the same time. I realise this engagement’s powerful involvement in the politics of education, hence, hybridised individuals would gain *an upper* hand on the politics by means of reconfiguring and transcending sites of power relations. By rejecting all forms of ‘self-evidence’ and ‘self-content’, as



well as nihilism, hybridised individuals seek to achieve their aims in the most responsible manner. They critically engage with the stance of knowledge, yet reject Enlightenment and being enslaved by Instrumental Rationality. Within the broader lines of diasporic epistemology and pedagogy of hope, it becomes possible to promote spaces where individuals develop an intimacy with the cosmos and beauty of love, at the one end, and resistance to oppression and injustice, at the other where human rationality cannot establish an authentic 'I' (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005).

*Theme Three: Deconstructing canonicity, 'cultural capital' and elitism:*

Whether in the literary realm or in the stance of knowledge in general, canons, standardisation and universalism are manifestation of perceived power and ideology. Since Bourdieu and Giroux recognise the notion of 'cultural capital' as 'an object of unquestioning reverence', the challenge should begin with deconstructing the notion of canons as representing 'honorific' humanistic values.

As a symptomatic sign of the Enlightenment's failure, hybridity qualifies a 'conceptual inevitability' for the dynamics of such discourses and becomes a "site of democratic struggle and resistance against hegemonic cultures" (Kriady, 2002, p. 310). Since the use of the canons creates an enduring relationship between

knowledge and power (Said, 1978) that is maintained by 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1998), we need to advocate a view of literature that "if anything is to be an object of the study it is the whole field of practices" through the promotion of 'discursive practice' (Eagleton, 2008).

To challenge canonicity is not impossible; it is a task that prioritises a 'discursive practice' that espouses all forms of knowledge as valid. I understand 'discursive practice' as a variety of action and discourse that is informed by, and serves to reproduce and transform, socially constructed values and ideologies (Davies, 1990). Building on this, discursive practice is an evolving mode of knowledge construction depending on the dynamism of the society. Although discursive practice is goal-oriented, the goal is not available to the consciousness of those participating in the practice. It involves paying attention not only to the production of meanings, but it also requires attention to how employment of resources reflects and creates the processes and meanings of the community in which the local action occurs (Young, 2008). Drawing on this, the dynamics of dialogic exchange and multiple subject positions created enable multitude forms of discursive practice that take up various sorts of knowledge as worthy of study. Similarly the dynamicity of social discursive practices works as an impediment of unified and total forms of knowledge.

Building on this, the trans-historical value of canons is put to question. Eagleton (2008) contends that "it is most useful to see 'literature' as a name which people give from time to time for different reasons to certain kinds of writing within a whole field of what Michel Foucault has called 'discursive practices' (p. 178). At a pedagogical level,

discursive practice and dialogic engagement challenge the dichotomous generic and historical conventions where the boundaries between public and private history and between fact and fiction are dissolved. Since cultural complexity is not simply socially constructed and defined but rather as essentially human, dialogic interaction ultimately leads to a genre of critical pedagogy that acknowledges multiple subjectivities and multiple forms of discursive practices. Although tension of difference is inevitable, critical pedagogy in the sense I have engaged with invites individuals to question their own positioning, destabilise their own subject positioning and explore other discursive positions.

In sum, I view the task of my engagement with those interdisciplinary concepts, theories and approaches a challenging endeavour since this chore remains questionable on the ground of coherence and unity. At the same time, I understand that in our times where the stance of knowledge and meaning are rhythmic in shape and dynamic in structure without rigid, closed, or static boundaries, approaches to them are turned into regulated disorder and planned chaos while keeping the stance of knowledge itself in flux, in motion, and repetitive. For a post-colonial world to sustain a diasporic/hybrid and dialogical stance, it becomes crucial that critical projects are 'framed' by assumptions of multiple possibilities practiced through the creation of dynamic and multiple spaces.

In my engagement with post-colonialism, I have attempted a vision of the 'creation' of spaces that enables individuals to cross from the colonised 'self' to an understanding of a post-colonial 'other'. I estimate this

post-colonial 'other' is reconfigured in the realm of the 'self' not merely in a cognitive sense, but also as participatory and contextually informed engagements. A diasporic/hybrid post-colonial individual can perform a participatory process of knowing by dialogue and through transcending 'the cultural constellations' or 'force-fields' that shape colonial binaries. Recognising the complexities of cultural representations in the current era, I prioritise the 'processes over 'destinations' where the ever-changing 'realities' replace static and essential canons, and educators' attention should be directed to the mediator or interpreter, rather than pointing to or ostensibly avoiding the essentialising of difference, with all that this entails politically and culturally.

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