Public Pedagogy and the Quest for a Substantive Democracy

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A CRITICAL NOTICE on four books by Henry Giroux:
- *The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence*, (1999). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 186 pages;
- *Impure Acts: The Practical Politics of Cultural Studies*, (2000a). New York: Routledge. 166 pages;
- *Stealing Innocence: Corporate Culture's War on Children*, (2000b). New York: Palgrave. 197 pages;
- *Public Spaces/Private Lives: Beyond the Culture of Cynicism*, (2001). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 204 pages.

In this age, characterized by the intensification of globalization and the wide diffusion of the ideology of the marketplace, entailing a fierce onslaught, for the purposes of commodification, on most public and private spaces, Henry Giroux continues to explore resources of hope for the revitalization of the public sphere. Although enhanced by some of the most critical theoretical insights of postmodernism, the process of exploration, found in Giroux's work, is predicated on the emancipatory ideals one associates with the modernist legacy, notably those of social justice, equity, and solidarity. Giroux has remained consistent, throughout his large corpus of work, in affirming the notion of learning as a fundamentally social act, underscoring, in the process, its collective dimension. It is this dimension that gives learning its socially transformative potential. Henry Giroux is most explicit on this in many of his writings. Quite representative is the following piece dealing with the kind of authority that needs to be assumed by teachers acting as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and cultural workers:

> In my view, the most important referent for this particular view of authority rests in a commitment to a form of solidarity that addresses the many instances of suffering that are a growing and threatening part of life in America and abroad. Solidarity in this

> instance embodies a particular kind of commitment and practice ....
> As a form of practice, solidarity represents a break from the bonds
> of isolated individuality and the need to engage for and with
> oppressed groups in political struggles that challenge the existing
> order of society as being institutionally repressive and unjust. This
> notion of solidarity emerges from an affirmative view of liberation
> that underscores the necessity of working collectively alongside the
> oppressed. (Giroux, 1997a, p. 104)

Following in the tradition of such radical luminaries as Antonio
Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Walter Benjamin, Stuart Hall, Paulo
Freire, Maxine Greene, Homi Bhabha, and bell hooks, among others,
Henry Giroux has always considered the cultural terrain as a key
source of power, rather than being, to use the popular though
problematic phrase, a context for "soft" politics. He draws on Antonio
Gramsci's insight that every relationship of hegemony is an educational
one, an insight, appropriated by Giroux, that one can trace back to an
early piece by the author on Gramsci in *Telos* (1980a), also available
elsewhere (Giroux, 1980b; Giroux, 1988).[1] Giroux has always recognized
the cultural realm as the one wherein subjectivities are continuously
shaped and desires are cultivated in a process which is "pedagogical"
and "whose structuring principles are deeply political" (Giroux & Simon,
cited in Giroux, 1992, p. 188; Giroux & Simon, 1989, p.10). In more
recent work, Giroux echoes Stuart Hall in referring to culture as the
terrain where "social practices are produced, circulated and enacted on
one hand and given meaning and significance on the other" (Giroux,
2000a, p. 9). He refers to "the production of meaning, social practices
and desires" as "public pedagogy" (1999, p. 4). Culture constitutes much
of the terrain wherein the present hegemonic arrangements are
developed and contested, given that hegemony is never complete, being
"a continuing, shifting, and problematic historical process" (Giroux &
Simon, cited in Giroux, 1992, p. 186; Giroux & Simon, 1989, p.8).

These considerations are intensified and developed even further in
the cluster of books under review, to which one must add such works as
Disturbing Pleasures (Giroux, 1994), *Fugitive Cultures* (1996), *Pedagogy
and the Politics of Hope* (1997a), the co-edited anthology, *Education and
Cultural Studies: Toward a Performative Practice* (Giroux & Shannon,
1997), and *Channel Surfing: Race Talk and the Destruction of Today's
Youth* (Giroux, 1997b). They represent the latest phase in Henry
Giroux's enormous corpus of work that started off with his writing
within/against the dominant paradigm of the mainly Marxist-inspired
theories of social/ cultural reproduction and resistance in education. The
works involved, in this very early phase, are *Ideology, Culture and the*

Process of Schooling (1981a)[2] and the much-celebrated *Theory and Resistance in Education* (1983), the latter being, for many years, a standard referent in critical debates on education. He later collaborated with Stanley Aronowitz in roughly the same area (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). While incorporating some of the most important insights from this paradigm, to "engage the Marxist tradition" (Giroux, 1992, p. 13), Giroux sought to introduce a "critical cultural politics" (Giroux, cited in Torres, 1998, p. 136) dimension to that work, drawing on the writing of Paul Willis and others, particularly work in connection with the Frankfurt School.[3]

Engaging and appropriating insights from the Marxist tradition is something Giroux continues to do at present. He has always felt that Marxism needs to be extended and revitalized (Giroux, cited in Torres, 1998, p. 153). His dissatisfaction with the social and cultural reproduction theorists had earlier led him to appropriate some of the more critical insights from cultural studies, works such as Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope*, and the growing body of postmodern literature, in a series of writings that rendered popular culture a vital area of enquiry. Here he often collaborated with Stanley Aronowitz (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991), Peter McLaren (Giroux & McLaren, 1989), and Roger I. Simon (Giroux & Simon, 1989). Other areas of influence during this period include feminism (Giroux, 1991), the work of Michel Foucault and postcolonial theory (1992), influences, which, it would be fair to say, continue to be felt even in his most recent work.

At no stage throughout his writing was the emancipatory dimension lost on Giroux. And it is in this particular aspect that the influence of Paulo Freire, among others, has been quite pronounced. Giroux's dissatisfaction with some of the excesses of postmodernism, especially its de-politicized, possibly nihilistic, and ludic versions, as well as those versions denoting an obsession with a fragmentary identity politics, led him to intensify his engagement with cultural studies. He felt that this area would enable him to "recover the primacy of the political" (Giroux, cited in Torres, 1998, p. 137); a vehicle for demonstrating the many ways by which the pedagogical is rendered political and the political is rendered pedagogical. The four books under review, together with the many other works developed during this period and cited earlier, reflect the intensification of Giroux's engagement with cultural studies.

They certainly represent a deliberate attempt by the author to bring a strong cultural studies dimension into education as well as to provide a pedagogical dimension to cultural studies itself. He sees these two areas, which he considers most valuable for the process of revitalization of democratic public life (towards a radically democratic public life), as

having a hitherto separate existence, especially within educational institutions. In one of his co-edited anthologies (Giroux & Shannon, 1997), he explores reasons why a cultural studies dimension has been missing from colleges of education, given that this area deals with a huge range of socialization agencies and the massive culture industry that provides much of the terrain in which hegemony is consolidated, through the shaping and conditioning of the various subjectivities, and challenged. Hegemony can be challenged by virtue of an oppositional and transgressive discourse occurring in and against institutions such as universities and the film industry, to name but two, that are not to be represented in monolithic terms. Cultural Studies, he believes, has much to offer educators. Giroux conceives of educators as cultural workers or, more appropriately, "public intellectuals," who provide a pedagogical function, in terms of either legitimation/consensus building or counter-hegemony, in different areas of social life. In *Impure Acts*, he describes the progressive public intellectual thus:

> Paul Gilroy has suggested that progressive cultural workers need a discourse of ruptures, shifts, flows, and unsettlement, one that functions not only as a politics of transgression but also as part of a concerted effort to construct a broader vision of political commitment and democratic struggle. This implies a fundamental redefinition of the meaning of educators and cultural-studies workers as oppositional public intellectuals. And as oppositional public intellectuals, we might consider defining ourselves not as marginal, avant-garde figures, professionals, or academics acting alone, but as critical citizens whose collective knowledge and actions presuppose specific visions of public life, community, and moral accountability. (Giroux, 2000a, p. 141)

Giroux therefore conceives of education in its broadest sense, encompassing many of the different areas that would be included in Gramsci's specific conception of *civil society*. Educators acting as public intellectuals, according to Giroux, operate in a terrain that extends beyond schools and universities, a terrain full of agencies engaging in "public pedagogy." These educators/public intellectuals include teachers, community activists, journalists, architects, artists, actors, public health employees, critics, social movement activists, and so forth – the list cannot be exhausted. For these reasons, the four books under review, and earlier volumes and pieces by Giroux, differ from the author's first published works in that they cover a much larger terrain than simply schooling. The sites wherein such public pedagogy takes place are numerous and various.

The four books under review provide critical analyses of the public pedagogical function of several important sites, many of which are

under the sway of corporate power. In *Stealing Innocence*, Giroux's work devotes attention, among other things, to corporations such as Calvin Klein (2000b, pp. 74-81), already tackled in *Channel Surfing* (1997b). This echoes the earlier work focusing on Benetton adverts (1994). In this book, he also sheds critical light on child beauty pageants (2000b, pp. 39-64). In an impressive work, Giroux also targets the Disney Empire (*The Mouse That Roared*). The corporation is tackled comprehensively through a multi-varied analysis that also takes issues of political economy on board, covering the whole gamut of activities through which Disney extends its corporate reach and providing, among several other illuminating accounts, revealing episodes concerning hierarchical and clinical management–labor relations in its theme parks. Some of the main arguments in this book are reproduced in a chapter in *Impure Acts.*

The film industry is the target of some very insightful analyses in most of Giroux's work, which includes, as objects of critique, not only the numerous Disney blockbuster cartoons but also the following: *Dirty Dancing* in his edited anthology with Roger Simon (Giroux & Simon, 1989); *Dead Poets Society* (Giroux, 1993); two Disney-Touchstone films, *Good Morning Vietnam* and *Pretty Woman*, in the *Mouse That Roared* (1999, pp. 129-130) and earlier work (1994); and *Fight Club* in Giroux's most recent *Public Spaces/Private Lives* (2001).

Giroux is at his best demonstrating how some of the images produced in these forms of cultural production and other features "operate as public pedagogies within a broader set of articulations" that resonate "with broader issues in the historical and sociopolitical context in which they are situated" (2001, p. 75). Examples of the images and other features in question include: the racist representation of Arabs in *Aladdin* and degenerate images of youth in 'heroin chic' adverts; racially-coded language in *The Jungle Book*; sexist gender relations in *Pretty Woman*; violence and machismo as a solution to masculine identity crisis in *Fight Club*; the reconstruction of childhood innocence for the gratification of adult desire.

Henry Giroux engages in this extensive scouring of different forms of popular culture not to engage in simply an ideological critique, a point he is at great pains to make throughout the four books, but to reinforce his overriding thesis, which lies at the heart of many of these and other works, namely that a war is being waged against children and youth (especially marginalized youth such as blacks, indigenous, and working class youth), precisely those people who, in his view, should hold out the promise of a better future. And yet they are made the subject of relentless attacks that take several forms, including coercion,

demonization, and commodification (through corporatist encroachment) within a New Right scenario. Needless to say, the demonization of youth, through a plethora of unsavory images and publicized police crackdowns, serves, as Giroux points out (see also Kellner, 2001, p. 143), to justify cuts in spending on youth welfare and other social programs. The war on children occurs through "retrograde policy, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the pervasive glut of images that cast them as the principal incitements to adult desire" (Giroux, 2000b, p. 63).

The issue concerning the war on youth, especially black youth, is discussed in depth in a variety of places, including *Fugitive Cultures* (1996). Very revealing in terms of factual documentation and analysis are chapters such as the one focusing on zero tolerance in *Public Spaces/Private Lives* (Ch. 2). The chapter on zero tolerance brilliantly captures the current situation in the United States and elsewhere where one witnesses a massive increase in spending on incarceration and cutbacks in the funding of traditional public goods such as schools, health care, universities, libraries, social programs, and so on. As a person living outside North America, I found outgoing New York City Mayor Rudolf Giuliani's farewell speech, broadcast live on Sky News, quite revealing in this respect, in that it confirms Giroux's version, and that of other writers, of where the priorities lie in a New Right policy context. These priorities are likely to become more pronounced following the tragic events of September 11th, with the New Right authorities now likely to have a *carte blanche* to continue to adopt zero tolerance policy measures on the grounds of security.

The images targeted by Giroux, to drive home his central point concerning the war (in many cases, class-based, sexist, homophobic, and racist) being waged on youth and children, have a broader international relevance in as much as racism, to take one example, is a global reality, with immigrants, who do not fit the Eurocentric normalizing discourse, constantly being "otherized" in a variety of countries that are increasingly becoming multi-ethnic. These include my own country, Malta, and its neighboring Southern-European states that, having, for years, experienced massive waves of emigration are now experiencing immigration from the Mediterranean's southern shores and elsewhere (see Borg & Mayo, in press; Mayo, 2001).

Directly connected to this war on children and youth is the encroachment of corporate culture on all spheres of life, as capitalism extends its tentacles, through neo-liberal policies, to draw more aspects of our existence into capitalist social relations of production. Public goods become consumer goods, as attempts are made, through economic and cultural policies, to construct a very reductionist form of citizenship,

one whereby people, including children, are portrayed and conditioned to act as two-dimensional persons, namely producers and consumers, rather than as persons with multiple, albeit often contradictory, subjectivities capable of engaging as social actors (see Martin, 2001, p. 5).

While Giroux has extended his areas of analysis beyond schooling, he has not ignored the ongoing corporatization of schools and universities. In the first place, it can be argued that many of his insights, concerning the corporate culture industry's commodification and construction of innocence, childhood, and youth, besides its shaping of desires and the inculcation of the values of competitiveness and consumption, not to mention the mortgaging of children's futures through full-blooded "nymphet" child beauty contests, can be of benefit to educators working in schools and other settings. Equally beneficial is Giroux's stinging critique, in *The Mouse That Roared*, of the way history is rewritten by mass appeal mega-corporations such as Disney (see the discussion on *Pocahontas* in Ch. 3, p.101 and Ch.4). These insights and many others can help educators provide meaningful educational experiences that resonate with the learners' everyday life and various aspects of their identities. Teachers and other educators ignore popular culture at their peril, given the way it conditions students' lives and their ever-shifting identities.

This applies not only to teachers in the United States but to educators in various parts of the world since much of what Giroux says has a global resonance given the intensification of globalization in its economic and cultural, including digitally-mediated, forms. I can confirm, for instance, that the issue of child beauty pageants is a growing occurrence in my native Malta and is of concern to a number of teachers I recently met in schools when supervising student-teachers on their practicum. The war on youth and children seems to have become a global war.

Second, *Impure Acts* and *Public Spaces/Private Lives* address the issue of corporate encroachment in formal education. Henry Giroux's strictures concerning the way corporations (including the Disney corporation) are providing funds for schools in return for advertising rights in the schools' rest places and corridors would be very instructive to educators and school principals/heads in other countries who might be prone to opting for easy quick fix solutions to cash shortages caused by cutbacks in public funding as a result of neo-liberal policies.[4] Equally instructive are Giroux's views concerning the corporatization of the university where the marketplace ideology and a technical rationality take precedence over concerns with providing the tools for active

citizenship in a participatory democracy in which people would be regarded, once again, as social actors (people who learn and develop the knowledge to exercise their right to govern), rather than simply consumers/producers.

Giroux's concerns regarding the commodification of higher education, reflected in the gradual erosion of the humanities and social sciences, through under-funding and possibly instrumental reasoning on the part of potential students steeped in the consumer-culture ideology, and the search for university presidents with a business school or managerial background, to bridge the gap between business and academe, have a broader international resonance as Neo-liberal policies take their toll worldwide. Similar concerns have been expressed in a series of articles in the November 2001 issue of *the Courier Unesco* with regard to the way corporatist involvement in university projects places at risk the University's role in a democratic society (see Turk, 2001; Evans, 2001). There are also concerns regarding the way, in the words of Gambian researcher, Ebrima Sall (2001), African universities "have been sacrificed over the past twenty years on the altar of structural adjustment programmes" (p. 27), these programs, of course, constituting the Neo-Liberal recipe for the Third World. We have witnessed the emergence, in Europe, of such documents as the EU's "Memorandum on Lifelong Learning," which strikes me as representing a dilution of the old Scientific-humanist concept of Lifelong Education. The process is now being conceptualized in primarily vocational and neo-liberal terms. Similar concerns are expressed by Jane Thompson (2000) with regard to the future of Ruskin College, Oxford, England, looked upon, since its establishment, as the working class seat of learning *par excellence*. It has recently hired a male principal with a background in management studies:

> Given the opportunity in 1998 to appoint a strong woman principal – with good academic, feminist, socialist and relevant experience of leading 'struggling institutions' in times of rapid and social and educational change – the male dominated and 'Old Ruskin' governing body – despite their professed allegiances to 'the workers' rather than the bosses and to 'scholarship' rather than 'training' – chose to appoint in preference, a self-confessed pragmatist and self-employed management consultant, without the same credentials, rather than contemplate 'another bloody woman' in a position of power. (Thompson, 2000, p. 174)

In light of such corporatization and commodification of what were once important public spaces, one ought to applaud the efforts of those who swim against the current by seeking ways and means of extending their

roles as educators outside the university. They seek to build alliances with activists and popular educators in the wider communities, among youth, children, and adults, doing such work against all odds and in the face of much risk in view of the fact that such community involvement is rarely rewarded in department reviews or, for instance, the research assessment exercise (RAE), which takes place in Britain. The various attempts made by academics to engage the academy in popular education, to create partnerships with grassroots activists, as evident in the Ontario-based project, NALL (New Approaches to Lifelong Learning)[5] or PEN (the Popular Education Network), coordinated from Edinburgh, can be instructive in this regard.[6] These and other initiatives in various parts of the globe can provide signposts for future directions wherein educators, in and outside the academy, can become, in Giroux's terms, "border crossers" acting beyond the traditionally perceived boundaries of their work, culture, and social location to join forces with others (and here the question that arises is: on whose terms?) in the quest for a substantive democracy. This would be a democracy predicated on social justice and equity. Substantive democratization is regarded by Giroux, Freire, and others, present author included, as a *dynamic* and an *ongoing* process.

It would be interesting to see how such educators would take up the challenge posed by Giroux when he advocates a cultural studies approach to teaching/learning in various settings and urges us not to render this area an enclave within the academy inhabited by those who indulge in 'radical chic.' These scholars would be obsessed with issues of textuality (Giroux, 2000a, pp. 131-132), ideology critique, and signification and fail to connect this work to the broader discourses with which it resonates and the broader challenge of providing an anticipatory utopia forged in the struggle for the creation of a healthy and radical democracy, predicated on equity and social justice. One way of ensuring that cultural studies becomes a meaningful political pedagogical practice is by extending it beyond the traditional academy into the area of adult and community education/action, adult education being precisely the place where cultural studies originated in its British versions, as Raymond Williams has so forcefully indicated (Williams, 1993, p. 260).

As far as academics are concerned, this entails that they regard their role as that of public intellectuals. Their work would stand in contrast to that of all sorts of intellectuals adopting a variety of positions. One needs not rehearse the substantial literature that exists in this area. It would be appropriate, however, to refer to two types of intellectuals, among the many targeted by Giroux in these volumes

(these include Richard Rorty and Todd Gitlin who deny the political relevance of culture for different reasons). There are those intellectuals who seek to appropriate left wing revolutionary figures by providing right wing (mis) readings of their works to reinforce conservative positions regarding schooling, social policy, and so forth. Part of capitalism's dynamism resides in its ability, through a variety of means, including the work of intellectuals, to appropriate some if its oppositional figures, discourses, and symbols for its own ends, including commercial ends. For instance, we come across what has been termed "right wing Gramscism" (see, Van Kranenburg, 1999). Very instructive and timely, in this respect, is Giroux's scathing critique of E.D Hirsch's appropriation of Antonio Gramsci's views concerning schooling, an appropriation that serves conservative interests. Well-known Gramsci scholar, Joseph A. Buttigieg (1999, 2002) has produced a similar criticism of Hirsch for his particular reading of Gramsci's tract on the Unitarian school. Giroux's critique is available in chapter 4 of *Stealing Innocence*, which brilliantly illuminates Gramsci's revolutionary thinking, expounding on its relevance to present times. This chapter, just like the ones on Freire and Hall, in the same volume, offers us some very valuable theoretical ingredients for analysis of the very context-specific chapters that are found in the first section of the volume.

Giroux also refers to the kind of intellectual who, in Foucault's terms, confines his or her leftist posturing to simply "trading in polemics:"

> Lost here is any attempt to persuade or convince, to produce a serious dialogue. All that remains are arguments buttressed by an air of privileged insularity that appear beyond interrogation, coupled with forms of rhetorical cleverness built upon the model of war and unconditional surrender, designed primarily to eliminate one's opponent but having little to say about what it means to offer alternative discourses to conservative and neo-liberal efforts to prevent the democratic principles of liberty, equality, and freedom from being put into practice in our schools and other crucial spheres of society. (Giroux, 2000a p. 14)

Cynicism is rife in an age characterized by the misplaced triumphalism of capitalism and the widespread diffusion of certain reactionary versions of postmodernism. The latter insist on a fragmentary politics, rather than being content with providing important correctives to the grand narratives associated with the Enlightenment, a justified reaction to these narratives' rendering invisible a wide array of social differences, erasing from public memory multiple histories of violence and exploitation. In the reactionary versions of postmodernism,

however, we witness a politics through which identities become ends in themselves – "identities of being" in Predrag Matvejevic's (1997, pp. 122-123) terms. This type of politics negates the possibility of border crossing and the forging of alliances characterized by an "identity of doing," again in Matvejevic's terms. It continues to provide what Nawal El-Saadawi calls a "postmodern version of divide and rule." In an essay entitled "Why Keep Asking Me about My Identity?" El Saadawi states:

> The movement towards a global culture is therefore not contradicted by this postmodern tendency towards cultural fragmentation and identity struggles. They are two faces of the same coin. To unify power, economic power at the top it is necessary to fragment power at the bottom. To maintain the global economy of the few, of the multinationals, unification must exist at the top, amongst the few, the very few. (El Saadawi, 1997, pp. 121-122)

Such cynicism and nihilism bring about a general distrust of and generate a culture of derision directed at any attempt to imagine a world not as it is but as it should and can be. Its proponents indulge in a politics devoid of hope – often misrepresenting the views of the author, who is the target of their attack, quoting out of context, to develop a "straw man" argument. Giroux argues for a politics of hope, just like such other radical educators as Paulo Freire and Frei Betto, the latter declaring that:

> Human beings need dreams, need utopia and there is no ideology, no system that can stop this force. Dostoyevski was right when he said "The most powerful weapon of a human being is his (sic) conscience" and this nobody can destroy.... I think that it is a matter of time before we witness the eruption of a world movement to rescue utopias (Betto, 1999, p. 45)

The hope which Giroux writes about, in this context, is not a messianic one but an "educated hope" rooted in an informed critique of the present guided by a vision of alternative social relations, characterized by ongoing critique and renewal, by "annunciation" and "denunciation" (Freire's terms), for a more radically democratic public sphere. It is a sphere in which democracy, pedagogy, and human agency are connected (Giroux, 2001, p. 125). In this sense, Giroux's vision is utopian but his is an anticipatory utopia, prefigured not only by critique of the present but by an alternative pedagogical/cultural politics, constantly suspicious of its own limits, that foregrounds "issues of value, ethics, meaning, and affect" (p. 139).

These four books and much of Giroux's work project him as someone who scours diverse aspects of cultural politics with a clear preference for mass popular culture. Of course, he does this to demonstrate larger forces at play, notably what he perceives as an all out war on children

and youth, particularly black, latino/a, working class, and indigenous youth, through the constant corporatization/commodification and regulation/policing of public/private spaces. The choice of popular culture domains as areas of intensive inquiry makes perfect sense in this context.

It would be interesting, however, to see future work which complements this survey by also focusing on the way cultural production associated with dominant social groups, which, in Bourdieu's terms, denotes distinction, impinges on popular sensibilities and offers spaces for critical appropriation. Furthermore, it is important, in trenchant analysis of institutions, including corporate institutions, as provided by Giroux in *The Mouse That Roared*, that we get a sense of the way the institution is not monolithic and that the author does not try to win games 'six love, six love.'

Throughout his writings, Giroux makes the point that institutions are not monolithic. In my view, however, it not enough to dedicate just one or possibly two paragraphs, in a 186 page volume (*The Mouse That Roared*), to the fact that this institution has its contradictions and "progressive" and "enterprising elements" (see, for instance, Giroux, 1999, pp. 26, 27). One expects much more extensive treatment of these elements, in volumes such as *The Mouse That Roared*, to discover how these institutions can really be conceptualized as sites of contestation which consolidate the Gramscian view, echoed by Giroux, that hegemony is never complete.

In these four excellent books, Henry Giroux comes across as someone who constantly revises his emancipatory politics by learning and critically appropriating from the oppositional discourses of people connected with progressive social movements, the more critical versions of postmodernism and post-structural theory, the finer aspects of the American liberal progressive tradition associated with Dewey and the historical materialist tradition. Giroux does this primarily because his main concern is with trying to address the urgent problems, and cases of social injustice, of the times as they manifest themselves in different contexts. He comes across strongly, however, as a critical intellectual who is firmly rooted in the kind of politics that lies at the core of the social vision associated with modernity, a radically democratic socialist vision that foregrounds issues calling for equity, social justice, and social transformation.

NOTES

1. Giroux returns to a consideration of Gramsci in most recent work, including one of the four books under review. In *Stealing Innocence* he devotes a chapter to each of the following: Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, and Stuart Hall. In *Impure Acts*, he dedicates a chapter to Homi Bhabha and Frederick Douglass.

2. See also Giroux, 1981b.

3. As always, there is no substitute for reading the original sources. However, anyone seeking a comprehensive review of Henry Giroux's early work should refer to Ronald G. Sultana (1985). In *Public Spaces/Private Lives*, one can find an excellent and detailed analysis of Giroux's works from the mid-1980s onward, penned by Douglas Kellner (2001).

4. Mary Darmanin (2002), for instance, has just provided a detailed analysis of HSBC's involvement in education in Malta.

5. The website for NALL is: www.nall.ca

6. See the following website for various discussions on the theme: "Popular education and the university: Encounters, missed encounters and oblivion." http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/upen/discussion.html

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