

Article

What Freirean Critical Pedagogy Says and Overlooks from a Durkheimian Perspective

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Abstract

“Critical pedagogy” has become a prevalent grammar furthering the necessity of a change in pedagogy from a banking-style to problem-posing approach, which it argues will facilitate students’ development of independent values and equip them to lead the liberation of society from authoritarianism into democracy. To achieve this, classrooms need to serve as cultural forums, through which either engaged pedagogy or negotiated authority empowers teachers and students to engage in free dialogues that problematize school textbooks as “cultural politics.” This empowerment demands that teachers perform as transformative intellectuals, dedicating themselves to the amelioration of inequity in educational results by reconstructing new texts, making them more accessible to working-class students. While these theoretical lexicons envision a new perspective for the “educational function,” alleviation of the phenomenon of cultural reproduction can only occur if critical pedagogists pay more attention to academic curricula. Student achievements in such curricula, which respond to the demands of the social division of labor, have a profound influence on their potential social mobility.

Keywords

academic curriculum; educational inequity; emancipatory function; Freirean critical pedagogy; power relations; social mobility

Issue

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1. Introduction

The school of critical pedagogy presumes that education can accomplish its emancipatory function of transforming an authoritarian society into a democratic form by leading students to cultivate critical thought. This mission calls for a great change in pedagogical approach, from the traditional “banking” mode to one based on problem-posing, which allows students to draw upon their own experience to reply to questions posed by teachers (Freire, 1990). As this process promotes self-reflection, problem-posing facilitates the restoration of students’ subjectivities through the project of *conscientização* (Freire, 1998). Because self-reflections are often retained within the domain of personal experience, students are much more likely to use predetermined viewpoints to endorse power relations embedded within the social structure. It is argued that deso-

cialization enables them to develop open minds (Shor, 1992a). This process requires a democratic context in which both teachers and pupils can proceed with free dialogues (Freire, 1990, 1993, 2001). Accordingly, classrooms need to serve as cultural forums, permitting both sides to express their ideas in the spirit of multiculturalism that emphasizes the unique meanings found in individual cultures. Although the implementation of cultural forums demands a free context proliferating students’ active participation in pedagogic practices (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991), empowerment is the key to exertion of such ideas as engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994) and negotiation of authority (Shor, 1996). While freedom shields the practice of cultural forums, students’ critical minds may become mature when they align their personal experiences with a social structure that transmits the dominant ideologies of ruling groups through school textbooks. The concept of cultural politics profiles this

political attempt (Giroux, 1981, 1994) and calls for teachers to make a contribution to developing students' critical minds (Giroux, 1988). Teachers thereby need to be empowered to act as transformative intellectuals who dedicate themselves to reducing inequity in education results (Giroux, 1989a, 2000) through the construction of new texts suitable for students from all types of social class backgrounds (Giroux, 2004).

Although the perspective of critical pedagogy addresses the linkage between independent values and social reform, the functions of education are not limited to this association. Education also needs to secure productivity through the transmission of knowledge/skills associated with production, in order to meet a variety of social needs (Durkheim, 1933). This function underlies the necessity of academic curricula, within which students' achievements play a key role in social mobility, which in turn is viewed as a yardstick for measuring educational inequity. Unfortunately, power relations have become implicitly enshrined in academic curricula through its theoretical and systematic character, whereby the logic of knowledge transmission prejudicially restricts the ability of some to legitimately have access to such curricula and achieve upward mobility (Bernstein, 1990, 1996). This article sets out to outline dual realms of educational function, namely the cultivation of independent values and academic knowledge. Its purpose is not to reject the insights of critical pedagogy with regard to educational inequity but to provide researchers who are interested in this school of thought with another path for enriching its theories. Although critical pedagogy has evolved by assimilating a range of other theories (Kincheloe, 2008), space limitations compel us to narrow the scope of this analysis to the leading proponents of Freirean critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux, who are its founder and most distinguished scholar respectively.

2. From Banking to Problem-Posing

For Freire (1990), education functions as a means of unshackling social members from an oppressed society by cultivating their critical thinking, and thus enabling them to transform their society from authoritarian to democratic form:

As Freire argued, education as a practice for freedom must expand the capacities necessary for human agency, and hence the possibilities for new academic labor should be configured to ensure such a project that is integral to democracy itself. (Giroux, 2010, p. 718)

Unfortunately, in a despotic society, education is deployed as a political tool for relaying the ideology of dominant groups through the "banking" mode of pedagogy, which positions students as docile receivers of predetermined values that are embedded within school text-

books with unchallengeable authority. When students successfully assimilate dominant values, they become self-oppressed bodies who lose their capacity for critical thought and come to view the existing social structure as an unavoidable outcome (Freire, 1990). Freire (2001) points out that banking pedagogy not only transgresses democratic values but also neglects the unique features of individual students in the aspects of culture and experience. Therefore, it is necessary to change the pedagogical approach from the "banking" model to a "problem-posing" style that addresses dialogues rather than instructions. According to Freire's experiments, telling learners answers reveals an instructive form of pedagogy that cannot stimulate their reflections. In contrast, "problem-posing," implemented through open questions linked to the social world, opens up a free space for students to problematize social issues they confront, so that they can liberate themselves from false subjectivities:

The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women, which results in their humanization. (Freire, 1990, p. 67)

In this case, as language is a crucial medium for students to express their experiences, literacy no longer functions as a tool of oppression but instead offers possibilities of change and hope:

Central to Freire's approach to literacy is a dialectical relationship between human beings and the world on the one hand, and language and transformative agency, on the other. (Giroux, 1988, p. 153)

3. Dialogue and Conscientization

Dialogues are thus viewed as a gateway for implementing the strategy of problem-posing. In practice, they need to allow students to utilize their own experiences to reflectively examine the questions posed by teachers. As power regulates the development of knowledge and social institutions in a repressive society, people have to recognize this situation prior to undertaking dialogues, so that it is possible for them to acquire critical minds (Freire, 1990). This recognition suggests that the precondition for developing critical minds is *conscientização* because it authorizes people to be aware of, discover, and finally judge power relations embedded within knowledge and social institutions. Because *conscientização* directs intentions and actions, it embraces dual functions, namely critical thinking and social transformation (Freire, 1993). *Conscientização* is comprised of three stages, progressing in order from semi-intransitivity of consciousness to transitivity of consciousness and finally critical consciousness. In the layer of semi-intransitivity, people are able to perceive and react towards problems arising from their social world:

Men of semi-intransitive consciousness cannot apprehend problems situated outside their sphere of biological necessity. (Freire, 1998, p. 17)

Although such permeable consciousness enables them to have dialogues with others, it is confined within the stage of naive transitivity, which can easily lead to cynical irrationality that “can be characterized by an over-simplification of problems” (Freire, 1998, p. 18). When they move into the second tier—critically transitive consciousness—they can examine and interpret social phenomena with open minds and active attitudes. The shift from the first level to the second one won’t occur automatically but requires the support of an inspirational curriculum that is concerned with social and political obligation. In the final stage, people develop critical minds able to disentangle the interwoven relations between power, knowledge and social structure (Freire, 1998).

These shifts reflect that the critical project presumes rational thinking as an innate faculty of human beings, which fosters the ability for social members to understand the multiple forms of meanings of social cultures. In this sense, dialogues are able to enlighten their critical thinking (Freire, 1998). As enlightenment can be achieved in a democratic context, students’ capacity for independent thought is nurtured in a free dialogical context (Freire, 1993). Because this approach requires a value-free environment in which individual interlocutors have freedom to express their own viewpoints, structural constraints are eliminated, enabling students to engage in dialogue with themselves and their own environments by retrieving relevant data from their bank of social experiences. Their dialogues also need to be extended to include others and consider social structure. Such two-way interactions authorize interlocutors to reexamine and refine their own viewpoints and values through understanding the multiple forms of other cultures and their singular meanings. These correlations foreground a principle that problem-posing secures the practice of self-reflection, which leads to the creation of independent actors (Freire, 1998).

While experience-based dialogues may assist students to advance their critical faculties, Shor (1992a) reminds us that this growth may be limited within the realm of the social value system that has been internalized within their mindsets through socialization. As a consequence, they are likely to employ predetermined viewpoints to confirm social structure. However, this invisible constraint can be removed by the strategy of “desocialization,” referring to a critical rethinking of existing socialization:

To maintain the democratic politics of critical education, texts enter a student-centered process rather than students entering a text-centered discourse. (Shor, 1992b, p. 245)

This inductive teaching consists of reading, interpretation, questioning, and class dialogue, which need to be carried out through cooperative learning ensuring negotiated authority/co-governance between teachers and students. In this way, students can situate their viewpoints and experiences within real life issues, and thus discover the power-knowledge relations embedded within texts, such as the ways in which newspapers may promote ideologies of specific parties (Shor, 1992b). Freire (2001) further points out that experience-based dialogues aim at activating students’ curiosity to explore the real picture behind social phenomena. Curiosity and self-reflection need to be integrated with the real world, so that students can build up advanced knowledge:

In criticizing itself, ingenuous curiosity becomes “epistemological curiosity,” as through greater methodological exactitude it appropriates the object of its knowing. (Freire, 2001, p. 37)

In this sense, critical minds serve as the foundation of knowledge development and the practice of critical thinking renews learners’ subjectivities against alienation. When this reflexive scheme further stimulates students to recontextualize their daily life experiences into theoretical concepts, this not only reduces the gap between commonsense and theories but also sharpens their critical thinking. As a result, they become able to act as independent actors, constantly questioning the existing social structure and the manipulation of its dominant values by ruling groups (Freire, 1990).

4. Ideology and Cultural Politics

It is argued that academic colonization, caused by a hegemony of “universal truth” produced by Westerners, has excluded others’ cultures but shaped their minds. In order to overcome this colonization, adoption of a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, addressing interpretation and understanding, enables teachers and learners to detect the relations between power, knowledge, knower, and self:

As we uncover the plethora of ways that dominant power blocs colonize the mind, we begin to understand the intersection of personal experience and pluriversal knowledge anew. (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 249)

This relation can be explained in scientific positivism exercising in a hegemonic form convincing the public that the contribution of professional knowledge to securing social security is necessary if we want society to move forward, so that experts become the best agents for administering social development plans and solving related problems. Giroux (1997) theorizes this ideology as the culture of positivism depriving people’s historical consciousness that forms critical minds:

This form of rationality prevents us from using historical consciousness as a vehicle to unmask existing forms of domination as they reproduce themselves through the “facts” and common-sense assumptions that structure our view and experiences of the world. (Giroux, 1997, p. 12)

While human subjectivity is locked into a cage of ideologies such as technical rationality, an ideology often presents itself as a universal truth. This is evident, for example, in neoliberalism’s redeployment of discourses of efficiency from corporate culture to endorse the reorganization of school institutional cultures:

I use the term “corporate culture” to refer to an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to fashion compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens. (Giroux, 2003, p. 158)

A similar trick can be found in the discourse of economic prospect (human capital) advocated by neoliberals, which has been invoked to effect great changes in educational purposes, particularly the increasing emphasis on basic competences and high academic performance (Shor, 1992a). Notwithstanding, the power-knowledge formation of ideologies also brings possibilities of change. This is because ideologies develop from contradictory conditions in historical contexts, the cleavages of which open up a great space for struggle and resistance:

In this way it is important to understand ideology as both *the medium and outcome of human experiences*....In this way, ideology functions not only to limit human action but also to enable it. (McLaren, 1989b, p. 189)

Drawing upon the cultural hegemony theory of A. Gramsci, Giroux (2020) also recognizes culture as a medium for mobilizing the legitimacy of knowledge and authority. However, he argues that while this power array generates an oppressive political regime, it also provides educators with the pedagogical conditions to engage in social change and collective struggle, if they think critically about its relations with political purposes and its possible transformations related to democracy. Based on the encoding-decoding formulation (Hall, 1993), Giroux (1997) points out that such transformations are rooted in textual consumption that facilitates the turning of dominant ideologies into transformative actions, when readers exercise agency through dialectical reflections:

The underlying grammar of ideology finds its highest expression in the ability of human beings to think dialectically....Thus, ideology implies a process

whereby meaning is produced, represented, and consumed. (Giroux, 1997, p. 85)

Accordingly, dialectical reflections appropriate our viewpoints towards certain political intentions inscribed within school curricula (Shor, 1996), which attempt to reformulate students into docile receivers (McLaren, 1989a). As this is a political project, geared by ideologies and power, educators need to question why curriculum knowledge is legitimized and how students’ subjectivities are constituted by such knowledge:

Critical pedagogy initiates an inquiry into the relationship between cultural work, authority, and the securing of particular cultural practices. (Giroux, 1994, p. 132)

They also need to understand why educational enterprise exerts influence in various forms, such as through school organization, evaluation, and social relations in classrooms (Giroux, 1981). The practice of cultural politics thus implies a principle that schools cannot become agencies for transmitting dominant ideologies and shaping students’ subordinated subjectivities, but rather activate students’ subjectivities by incorporating their silent voices into school curricula. This is exemplified in the case of popular culture no longer being viewed as a loss of classical heritage but a channel for navigating students’ daily experiences:

This suggests a critical pedagogy operating to disrupt the unity of popular culture in order to encourage the voice of dissent while simultaneously challenging the lived experiences and social relations of domination and exploitation. (Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 245)

When schooling becomes a form of cultural politics, we can create “a pedagogy of and for difference” allowing dominated groups to exercise agency by expressing their voices (Giroux, 1989b, p. 143).

5. Cultural Forum, Empowerment, and Public Intellectual

The project of cultural politics commands schools to serve as public spheres in which all social members are treated equally, so that both teachers and pupils are provided with a free space to engage in dialogues probing the relations between legitimate texts and power, which shape their subjectivities:

No longer viewed as merely the repository of consciousness and creativity, the self is constructed as a terrain of conflict and struggle, and subjectivity is seen as the side of both liberation and subjugation. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 76)

In order to accomplish this emancipatory authority, language, and experience are situated in central categories of schooling because they enable dominated students to retrieve their subjectivities, which function as the point of a political inquiry (Giroux, 1989b). Accordingly, classrooms need to establish democratic discourse, permitting students to develop their independent values through the exercise of metacognition. This student-based pedagogy addressing critical thinking requires teachers to curtail their authority and initiate a shared power project, creating mutual pedagogy that draws on a variety of lexicons, and encouraging teachers and students to undertake meaning negotiation and interpretation:

These self-selected issues are “generative themes” in a Freirean sense, because they were generated out of student experiences and writing, based on their perceptions of their social lives, good for generating critical discussion about larger issue. (Shor, 1996, p. 46)

As such engagement can link “I” to the text through negotiating and reconceptualizing the meanings of popular ideas and values, this critical action underpins students’ construction of self-knowledge (Vasquez, 2004). Critical pedagogy can thereby be characterized as engaged pedagogy ensuring students have opportunities for meaningful learning through exploratory, narrative and creative learning activities. The practice of engaged pedagogy calls for empowering of both teachers’ and students’ voices to secure two-way interactions (hooks, 1994):

Authority in this view becomes a mediating reference for the ideal of democracy and its expression as a set of educational practices designed to empower students to be critical and active citizens. (Giroux, 1988, p. 88)

As students are still in need of teachers’ guidance in a democratic context (Giroux, 1988), teachers do not act as inert agents but active guiders who help students complete socialization through the curriculum (Shor, 1992a). This change indicates a movement in authority from a traditional to an emancipatory form. Teachers hereby need to enact as transformative intellectuals who are empowered to constantly undertake self-reflections that assist them to undertake critique of ideologies in order to fashion students’ critical minds (Giroux, 1989a, 2004):

Central to the category of transformative intellectual is the necessity of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical....Within this perspective, critical reflection and action become part of a fundamental social project to help students develop a deep and abiding faith in struggle to overcome economic, political and social injustices, and to further humanize themselves as part of this struggle. (Giroux, 2004, p. 209)

Reflections provide teachers with a vital toolkit for interpreting and redefining the meanings of their experiences, so that transformative intellectuals are not directed by perceptions, but by a desire to reexamine theories and social values (Giroux, 1983). Their mission is to fight for social equity in economic, political, and social arenas by detecting social discourses embodied in school textbooks. A workable way of completing this assignment is to cross the existing textual boundary and then to reconstruct new texts suitable for all types of students from different social backgrounds (Giroux, 2000, 2004). As this assignment needs to align critiques with the macro issue of moral and political discourses, transformative intellectuals need to be levelled up to become “public intellectuals” who exercise the strategy of truth-telling to awaken the public to question prevailing ideas such as neoliberalism:

Such a pedagogical task suggests that educators speak truth to power, exercise civic courage, and take risk in their role as public intellectuals. (Giroux, 2014, p. 42)

6. Critique

Interest in critical pedagogy has attracted many researchers to conduct empirical studies, the findings of which have consistently documented the notions described above. It has been reported that the praxis of critical pedagogy is influenced by a variety of factors, including internal elements, such as teachers’ attitudes towards and understanding of critical pedagogy (Magill & Salinas, 2018), beliefs, identity, knowledge, teaching experiences, and external factors, such as curriculum freedom and school cultures (Behizadeh et al., 2019). However, workable strategies for developing conscientization have been developed through transformation of classrooms into democratic public spheres, which move pedagogy from a banking approach to one of problem-posing (Wink, 2005). Furthermore, as the self is shaped by the politics of culture, it has been shown that the project of consciousness is attainable through dialectical pedagogy between knower (subject) and the known (object) in dialogue language (Kincheloe, 2008). This project has been confirmed by Alfrey and O’Connor’s (2020) finding that when teachers were invited to engage in criticality, they changed their philosophy, moving their focus from performance to the cultivation of critical minds as they transformed traditional curricula into a broader critical agenda through the use of engagement and enactment driven by critical dialogue. This approach promoted freedom by allowing students to choose their forms of assessment and to have opportunities for undertaking critical reflections and creative thought. This shared power consequently enhanced students’ participation in teaching processes.

When teachers developed critical consciousness, they enacted the role of reflexively critical educators through their ability to apply epistemological assump-

tions to expose oppressive ideologies enshrined within the school curriculum. This orientation led to a more inclusive pedagogy, notable for permitting students to partake in the construction of knowledge and classes to depart from the predetermined curriculum (Magill & Salinas, 2018). Being reflexively critical also means that educators are able to apply the strategy of problem-posing, as illustrated by studies showing how teachers developed students' independent values through problematizing issues with which they were familiar (Shor, 1992b; Wink, 2005). Other research has demonstrated that the practice of problem-posing needs to operate in an atmosphere of open dialogue, because this condition helps teachers to situate students' experiences within problematic issues, such as socio-political or cultural events, which in turn stimulates them to express their viewpoints. This method also created safe and open contexts, within which the students developed a sense of inclusivity and demonstrated critical knowledge associated with social justice (Rodriguez & Huemmer, 2018). Other related studies suggest that the exercise of open dialogue requires the support of empowerment. This is manifest in the findings of Jeyaraj and Harland (2019) that empowerment ushered in a trusting environment, aiding teachers to cultivate pedagogic ownership. This belongingness then reinforced teachers' confidence in the exercise of problem-posing, which subscribed the practice of free dialogues with students through engaged pedagogy. It was also discovered that self-reflexivity and peer review led empowerment not to instructive pedagogy but an engaged one (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). Without a pedagogy that embraced open dialogue, more oppressive contexts predictably provoked resistance among working-class students (Ashendon et al., 1987; Chiang, 2019; McLaren, 1989a; Ogbu, 2003, 2004; Willis, 1977) and among teachers (Simmons, 2016).

Numerous studies also show that oppression is becoming more visible in the regime of neoliberal governmentality. For example, it can be seen in teachers' apparent motivation to become "self-improvers" (Lissovoy, 2017; Säfström, 2005) or "enterprising subjects" (Ball, 2016; Chiang, Thurston, & Lee, 2020) through participation in performativity practices, and eagerness to acquire dignity, honor and pride by demonstrating excellent performance (Ball, 2006). In this case, critical pedagogists rightly argue that agency functions as a crucial element in disclosing dominant ideologies embedded within discourses in the tactic of the politics of culture. This argument was verified by a research finding that while university lecturers were constrained by neoliberal performance management, they applied agentic dialogue to understand learners' inner worlds to ensure their confidence when returning to higher education. This recipe yielded many advantages, such as generating enthusiasm for reflection on the relationship between class and gender and commitment to ameliorating educational inequity. These findings indicate that dialogue produced dual functions of

critical pedagogy, namely conscientization and praxis (Hedges & Kadi-Hanifi, 2019). A similar picture, reported in McElearney (2020), revealed critical pedagogy serving as a medium for bridging structure and agency, as learners engaged in a kind of apprenticeship that enhanced their participation in issues raised by teachers. Such participation stimulated their reflections on the relations between self and others, enabling them to become impassioned about social justice and student empowerment.

Although the robust evidence presented above has confirmed the concepts of Freirean critical pedagogy, its advocates appear to confine their theories to the sphere of independent values, which are taken as the basic philosophy for protecting a democratic society. More specifically, classical theories they have drawn upon, including those of cultural hegemony, resistance and discourse, all address values, rather than the academic curriculum that regulates social mobility and functions as an index for measuring educational inequity. Gramsci (1971), for instance, argues that ruling groups dominate society mainly through the establishment of hegemonic cultures rather than through the economic-political mechanisms postulated by K. Marx. In order to achieve this, they need to firmly seize leadership of the society's intellectuals, as a means of fusing their own values into mainstream social culture and beguiling the public into voluntarily accepting their leadership. Organic intellectuals come to complete this cultural construction by disseminating common goods, which they are able to achieve because of their professional knowledge and widespread connections with civil society. However, the public will eventually discern the deceptive coercion of cultural hegemony through their daily life experiences, and this is likely to generate resistance through questioning of how this hegemony functions to shield the sovereignty of ruling groups. In order to ameliorate this potential political crisis, ruling groups have no choice but to constantly employ organic intellectuals to build new forms of cultural hegemony by conceding short-term interests that are able to convince the public. This perspective thus reconceptualizes one-way domination from superstructure to base (Marx, 1969) as two-way interactions comprised of domination and resistance. This insight inspired Hall (1993) to propose the idea of "cultural consumption," a two-way process of encoding and decoding that denotes a moving equilibrium between the text producer and the consumer. The School of CCCS Hall advanced has become renowned for its studies of "lads" (Hebdige, 1979), "teds" (Jefferson, 2000), "skinheads" (Clarke, 2000), "counter-school culture" (Willis, 1977), and "resistant strategies" (Corrigan, 1979). The findings of these studies clearly show that resistant actions are employed by working-class youths to sustain their collective identities and enact mastery over their own behavior. Some American researchers have also started to scrutinize the social meanings of working-class youth cultures since the notion of cultural

hegemony was imported to the USA by S. Hall in the early 1980s.

The points outlined above indicate that Gramscian researchers focus on the aspect of sub-cultures associated with identities and values. Likewise, the notion of discourse is concerned with values as discernable in the power-knowledge formula. This is exemplified in the issue of how sexuality is disciplined by medical knowledge (Foucault, 1990), the objective of which is to hatch “docile bodies” who strongly support the existing value system (Foucault, 1991). In his late work, Foucault elaborates this power-knowledge prescription by proposing the concept of “governmentality” to explicate how the self serves as the core element in constituting “biopolitics,” governance which takes populations as its subject and object. When governance becomes reflexive (*raison d’État*; Foucault, 2010), transforming people into rational self-monitors becomes the core assignment of government, and this underwrites the development of policy that serves as a toolkit for administering people’s lifestyle (Foucault, 2009). The constitution of self is achieved through the “art of self” that installs care of self into people’s self-knowledge via their “souls.” This is achieved through a series of tactics evolving from attending to oneself, looking at oneself, concerning oneself (*epimeleia heautou*), and knowing oneself (*gnōthi seauton*) to caring of oneself (Foucault, 2005) which are exercised through truth-telling (*Parrēsia*). As truth-telling means to tell people about ethics, it harnesses the symbolic value of personal example, serving as a political means for politicians to win people’s trust through their exemplary demonstrations (Foucault, 2011). The transmission of ethics is mainly reliant upon civil society because it requires consensus between social members (Foucault, 2003)

Although developing students’ independent values is very important for sustaining a democratic society, it is very difficult for this value-led perspective to improve inequity in education results because social mobility is mainly determined by professional knowledge/skills driven by scientific development in the labor market (Livingstone, 1987). This is evident in changing conceptualizations of the labor force structure, from meritocratic society (Young, 1961), industrial society (Dahrendorf, 1959), and modern society (Goldthorpe et al., 1987) to artificial intelligent society (Brown & James, 2020). In light of this association, we need to look at the character of the social division of labor. According to Durkheim (1933), scientific development leads to specialization in the social division of labor in order to meet a variety of social needs:

An industry can exist only if it answers some need. A function can become specialized only if this specialization corresponds to some need of society. But all new specialization results in increasing and improving production. (Durkheim, 1933, p. 272)

Beside knowledge and skills associated with production, social equilibrium in modern society requires collective sentiments, termed organic solidarity, functioning as a sense of morality that is rooted in occupations:

This is what gives moral value to the division of labor. Through it, the individual becomes cognizant of his dependence upon society; from it come the forces which keep him in check and restrain him. In short, since the division of labor becomes the chief source of social solidarity, it becomes, at the same time, the foundation of the moral order. (Durkheim, 1933, p. 401)

When society moves from a primitive stage (mechanical solidarity) to a modern form (organic solidarity), schools take over the functions of primitive institutes, such as religions and families, transmitting knowledge/skill and social norms in order to advance social civilization (Durkheim, 1956), the missions of which are accomplished through selection and socialization of schools (Cohen, 1968; Parsons, 1961). Selection is carried out to ensure learners’ mental abilities match the stratified system of knowledge in the education system. Socialization refers to how learners internalize the social value system into their personality, the origin of which is social norms (Parsons, 1937, 1951). In short, stable social operation requires two crucial components—knowledge/skills and values. Based on these associations, Bernstein (1990) put forward the notions of “regulative discourse” and “instructional discourse,” which together constitute “pedagogic discourse,” in order to depict how the logic of knowledge transmission in classrooms (framing) is regulated by social values:

We shall define pedagogic discourse as the rule which embeds a discourse of competence (skills of various kinds) into a discourse of social order in such a way that the latter always dominates the former. We shall call the discourse transmitting specialized competences and their relation to each other instructional discourse, and the discourse creating specialized order, relation, and identity regulative discourse....In this sense regulative discourse is itself the precondition for any pedagogy discourse. It is of course obvious that all pedagogic discourse creates a moral regulation of the social relations of transmission/acquisition, that is, rules of order, relation, and identity, and that such a moral order is prior to, and a condition for, the transmission of competences. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 184)

In this sense, educational practices are a cultural relay that legitimately reproduces the bias of class relations through the internal logic of classification (power and knowledge) and framing (control and transmission). Classification refers to a voice determining what type of knowledge is legitimate and authentic. This relationship

is regulated by power that is exercised through the process of recontextualization, which reorganizes knowledge units into the form of a neutral discipline through processes of delocation and relocation. Because power creates singular forms of disciplines which possess exclusive and distinctive features enabling them to be discriminated from each other, there are insulating boundaries between these disciplines, which can be framed in classification. Framing is about who obtains control over the processes of knowledge transmission, so that the logic of knowledge transmission is regulated by social relations between and within transmitters and receivers (Bernstein, 1996). While both classification and framing illustrate the relations within knowledge reproduction and knowledge transmission, theories of cultural reproduction posit a top-down domination of power, so that their focus is power external to education rather than relations within:

‘Relations within’ refers to the rules whereby the ‘privileging text’ has been internally constructed. ‘Relations within’ tells us about the relationship within the ‘privileging text,’ that is the rules whereby that text has been constituted, which makes the text as it is, which gives it its distinctive features, its distinctive relations, its mode of transmission and acquisition. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 176)

“Relations within” is thus inscribed within curriculum knowledge, which acts as a nexus linking class power to educational attainment, and in turn legitimizes the status of the aristocracy in modern society. In other words, class power structure is reproduced through academic curricula, comprehension of which demands a specific form of reasoning ability that is regulated, in Bernstein’s terminology, by the combination of “rules of recognition” and “rules of realization”:

Recognition (ground) rules create the means of distinguishing between and so recognizing the speciality that constitutes a context, and realization (performance) rules regulate the creation and production of specialized relationships internal to that context. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 15)

This quotation indicates that if students cannot identify the speciality of contexts, they cannot produce legitimate texts expected by teachers. Unfortunately, the knowledge structure of an academic curriculum, termed “sacred knowledge” or “vertical discourse,” features theoretical and systematic concepts, the understanding of which generally require a logical reasoning ability that is regulated by coding orientations (Bernstein, 1999). Because restricted code, often used in families of low socioeconomic status, is contextually dependent, collective, and substantial, it has a close relation with practical curriculum, termed “horizontal discourse,” the features of which are practical, substantial, manual, and unorga-

nized. In this sense, children possessing a restricted code are impeded from comprehending academic subjects (vertical discourse), meaning that difficulties at school might be partly attributable to such students’ linguistic competence (Bernstein, 1977). From this viewpoint, when class power is embedded within academic curricula, inequality in educational results will be perpetuated. Sadly, most teachers cannot detect such “relations within” and apply instrumental rationality to interact with students. This scenario was confirmed by a study finding that the purpose of schooling exercised through academic curricula was aligned with professional identity among teachers that was predicated on appreciation of academic performance, so that intellectual students became the source of teachers’ identity. As the majority of the working-class students in the study failed in academic curricula, teachers employed their authority to control them, unfortunately marginalizing them in the process (Ashendon et al., 1987). Other studies have revealed that such identity was associated with teachers’ concerns with effectiveness, as evidenced by a finding that an elaborated code (often found in middle-class students) expressly fostered engagement by teachers in interactions with students ($\beta = .325, p < .001$). This code also secured a high level of student-based teacher authority ($\beta = .019, p < .001$), which was a key component enabling the practice of weak framing (Chiang, Thurston, Zhao, et al., 2020). Another study portrayed a similar picture in which teachers’ attitudes toward excellent students’ coding orientation significantly contributed to teachers’ ideas in instrumental rationality ($\beta = .279, p < .001$). In contrast, a restricted coding orientation (often found in working-class students) substantially impeded teachers from fluently implementing their pedagogic practices ($\beta = -.431, p < .001$; Chiang et al., 2021). These findings show that instrumental rationality steers teachers’ minds and teaching strategies. It has been argued that the such techno-efficient minds can be attributed to the framework of teacher education, which is mainly based on psychological courses associated with teaching techniques rather than sociologic disciplines related to cultural consciousness (Apple, 1988, 1990). Giroux (1981) also acknowledges this association:

While the interests behind the historical development of technocratic rationality are rather clear, it appears that the historical roots of its more contemporary versions have been forgotten by many teacher-educators. (Giroux, 1981, p. 150)

As a result, teachers are molded into the role of implementers, concerned primarily with teaching efficiency, rather than that of critical educators. Therefore, if critical pedagogists want to alleviate the phenomenon of cultural reproduction, they need to engage with teachers’ critical minds to explore the knowledge structure of academic curricula and heighten awareness of why inequity in educational achievement is anchored in

the internal logic of knowledge production and knowledge transmission.

7. Conclusion

The paramount mission of critical pedagogy is to develop students' independent values with the goal of establishing and maintaining a democratic society. This attempt can be achieved if education accomplishes its emancipatory function through the strategy of problem-posing, which motivates students to pursue self-reflections through free dialogues. This can be achieved by creating classrooms that serve as cultural forums whereby negotiated/engaged authority empowers both teachers and students to apply the politics of culture to engage in critical reflections on familiar issues through desocialization. While independent values are the core element in exercising education's emancipatory function, there are also other functions, including concern for productivity that prescribes the necessity of academic curricula transmitting scientific knowledge/skills required by the social division of labor. Because power relations have been enshrined within academic curricula, inequity in educational results is rooted in the knowledge structure of academic curricula, which privilege certain reasoning abilities that serve as a precondition for learning. This knowledge is articulated in the notion of "relations within" that regulates the logic of knowledge transmission in pedagogic practices. This concept accounts for the inner logic of knowledge of academic subjects (vertical discourse) and the social relations between teachers and students, which constitute a mode of pedagogic practices orienting to either transmission or acquisition. In this regard, "relations within" sorts out the major shortcoming of the theories of cultural reproduction that posit a top-down mode of power structure, describing how learners are situated in their "relations to" legitimate pedagogic communication. More importantly, developing critical strategies through pedagogic practices to decode the knowledge structures of academic curricula serves as a gateway for alleviating inequity in educational results, and the consequent social inequity with its associated poverty, crimes and diseases. Unfortunately, this structural constraint is reinforced by teachers' ingrained instrumental rationality, which leads them to view this knowledge structure as being natural. While they may apply more critical minds to develop students' independent values, this approach cannot help improving students' academic performance, which regulates their social mobility. All of these associations highlight a principle that if critical pedagogists want to mitigate the phenomenon of cultural reproduction, they should develop new strategies for pedagogic actions that can assist teachers to transform the academic curriculum (vertical discourse) into practical knowledge (horizontal discourse), and thus make it accessible to students from all types of social backgrounds. As this transformation expands the emanci-

patory function of education from independent values to students' academic attainment, it is consistent with the mission of critical pedagogists to ameliorate educational inequity. With the remarkable dedication and talents of those working in this field, this project is certainly achievable.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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