

Critical Education

Volume 2 Number 2

February 23, 2011

ISSN 1920-4125

A Return to Educational Apartheid?

Comments from the Series Co-Editor

Doug Selwyn

State University of New York, Plattsburgh

Citation: Selwyn, D. (2011). A return to educational apartheid? Comments from the series co-editor. *Critical Education*, 2(2). Retrieved from

<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/journal/index.php/criticaled/article/view/150>

Part of the *Critical Education* series: A Return to Educational Apartheid? Critical Examinations of Race, Schools, and Segregation

Abstract

Selwyn, co-editor of the "A Return to Educational Apartheid?" series, pays tribute to Critical Education Associate Editor Adam Renner and introduces the latest in a special series of articles focusing on the articulation of race, schools, and segregation. Each of the articles in this series analyzes the extent to which schooling may or may not be returning to a state of educational apartheid.



Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and *Critical Education*, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or *Critical Education*. *Critical Education* is published by the Institute for Critical Education Studies and housed at the University of British Columbia. Articles are indexed by the Directory of Open Access Journals and EBSCO Education Research Complete.

Remembering Adam Renner

There is no easy way with hard news. We have lost our friend, colleague, and series co-editor Adam Renner. On a Sunday evening in mid December he was coordinating a phone call of the Rouge Forum steering committee, helping lead a conversation focused on the upcoming Rouge Forum conference to be held in Chicago in May. Adam was, as always, engaged with plans and ideas, while gently and consistently moving us towards productive conversation. He was fully engaged in his teaching work, his organizing, his writing. He and I made plans to talk later in the week about the next essays we hoped to bring to *Critical Education*. Two days later his wife Gina discovered him unconscious, and rushed him by ambulance to the hospital. Two days after that he was gone.

There are no words for loss this deep and sudden. Shock, disbelief, a sense of the seeming senselessness that allows a young man in his prime, doing extraordinary work, to simply stop. Adam's passing pits reason against our faith and beliefs, whatever they may be, and there is no way that we can find sufficient answers in reason.

What Adam would be the first to agree to is the notion that our work is larger than any one person, and that our task, our challenge is to continue on with our work. Adam lived a life as full and committed to justice as possible, as a teacher, organizer, writer, editor, musician, husband/partner, and friend. While he could not have known that his time would be so short, he lived his life knowing that there was no time to waste. His sudden passing offers us a reminder that at each moment we have the opportunity to do our best work, to live it as fully as possible, and that we'd best do our good work now. So, with a nod to Joe Hill, we mourn, we organize, and we go on. And, as Adam would say, peace.

Introduction to "Meaningful Social Contact" by Kelly Norris

Most articles in *Critical Education* focus on the bigger picture, helping us to understand that what we see and experience on a day-to-day basis takes place in a larger, deeper, and historical context. Institutional racism, sexism, classism, and other -isms are rarely visible on a day-to-day basis to most of us. What is visible are the ways in which we have been taught to see, and not see the world. We live out the cliché that we fail to see what constrains our environment: fish don't see the water in which they swim, and we, at one time, failed to see the atmosphere that sustains us.

This second essay in our series, "A Return to Educational Apartheid?" helps us to humanize the struggle, the work, and the world in which teachers and students spend their lives.

Kelly Norris, as a teacher determined to help sharpen her own vision, and to help her students to begin to see the pond in which they swim, reflects on the tentative steps she and her students took into (or out of) the muck of racism. While it is possible to focus on the historical and theoretical underpinnings of these classroom moments, it is also important, and instructive, to see them as they happen, to see them as human interactions guided by an instructor willing to take a risk, with the courage to be honest, and to act.

Kelly's essay highlights the complexities of moving theory into practice. Working with students who have spent years in a system often teaching them away from honest dialogue and reflection, working within a system that has placed enormous pressure on teachers to

compromise, to switch our allegiance from the students to the corporate state, how do we bring real change to our classrooms, to our children? Kelly Norris offers us a compassionate, honest look at her first steps, and as the title of her piece makes clear, the focus of those first steps are through the relationships she has formed with her students, and they with each other. These are only first steps, and many more are required, but her essay presents a snapshot of a door opening...

Critical Education

criticaleducation.org

ISSN 1920-4175

Editors

Sandra Mathison, *University of British Columbia*
E. Wayne Ross, *University of British Columbia*

Associate Editor

Adam Renner, *San Francisco Unified School District*

Editorial Collective

Faith Ann Agostinone, *Aurora University*
Wayne Au, *University of Washington, Bothell*
Marc Bousquet, *Santa Clara University*
Joe Cronin, *Antioch University*
Antonia Darder, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
George Dei, *OISE/University of Toronto*
Abraham Paul DeLeon, *University of Texas at San Antonio*
Stephen C. Fleury, *Le Moyne College*
Kent den Heyer, *University of Alberta*
Nirmala Erevelles, *University of Alabama*
Michelle Fine, *City University of New York*
Gustavo Fischman, *Arizona State University*
Erica Frankenberg, *Penn State University*
Melissa Freeman, *University of Georgia*
David Gabbard, *East Carolina University*
Rich Gibson, *San Diego State University*
Dave Hill, *University of Northampton*
Nathalia E. Jaramillo, *Purdue University*
Saville Kushner, *University of West England*

Zeus Leonardo, *University of California, Berkeley*
Pauline Lipman, *University of Illinois, Chicago*
Lisa Loutzenheiser, *University of British Columbia*
Marvin Lynn, *University of Illinois, Chicago*
Linda Mabry, *Washington State University, Vancouver*
Sheila Macrine, *Montclair State University*
Perry M. Marker, *Sonoma State University*
Rebecca Martusewicz, *Eastern Michigan University*
Peter McLaren, *University of California, Los Angeles*
Stephen Petrina, *University of British Columbia*
Stuart R. Poyntz, *Simon Fraser University*
Kenneth J. Saltman, *DePaul University*
Patrick Shannon, *Penn State University*
Kevin D. Vinson, *University of the West Indies, Barbados*
John F. Welsh, *Santa Fe, NM*