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Critical Border Praxis *Choosing the Path of Critical Border Dialogism*

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Abstract

This work examines the intersection of place-based and border pedagogies, including the concepts of heteroglossia, meliorism, critical cosmopolitanism, nepantla, dialogic feminism, and pragmatic hope that form the basis of a new critical border dialogism. Critical border dialogism resituates teachers, students, cultural workers, decision makers, policymakers, and the larger community. Critical border dialogism draws upon a critical pedagogy of place and border pedagogy. Gruenewald's (2003) critical, place-based pedagogy influences assumptions, practices, and outcomes. Border pedagogy (Giroux, 2005), in turn, engages a critical pedagogy of place and involves a recognition and understanding of margins as affected by history, power, and difference. Critical border dialogism positions us, as educators, students, cultural workers, and members of the larger community, on the course to critical border praxis. Critical border praxis actively engages us as cross borders in a contemplation of historically and socially constructed limitations.



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Introduction

An intersection of place-based and border pedagogies, based on concepts of heteroglossia (Abraham, 2014; Holquist, 2002; Clark & Holquist, 1984, Bakhtin, 1981), meliorism (Koopman, 2006; Kliebard, 2004; Wilson, 2003; James, 1906), critical cosmopolitanism (Mignolo, 2000a; Delanty, 2006), nepantla (Abraham, 2014; Maffie, 2007; Anzaldúa, 2002; and Mignolo, 2000b), dialogic feminism (Yaeger, 1991; Puigvert, 2012), and pragmatic hope (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2011; Koopman, 2006; Shade, 2001; Rorty, 1999) form the basis of a new *critical border dialogism* (Cashman, 2015). Critical border dialogism follows an exigency that educators, students, cultural workers, decision makers, and policy makers promote a *critical border praxis*. Critical border praxis is defined as the process of building a community of teachers and learners who are empowered and contribute to society through their sustained engagement in critical border dialogic processes. In this manner, educators, including administrators and teachers, and students are part of the process of *becoming*. Critical border dialogism, in turn, informs a new critical border praxis and develops broader visions and worldviews that resituate teachers, students, cultural workers, decision makers, policymakers, and the larger community.

Critical Border Dialogism and Currere

Alexander (2009) describes pedagogy, including pedagogy of place, as encompassing the act of teaching and related theories and debate, including analyses of the character of culture and society, the purposes of education, the nature of childhood and learning, and the structure of knowledge. Pedagogy involves discourses related to the act of teaching and the process of analyzing the efficacy of teaching (Alexander, 2009). Gruenewald (2003) argues that pedagogy of place can be a means of examining the connections between individuals and their inhabited spaces. Place-based pedagogies promote understandings of social and ecological places. Critical, place-based approaches influence assumptions, practices, and outcomes. A critical pedagogy of place promotes pedagogical approaches that contrast with the discourses of accountability, standardized assessments, and economic competitiveness that prevail in the current US educational environment (Gruenewald, 2003).

Comparative, critical place-based pedagogies serve to continually provide educators with ways of building bridges across racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, and socioeconomic lines. In this manner, students of various backgrounds learn about their personal, local, and regional spaces and develop the confidence to make connections and to broaden their understandings of national and global environs. Gruenewald (2003) argues that pedagogy of place can be a means of examining the connections between individuals and their inhabited spaces. Place-based pedagogies promote understandings of social and ecological places. By incorporating critical approaches into place-based pedagogies “we challenge the assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and in conventional education” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3).

Border pedagogy, in turn, engages a critical pedagogy of place in its discourses. Border pedagogy builds upon critical understandings of place and attempts to connect those understandings with larger contexts. According to Giroux (2005) border pedagogy involves a recognition and understanding of margins as affected by history, power, and difference. Moreover, an individual must contemplate historically and socially constructed limitations to become a border crosser who has developed new understandings of others (Giroux, 2005). Borders are considered boundaries of entities, while the act of crossing borders entails going

beyond existing boundaries and broadening one's perspectives of others in locales near or afar. In this manner, transnational studies that incorporate place-based pedagogy and border pedagogy promote respect for differences and, in turn, promote greater understandings of others.

Border pedagogy provides hope for democratic education that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life. It takes into consideration an “acknowledgement of shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations of culture, power, and knowledge” (Giroux, 2005, p. 20). Border pedagogy serves as a reconceptualization of existing ideologies. Accordingly, border pedagogy is dynamic and includes the following components: (a) a recognition of epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins; (b) the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers and understand otherness; and (c) the teaching and learning of historically and socially-constructed borders that frame our discourses and social relations (Giroux, 2005).

Border pedagogy offers the opportunity for students to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences, and languages (Giroux, 2005). Teachers, in turn, are able to deepen their own understanding of the “limits, partiality, and particularity of their own politics, values, and pedagogy” (Giroux, 2005, p.26). The concept of border pedagogy unwraps diverse cultural histories and spaces to educators and students. It is in border spaces where educational institutions and the larger society meet, where the relevancies between teachers and cultural workers come into play, and where schooling is understood within the larger realm of cultural politics. Multicentric perspectives allow teachers, cultural workers, and students to recognize the multiplicity of layers and contradictory ideologies that construct personal identities. Moreover, border pedagogy allows educators to also “analyze how the differences within and between various groups can expand the potential of human life and democratic possibilities” (Giroux, 2005, p.151).

It is important for educators, as cultural workers, to resituate theory in practice so students critically reflect on their voices and experiences. Students have an “obligation to interrogate the claims or consequences their assertions have for the social relationships they legitimate” (Giroux, 2005, p.152). Border pedagogy also offers students “the opportunity to engage the multiple references and codes that position them within various structures of meaning and practice” (Giroux, 2005, p.152).

Critical border pedagogy considers borders as dynamic inhabited regions rather than divided, disparate locales divided by a political boundary (Reyes & Garza, 2005). The US and Mexico borderlands serve as fluid and connected sociopolitical zones (Romo & Chavez, 2006). Romo and Chavez argue that the geopolitical border of Mexico and the United States represents a transition zone and blending of languages, cultures, communities, and countries. Moreover, the United States and Mexico borderlands reflect “the complexity, juxtaposition, and intersection of identities, economies, and social and educational issues” (Romo & Chavez, 2006, p. 142).

Ultimately, this work calls for an intersection of place-based and border pedagogies, based on concepts of heteroglossia, meliorism, critical cosmopolitanism, nepantla, dialogic feminism, and pragmatic hope that form the basis of a new critical border dialogism.

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Heteroglossia

According to Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia represents the multiplicity of voices and perspectives present in all narratives, including educational accounts. In *The Dialogic Imagination* Bakhtin (1981) articulates the concept of heteroglossia as the following;

The base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions--social, historical, meteorological, physiological that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve (p. 263).

Bakhtin argues against any sort unilateral and unidirectional voice. The world is dominated by heteroglossia, and dialogism is a key characteristic of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981). Singularity and solitary positioning are relative to heteroglossia, and hence, dialogism. In Bakhtin's view there are disputed zones for hearing voices in the world, but disputed zones are never empty of voices.

Bakhtin put forth that the individual serves as a source of meaning. Individual voices connect with others' voices through dialogue (Clark & Holquist, 1984). When ideological conflicts occur, new meanings may develop (Bakhtin, 1981). Thus, Bakhtin argued for the constructing and deconstructing of knowledge from individual and collective acts, and argued that an individual's knowledge may violating other people's ways of knowing what they know (Abraham, 2014).

Bakhtin (1981) reasoned that meaning is a part of a greater whole, and there is a constant interaction among meanings. All meanings have the potential to influence other meanings. We do not know the how meanings will affect each other until the moment of an utterance. Bakhtin (1981) refers to this as a dialogic imperative, which is always more than a monologue. People in positions of power over others seek to enforce a unitary language. Heteroglossia and the subsequent dialogism that transpires serve to make the power of unitary language relative (Bakhtin, 1981). On many levels, Bakhtin's heteroglossia corresponds with Gramsci's (1971) theory of cultural hegemony. Gramsci critiqued the social norms that established and reinforced social structures. In this manner, the social, political, and economic status quo were justified; hegemony, or systemic control or influence by the dominant group, was maintained. Although their viewpoints on particular thinking varied, Bakhtin and Gramsci (1971) shared similar intellectual influences. Bakhtin and Gramsci developed, at times, complementary formulations about the relationship between language, ideology and hegemony. Both Bakhtin and Gramsci resisted and disputed positivist social science and linguistics and developed their own anti-positivist aesthetic theories (Brandist, 2006).

Heteroglossia, therefore, represents an array of voices and a multitude of viewpoints and perspectives. At the same time, it rejects an ideology that is authoritative and tries to standardize and normalize. Clark and Holquist maintain that Bakhtin's heteroglossia protects us from the hegemony of a language of singular truth and the status of official, limited, traditional discourses (Clark & Holquist, 1984).

Meliorism

Melioristic efforts seeks to better a system in the home context, with ideas, approaches, and policies that are influenced by educational systems outside of one's national context (Wilson, 2003). Social meliorists believe that education is a tool to reform society and create change for the better. This socialization goal is based on the power of the individual's intelligence, and the ability to improve on intelligence through education (Kliebard, 2004).

Meliorism joins together pluralism with humanism and is the thesis that we, as individuals, are capable of creating better worlds and selves. Meliorism is best seen as humanism and pluralism combined and in confident mood. Melioristic confidence offers a genuine alternative to both pessimism and optimism (Koopman, 2006).

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Critical and dialogic cosmopolitanism takes into consideration diversity as a universal and cosmopolitan project. Diversal *knowledges* “enhance our socio-political and educational imagination and our ability to imagine new ways of seeing and being and interacting with other people and the physical world” (Kincheloe, 2008, p.5).

Critical cosmopolitanism demands a different conceptualization of human rights and democracy (Mignolo, 2000a). Mignolo (2000a) argues for diversality as a universal project and for border thinking as a necessary epistemology upon which critical cosmopolitanism shall be articulated in a postnational world order governed by global capitalism and new forms of coloniality. Mignolo puts forth that a bottom-up approach to cosmopolitanism is needed, as opposed to the current top-down hierarchy.

Delanty (2006) maintains that cosmopolitanism refers to the multiplicity of ways in which the social world is constructed in different modern and post-modern societies. Critical cosmopolitanism should be seen as a medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world interconnectedness, and is also associated with global publics. According to Delanty (2006), “global publics are playing a critical role in such processes of transformation” (p.27). Indeed, cosmopolitanism involves processes of self-transformation in which new cultural forms are created and where new discourses occur, which help promote a transformation of the social world. Critical cosmopolitanism is an argument for globalization from below, at the same time, “it is an argument for the geopolitical diversal”, one that conceives of diversity as an ongoing “cosmopolitan, universal project” (Mignolo, 2000a, p. 745).

Nepantla

According to Anzaldúa (1987), bridges that cross liminal spaces to connect worlds make up the concept of nepantla. Nepantla traces its history to the Nahua, an indigenous group of people from Mexico and Central America (Anzaldúa, 1987; Maffie, 2007). Maffie states that nepantla is rooted in a belief system that places “people and things within a borderland” or within “a dynamic zone of mutual transaction, confluence, unstable and diffuse identity, and transformation” (Maffie, 2007, p. 16). Thus, the Nahua hold perspectives of a world around them with elements of disorder, becoming, and transitions as norms (Abraham, 2014).

Nepantla, as a form of indigenous knowledge, is related to concepts of red pedagogy (Grande, 2004). Grande puts forth that, as a society, we must engage in a thorough examination

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of the causes and effects of all wars, conflicts, and inter/intracultural encounters. Accordingly, “we must engage the best of creative and critical capacities to discern the path of social justice and then follow it” (Grande, 2004, p. 175).

Red pedagogy brings a realization and consideration for sovereignty and survivances. Survivances can be described as native renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Grande describes the survivance narratives of indigenous peoples as narratives that articulate the “active recovery, reimagination, and reinvestment of indigenous ways of being” (Grande, 2004, p. 175).

Dialogic feminism

Feminist dialogics engender voices and consider intersections of feminist practices and dialogic voices. In this manner, societies are provided with robust narratives of power struggles (Yaeger, 1991). Feminist dialogics coincide with Bakhtin’s concepts of ideological becoming. As educators and cultural workers, we must consider the ability of citizens to analyze and change society (Puigvert, 2012). Dialogic feminism provides us with opportunities for “the analysis of social movements and realities that help us identify contexts where dialogue is taking place, seeking for opportunities for all voices being heard and jointly re-define the social contexts they share” (Puigvert, 2012, p. 92). Thus, a dialogic feminism provides us with pragmatic hope for a society with members who are empowered to overcome patriarchy and its inherent violence.

Pragmatic Hope

Pragmatism refocuses philosophy on the changes that humans can make. In this manner, “hope is the mood in which we expect that we can make the requisite differences” (Koopman, 2006, p.111). Rorty (1999) describes James and Dewey as replacing the inevitable with hope. According to Rorty, pragmatism is hopeful, melioristic, and experimental (Rorty, 1999). If pragmatism is an emblematic vision of democracy, this kind of democratic hope is the “crucial philosophical innovation urged by pragmatism” (Koopman, 2006, p.113).

Pragmatist hope calls for melioration, so that we change society for the better (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2011). When we hope pragmatically we recognize the conflict embedded in current social contexts and to approach such struggles with thoughtful action (Shade, 2001). Although meliorism is based on confidence, effort is integral to meliorism, and efforts must be exerted (James, 1906).

Meliorism is based on action that is influenced by various types of hope, including habits of hope (Shade, 2001). A practical example of hope from a pragmatist perspective is a community of inquiry, where teachers collaborate to resolve issues in schools. As educators, we must challenge the current system of punishment-and-rewards based on the results of high stakes, standardized tests. Current educational policies serve to allay pragmatic hope, including the learning and successes that transpire in communities of inquiry (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2011).

In the US educational climate where teachers face increased anxiety and lowered morale, hope is necessary not simply to struggle through the present situation, but also to imagine and take action toward an improved alternative. At this juncture, education scholars and teacher-educators need conceptual tools in order to successfully model and develop hope in pre-service educators, classroom teachers, and future scholars. Pragmatic hope calls for critically and

realistically confronting today's problems with reflection and collective action. Although hope is tempered by anxiety and low morale under present schooling conditions, pragmatic hope can provide long-term approaches "necessary to chip away at those that cannot be immediately tackled" (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2011, p. 9).

Thus, critical border dialogism draws upon a critical pedagogy of place and border pedagogy and is based on following principles:

1. heteroglossia, as it counters any sort of unilateral and unidirectional voices. Bakhtin (1981) puts forth that individuals connect with a multiplicity of voices through dialogue;
2. meliorism, which combines pluralism with humanism and serves as the thesis that we, as beings, are capable of bettering ourselves and creating a better world;
3. critical cosmopolitanism, as it is an argument for the geopolitical diversal and globalization from below;
4. nepantla, as it serves as a form of indigenous knowledge that places people and things in border surroundings that are characterized by dynamism and fluidity;
5. dialogic feminism, as it is also exemplified by creative energies with its renunciation, resistance, and counter-hegemonic actions of patriarchy and other borders that seek to limit; and
6. pragmatic hope, as it offers possibilities for a transcendence by our confrontation of the limitations currently imposed on our educational systems.

Critical border dialogism involves multidirectional discourse from a) student to teacher, b) teacher to student, c) student to student, d) teacher to teacher, e) teacher to administrator, f) administrator to teacher, g) educator to policy maker, and h) cultural worker to policy maker. Communication and decision making follows more of a bottom-up pattern than a top-down, hierarchal policymaking model.

Currere

According to Pinar (2011) curriculum should no longer reflect the static nature of a noun. On the contrary, the nature of curriculum should reflect the dynamism of its origin Latin action verb form, *currere*. Reframed as *currere*, curriculum becomes a "multiply referenced, conversation in which interlocutors are speaking not only among themselves, but to those not present, not only to historical figures and unnamed peoples and places they may be studying, but to politicians and parents alive and dead, not to mention to the selves they have been, are in the process of becoming and someday may become" (Pinar, 2011, p. 43). As an ethical, political, and intellectual undertaking, the complicated conversation enables educational experiences, including teaching and learning (Pinar, 2011).

This notion of *currere* has been under siege because of the current educational policies that connect curriculum to student performances on standardized tests. Educators have lost their intellectual and academic freedom to choose what they teach and how they will assess student

learning (Pinar, 2011). As a consequence, students' and teachers' performances are measured according to the test score results of high-stakes, standardized assessments. In this manner, extremists have gained control of the US school curriculum (p. 183).

Critical border dialogism serves as a necessary component of all curricula, and furthers dynamic curricula, or *currere* (Pinar, 2011), by replacing all notions of static and complacency with rigorous, kinetic, and complicated conversation that engages us in problem solving, including a grappling with the key issues of our time. Critical border dialogism, like *currere*, is also an intellectual endeavor (Carlson, 2005). The processes of critical border dialogism and *currere* are not mutually exclusive of one another, as both educational courses of action run the course of a complicated conversation.

Pinar (2011) laments the anti-intellectual conditions for teachers in public schools and for university education faculty alike. Anti-intellectualism is paradoxical as university faculty engaged in the study of curriculum issues, through the nature of their profession, must be engaged in intellectual pursuit (Carlson, 2005). Accordingly, many teacher education programs are currently preoccupied with quick prescriptions for teacher certification rather than subsumed with approaches such as a critical border dialogism as essential to the professional development of pre-service educators, classroom teachers, administrators, and other cultural workers.

At this juncture one could ask what role critical border dialogism might play in an uncharted future. First, before responding to this concern it must be noted that a critical border dialogism should make indispensable the contributions of educators and cultural workers as they address transnational and international issues, including their active engagement in promoting a sustainable abatement and end to ongoing wars, conflicts, and acts of terrorism. Second, in light of the present day demands of our educational institutions and society, critical border dialogism serves as a worthy component of attempts to ameliorate current and ongoing issues while anticipating future points of conflict. Nelles puts forth the following positions:

The national security concept has been so distorted, through preemptive or expansionist wars, militarism, and tolerance of human rights abuses, that a critical pedagogy approach must deconstruct its logical fallacies and misuses. It is especially important to assess the national security concept related to American domestic and foreign policy, including misuses of power. (Nelles, 2003, p. 237)

Nelles (2003) also pointed out that the US has been waging its "war on terrorism" with no clear end and little respect for democracy, public opinion, persons or even the sovereignty of other nations. Accordingly, the Iraq War set the stage for America's perpetual war based on a "unilateral global vision outlined in its September, 2002 National Security Strategy" (Nelles, 2003, p. 238).

Given the realities of Nelles' predictions from over a decade ago, what role can critical border dialogism play in an eliminating the need for perpetual war and ongoing use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims? If history is any indication, there will certainly be new challenges to international stability and global efforts to maintain some sort of peace and order in regions of conflict. Critical border dialogism needs to engage stakeholders inside and outside of the academic community in taking on the issues of our time. There is a need for self-reflection and criticism on the part of other influential architects of public opinion, such as government, corporate, and media figures.

Educators, as cultural workers, have important roles to play in societal *regensis*, or new beginnings. As Apple (2004) argues, educational institutions are not apart from society. Educational institutions are central “elements of that society--as work places, as sites of identity formation, as places that make particular knowledge and culture legitimate, as arenas of mobilization and learning of tactics, and so much more” (Apple, 2004, p.158). Through a critical border dialogism educators and cultural workers can examine, envision, and seek to broaden power relationships. By further contemplating the intersections of power relationships we, as a society, can begin to address issues of inequality and promote a socially just society.

Toward a Critical Border Praxis

Educators, students, and cultural workers are empowered through the implementation of critical border dialogism as praxis. According to Freire (2005), praxis involves reflection and action to better transform the world. Therefore, praxis is a process through which theory and pedagogy are enacted; transformative objectives are conceptualized within the overarching goals of praxis in education. This definition of praxis follows Gramsci’s (1971) recommendations for “commonsense” to be reformulated to turn common sense ideas into informed knowledge. Informed knowledge, in turn, must be turned into the philosophy of praxis and applied across educational settings. Critical border dialogism with its concerns for heteroglossia, meliorism, critical cosmopolitanism, nepantla, dialogic feminism, pragmatic hope, pedagogy of place, and border pedagogy leads us down the path of a critical border praxis. *Critical border praxis* engages educators, students, and cultural workers in teaching and learning the social contexts of our discord and propels us to enter discourses and problem-solving that keep pace with our dynamic surroundings and allow us to move beyond our boundaries and perceived limitations. As Leonardo (2004) argues, there is a need for utopic thinking so that nightmares can be transformed into dreams.

In this scenario we, as world citizens, enter a new epoch that will provide the narrative for a time of critical border praxis. Critical border praxis offers opportunities for educators, students, cultural workers, community leaders, and representatives of states and nations to come together for dialogue on the common goals for an era of security and relative peace. As part of critical border praxis education must reach out to those who had been deemed unreachable in the past. For critical border dialogism to be effective in its educational goals, anti-intellectualism should be replaced with access to first-rate, rigorous education. Contrary to the rhetoric that has been put forth by so-called education reformers, this sort of quality should not be hindered by the current push to drain public education from its resources. Support for public education stands in stark contrast to the increasing financial support and provisions for less-regulated charter schools or privately-sponsored academies, which tend to divert already meager funding for public schools. On the contrary, all too often corporate or other non-public school interests further their agendas without sufficient state government oversight, thus reinforcing Bowles and Gintis’ (1976) correspondence principle and Bourdieu’s (1977) theories of cultural reproduction. There must be a shift toward first-rate public education for students regardless of their social economic status. Quality education must be defined as something more than highly proficient standardized test scores.

Pax Americana and Pax Universalis

Critical border praxis is a concerted and mindful attempt to promote transnational understandings and models for change and peace. For critical border praxis to be efficacious, all efforts to promote meaningful, sustainable accord must reach beyond a *Pax Americana*, or period of relative peace for the US, a concept that needs further scrutinizing and critiquing through critical border dialogism. *Pax Americana* has been put forth as being a bi-product of democratic peace theory. A key tenet of *Pax Americana* and democratic peace theory is that democracy in the US has promulgated a period of improved relations with other democratic nations. Educators and their students should engage in a discourse of how democratic principles are positioned as a part of transnational and international conflict resolution. Rather than presuppose that the US as a democracy adheres to conventions of a democratic peace, critical border dialogism should be a factor in determining how democratic principles influence peace (Brock, Geis, & Muller, 2006). Accordingly, the US and many of the world's current democratic institutions, do not necessarily promote peace in the world. Rather, democratic governments "inculcate restraints in conflicts with other democracies" but the restraints can be circumvented by governments through covert warfare (Daase, 2006, p. 82). According to Daase (2006), there are incentives for democratic governments to use force for various reasons, such as diversionary action or in attempts to broaden domestic support through the expansion of war fervor. Moreover, peacetime provisions for "civil control of the military are lifted in times of war" (Daase, 2006, p.82). Although there are attributes of democracy that make it a comparatively favorable form of government, peacefulness has not necessarily been a characteristic of democracies (Daase, 2006). In this manner, critical border praxis allows us critique the rhetoric associated with democratic notions of *Pax Americana*.

Critical border praxis is focused on movement toward a *Pax Universalis*, or universal peace, rather than a fixation on *Pax Americana*. Conflict resolution and genuine attempts to ameliorate societal problems are ongoing struggles and processes and further goals of a *Pax Universalis*. Critical border dialogism and critical border praxis provide for flexible starting places and follow-up courses of action for points of contention, as conflict resolution and struggle inherently engage us in Bakhtin's process of becoming.

Only when all parties involved, including nation states, incorporate critical border dialogism into their educational curricula and international relationships will we see the possibilities for both short- and long-term solutions to misunderstandings, conflicts, and wars that cross international borders. It is these transnational understandings that offer the possibilities for addressing the root causes of long-standing international tensions and conflicts. The world needs well educated and informed citizens who can contemplate and debate the potential and value of existing governmental systems, whether the policy makers in their governments represent functioning democracies, governments that are democratic in name only, or undemocratic governing bodies. Critical border dialogism has the potential to further understandings and offer possible conflict resolution for current conflicts at the time of concerns for a new Cold War, involving tensions between the US, its NATO partners and Russia. Beyond these looming hostilities, critical border dialogism provides pragmatic hope and a realistic path for the resolution of conflicts between Israel and Palestine, Nigeria and its internal strife, boundary disputes in East Asia, and innumerable conflicts and autonomy movements throughout the world.

Recommendations

We, as members of societies, must transition from a culture of war to a culture of critical border dialogism and conflict resolution that continually promulgates shared visions and understandings. In our roles as educators, students, cultural workers, decision makers, and policy makers, we must transcend current culture wars through critical border praxis. Concerns and conflicts must be addressed through democratic participation. This engagement in democracy considers more than personal interests and individual agendas. Critical border praxis is informed by critical border dialogism and incorporates broader visions and worldviews than those that are limited to personal, group, or special interests. To explain further, critical border praxis should not be limited to concerns for single, one-dimensional issues. Moreover, hypocrisies within single-issue platforms should be exposed. For example, a person who participates in democracy based solely on their anti-abortion stances must also consider the hypocrisy of also being a death penalty supporter. To provide another case in point, if one seeks to further a personal agenda based solely on anti-capitalist stances, that same individual must be prepared to reflect on their own personal privilege.

Educational research can inform us of how critical border praxis is better facilitated. Accordingly, there is a need to consider the following questions:

1. How do current democracies, including the US, incorporate understandings of the root causes of international conflicts in their larger visions of policy making?
2. How can nations prepare for the future by changing their present reactive stances to more proactive measures that promote long term stability and reduce the likelihood of future violence and wars?
3. What role should education, in contrast to its traditional roles, play in developing rich understandings across physical, political, technological, ecological, and ideological spaces and borders?
4. How is critical border dialogism central to the development of a critical border praxis?
5. How does a critical border praxis serve as a genuine pre-emptive strike against inequality and social injustice?
6. How does the world overcome patriarchal, hierarchical systems, based on our understandings of dialogic feminism?
7. How does the US as a nation, move from concerns for a Pax Americana to a vision for a Pax Universalis?

New Beginnings

At local, state, or national levels critical border dialogism provides understandings of how to cross cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual preference, religious, age, physical ability, and other boundaries. Unless highly focused attempts at dialogue are attempted, polarized gaps

that ever-widen as the result of cultural, governmental, and military conflicts will continue to grow unabated. A requisite for a more civil society is that we stop shouting at each other and begin to listen. In this manner, democratic movements should be reassessed, but not abandoned. With regard to US democracy, in particular, there must be serious reflection on the goals and future of our governmental system. In place of a government that is dominated by corporate and oligarchic interests, the US system should move in the direction of respect for a multiplicity of voices as well as the socioeconomic and political interests represented by those voices. Likewise, critical border dialogism should allow opportunities for border crossings of national, racial, ethnic, religious, gender-restrictive, sexual identity, and ideological borders. It is long overdue that the US, as a democracy, replaces gunboat diplomacy and drone-delivered terror attacks in the name of peace-making with genuine attention to the root causes of conflicts worldwide. It is time that the world revisits Mohandas K. Gandhi's observations of "an eye for an eye makes the world blind." We, as fellow *beings*, should not allow the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Malala Yousafzai, and other indomitable individuals be in vain.

Critical border dialogism, therefore, has a major role to play in providing answers to the above questions, or at the various least, addressing new sets of uncertainties as big questions are resolved. Furthermore, a critical border praxis engages the educational community in discourses that address issues facing our dynamic, fluid border environs. It is through a critical border praxis that we can begin to contemplate utopic ideals, no matter how unattainable those embodiments may seem. Critical border praxis provides conditions in which we, as educators and members of diverse communities of learners, are brought in from the margins to cross borders and broaden our possibilities to achieve what had been considered the unattainable. At local, state, and national levels resources need to be redirected toward educational efforts. This represents a shift in US priorities from the current situation which pays homage to the 1950s by allocating a substantial share of the national budget to new forms of McCarthyism and a new Cold War. Under these conditions, overwhelming fear leads the US into situations where national security hoaxes are commonplace.

Place-based pedagogies, border pedagogy, and critical border dialogism are important for the development of a well-educated population and democratic society. As such, individuals should be afforded an education that promotes an understanding of their roles as local, national, and global citizens. Moreover, critical border dialogism engages educators, their students, and other cultural workers in the development of *knowledges* (Kincheloe, 2008) and subsequent understandings in classrooms and the larger society. Comparative, transnational *currere* and critical border praxis reinforce and help clarify the role of education, formal and informal, to influence individual thinking one-by-one, educate school-by-school, affect community-by-community, persuade policy makers state-by-state, and to transform country-by-country on the road to an enduring Pax Universalis.

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