



Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies >

Volume 29, 2007 - [Issue 4](#)

1,770 | 38
Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric

Original Articles

Utopian Pedagogy: Creating Radical Alternatives in the Neoliberal Age¹

Mark Coté, Richard Day & Greig de Peuter

Pages 317-336 | Published online: 05 Jul 2007

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714410701291129>

Sample our
Education
Journals



>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Full Article

Figures & data

Citations

Metrics

Reprints & Permissions

[Read this article](#)

Share

Utopian Pedagogy: Creating Radical Alternatives in the Neoliberal Age¹

Mark Coté, Richard Day, and Greig de Peuter

INTRODUCTION

How might we, as critical academics, work within, against, and beyond the neoliberal order? How might the progressive intellectual act and be understood today? How can and does the university do more than serve corporate powers and produce docile producer-consumer-citizens? How are people working to develop critical pedagogies appropriate to their local communities? To help us confront these sorts of questions we propose the conceptual tool and creative practice of “utopian pedagogy.” We do not use the concept of “utopia” in the sense of rationalistic dreams of a future perfect society. Rather, we mean it to refer to an ethos of experimentation that is oriented toward carving out spaces for resistance and reconstruction here and now. Utopian theory and practice acquire a new relevance as something *other* than and *outside* of the hyper-inclusive logic of neoliberalism. With the untimely concept of utopian pedagogy we hope to contribute to the debate on the current state of higher education, and to circulate struggles that show other educational worlds are not only possible but are already living in our present.²

This article seeks to put flesh on our key concept through a discussion of three interlinked themes: universities in the age of neoliberal globalization; non-hegemonic modes of intellectual and political activity; and concrete experiments in utopian pedagogy. From free schools and co-research to open-source media labs and popular theatre, experiments in utopian pedagogy are (re)emerging in various places around the world, in response to an urgent need to critically analyze relations of power around nodal points of race,

Portions of this article appear in a forthcoming collection of essays and interviews that we co-edited, *Utopian Pedagogy: Radical Experiments Against Neoliberal Globalization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

For critiques of the neoliberal transformation of higher education, see Henry A. Giroux, "Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education: The University as a Democratic Public Sphere," *Harvard Educational Review*, 72:4 (Winter 2002): 425-462; Jeff Lustig, "The University Revisioned: The Alternative to Corporate Mis-Education," *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies* 27 (2005): 17-52; David Noble, *Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Education* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002); Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); James L. Turk, ed., *The Corporate Campus: Commercialization and the Dangers to Canada's Colleges and Universities* (Toronto: Lorimer and Company, 2000). And for discussions of new social movements, see Ian Angus, *Emergent Publics: An Essay on Social Movements and Democracy* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2001); Susan George, *Another World is Possible If...* (London: Verso, 2004); *We are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism, Notes from Nowhere*, ed., (London: Verso, 2003); Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, eds., *From ACT UP to WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization* (London: Verso, 2002).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2000); Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York: The New Press, 1998); Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004).

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (1992): 3-7.

See Vincent Mosco and Dan Schiller, eds., *Continental Order? Integrating North America for Cybercapitalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Chris Shore, "Inventing the 'People's Europe': Critical Approaches to European Community 'Cultural Policy,'" *Man* 28:4 (1998): 779-800.

Slavoj Zizek, "Multiculturalism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 225 (1997): 28-51.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie

Thornton Dill, "Theorizing Difference from Multicultural Feminism," in *Through the Prism of Difference: Readings on Sex and Gender*, Zinn et. al. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997).

See Richard J. F. Day, "From Hegemony to Affinity: The Political Logic of the Newest Social Movements," *Cultural Studies* 18:5 (2004): 716-748.

Stuart Hall, "The University, Intellectuals, and Multitudes," interview by Greig de Peuter, *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Henry A. Giroux, "Utopian Thinking in Dangerous Times: Critical Pedagogy and the Project of Educated Hope," in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Heather Menzies, *No Time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Life* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005).

In 2000, Healy was recruited to a post in the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at the University of Toronto. Following an invited talk at the University's Department of Psychiatry anniversary meeting, at which Healy voiced his criticisms of the pharmaceutical industry, the offer of a post was rescinded.

Nick Dyer-Witheford, "Teaching and Tear Gas: The University in the Era of General Intellect," in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Nick Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 236.

Ian Angus, "Academic Freedom in the Corporate University," in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Ibid.

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 5-23.

Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, introduction to Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 3.

Gramsci, 5.

Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, general introduction, to *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), xci.

Gramsci, 16.

Ibid., 10.

Ibid.

Ibid., 9.

Ibid., 10.

For the most influential post-Marxist re-reading of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985). For a critique of the theory of hegemony from the viewpoint of the logic of affinity, see Richard J. F. Day, "Ethics, Affinity, and the Coming Communities," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 27:1 (2001): 21-38.

Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 2002), 126-133.

Ibid., 126.

Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 87.

Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia, 1995), 87-88.

See Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi, and Gigi Roggero, "Conricerca as Political Action," trans. Enda Brophy, in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Cited in James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (London: Flamingo, 1994), 193.

Foucault, 2002, 289.

Cited in Deleuze and Foucault, 76.

Deleuze, 1995, 88.

Foucault, 2002, 288.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988). See Mark Coté, Richard Day, and Greig de Peuter, “*Academicus Affinitatus: Academic Dissent, Community Education, and Critical U*,” in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: Athlone Press, 1994).

Foucault, 2002, 127.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: New Press, 2001), 58.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in discussion at “Subalternity and Marxism” panel at Marxism and the World Stage conference, 7 November 2003, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA, 6–8 November.

Foucault, 2002, 457.

See Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

Dyer-Witheford, 1999, 222.

Franco (Bifo) Berardi, “Book Review of Geert Lovink's *Dark Fibre*,” trans. Arianna Bove (2002). Retrieved from <http://www.generation-online.org/t/bifosreview.htm>, accessed 25 August 2003.

See Liam Kane, *Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2001).

For historical accounts of cultural studies and its links to non-traditional education, see Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Stuart Hall, “Life and Times of the First New Left,” in *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left 30 Years On*, ed. Oxford Socialist Discussion Group (London: Verso, 1989); Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies: Adult Education, Cultural Politics, and the ‘English’ Question* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997); Raymond Williams, “The Future of Cultural Studies,” in *The Politics of Modernism* (London: Verso, 1989); Stephen Woodhams, *History in the Making: Raymond Williams, Edward Thompson and Radical Intellectuals, 1936–1956* (London: Merlin Press, 2001); Handel Wright and Karl Maton,

“Cultural Studies and Education: From Birmingham Origin to Glocal Presence,” The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies, 26:2-3 (2004): 73-89.

Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 135.

Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1998), 48-50.

Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

Ivan Illich, “After Deschooling, What?” in *After Deschooling, What?* eds. Alan Gartner et. al. (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 9.

For intellectual and historical surveys of autonomist marxism, see Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically* (Leeds: Anti/Theses, 2000), 23-80; Dyer-Witheford, 1999, 62-90; Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, ed., *Italy: Post-Political Politics* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980); Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto, 2002).

Wright, 32-62.

See Colectivo Situaciones, “On the Researcher-Militant,” trans. Sebastian Touza, in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Plato, *The Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

Aldous Huxley, *Island, a Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962).

B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in Hardt and Negri and Nicholas Brown and Imre Szeman, “Subterranean Passages of Thought: Empire's Inserts,” *Cultural Studies* 16:2 (2002): 201.

Nick Dyer-Witheford, “Teaching and Tear Gas: The University in the Era of General Intellect,” in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Ibid.

Shveta Sarda, “‘Before Coming Here, Had You Thought of a Place Like This?’ Notes on Ambivalent Pedagogy from the Cybermohalla Experience,” in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Ibid.

See Marina Sitrin, “Horizontalidad in Argentina.” Retrieved from <http://info.interactivist.net/print.pl?sid=05/07/26/1417232>. Accessed 26 July 2005.

Coté et al.

Maurizio Viano and Vincenzo Binetti, “What is to be Done? Marxism and Academia,” in *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, eds. Saree Makdisi, Cesare Casarino, and Rebecca E. Karl (New York: Routledge, 1996), 250.

Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

See Sarita Srivastava, “‘Let’s Talk’: The Pedagogy and Politics of Anti-Racist Change,” in *Utopian Pedagogy*.

Related research 

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
38

Information for

Authors

R&D professionals

Editors

Librarians

Societies

Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints

Advertising solutions

Accelerated publication

Corporate access solutions

Open access

Overview

Open journals

Open Select

Dove Medical Press

F1000Research

Help and information

Help and contact

Newsroom

All journals

Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources
by email

 Sign me up

  

  

Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy Cookies Terms & conditions

Accessibility



Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG