



Review of Peter McLaren and Petar Jandrić (2020).

Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology

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Critical consciousness, they say, is anarchic. Others add that critical consciousness may lead to disorder. Some, however, confess ‘Why deny it? I was afraid of freedom. I am no longer afraid!’ (Freire 1970: 35).

Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Between Disorder and Freedom

These inspiring words by Paulo Freire recall the importance and potential of critical praxis—a philosophy of practice that lies in the core of *Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology* (McLaren and Jandrić 2020). Peter McLaren’s and Petar Jandrić’s provocative, grounded-breaking book pushes our intellectual limits towards new realities and ways of being and living with the world. In our age where pandemics emerge, climate change is on the rise, and ‘viral modernity’ settles in (Peters, Jandrić, and McLaren 2020); the book is crucial and necessary not only because it reflects the spirit of our times but also for the sake of collectivity and social humanization.

Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology is a compilation of conversations between Peter McLaren and Petar Jandrić held between 2011 and 2019. McLaren and Jandrić are cognizant of inseparability between their dialogues and constant intercreation of knowledge with their respective intellectual communities, and their recognition of various voices in and around their speech provides the book with a powerful sense of collectivity. Book’s strongly

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subjective assembly offers equal insight into authors' academic work and personalities, thus reinforcing the idea that the personal is the political. These values are reflected in book's accessible language and unusual dialogical structure unconstrained by typical academic conventions.

The book consists of five sections, and each section presents a series of loosely connected dialogues about revolutionary critical praxis in our postdigital condition where the digital and physical spheres merge into a single reality (Jandrić et al. 2018). This approach slowly weaves new forms of postdigital collective intelligences based on the trialectic between we-think, we-learn, and we-act (Jandrić 2019). *Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology* addresses a wide range of contemporary phenomena and encourages new forms of collective action, resulting in a series of important contributions to contemporary revolutionary critical pedagogy.

Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy in the Postdigital Age

At the beginning of the book, McLaren and Jandrić address evolution of critical pedagogy from postmodernism to Marxism and describe development of revolutionary critical pedagogy through revealing theoretical bases inherent within critical practices. They show that traditional critical pedagogy often neglects the role of technology in human affairs, and challenge common instrumentalist views to technologies as neutral tools. Analyzing interconnections between digital technologies, mass media, capital, labour, and revolutionary critical pedagogy, they point out that technologies and humans can co-create various futures and support oppositional movements towards a transformation of capitalist society into a socialist alternative.

McLaren and Jandrić highlight that our contemporary society gives rise to new productive structures and that new forms of labour are not free from traditional Marxist problems such as exploitation and alienation. These analyses result with an important question, originally asked by Peter McLaren and Glenn Rikowski, which in various forms reoccurs until the end of the book: 'To become capital or to humanize our souls?' (McLaren and Rikowski 2001). To answer this question, McLaren and Jandrić suggest that educational institutions should develop a revolutionary critical pedagogy that modifies social relationships sustained beneath the forms of capital. According to Henry Giroux, '[i]lliteracy has become a form of political repression that discourages a culture of questioning, renders agency as an act of intervention inoperable, and restages power as a mode of domination' (Giroux 2018: 202). Therefore, McLaren and Jandrić's 'dangerous thinking' (Giroux 2018: 204) requires new forms of postdigital literacy.

Our capitalist reality, perpetuated by technologies controlled by corporate interests, co-creates our postdigital society and lays foundations for new postdigital cultures which suffer from a chronic lack of political attitude and activist commitment. New forms of inequality, social control, suppression of privacy, and other contemporary phenomena are both causes and effects of these developments. In the age of the Anthropocene, this inseparability between humans, technologies, and nature is particularly visible in the context of climate change. McLaren and Jandrić therefore

extensively discuss relationships between critical pedagogies and the environment and endorse a new trajectory of critical pedagogy called ecopedagogy.

In the next section, McLaren and Jandrić switch their attention from education and technology to myth, faith, and emotion. Looking at concordances and tensions between Catholicism and Marxism, the book offers a unique insight into some lesser known relationships between revolutionary critical pedagogy and liberation theology. According to McLaren and Jandrić, liberation theology is deeply connected with critical revolutionary pedagogy because both system of thought begin from the experience and voice of the oppressed. Developing these connections in a postdigital context, McLaren and Jandrić explore new opportunities for negotiating complex relationships between the physical and the spiritual. Next two dialogues, dedicated to liberation theologies of Karl Marx and Paulo Freire, reveal some important points of agreement and opportunities for learning between theological and political praxis of liberation.

Until the end of the book, McLaren and Jandrić bring together diverse insights presented in earlier chapters and establish a postdigital dialogue between critical pedagogy, liberation theology, and information technology in the context of contemporary transnational capitalism. They insist that capitalism is beyond repair, and that we need a socialist alternative supported by the majority and shared in theoretical and practical ways. Therefore, revolutionary critical pedagogy is a crucial part of the struggle against global fascism and a key vehicle for imagining radically different collective futures. In concluding chapters McLaren and Jandrić outline key contributions that revolutionary critical pedagogy can make in and for the Anthropocene, and claim that these contributions offer ‘a tiny straw of hope’ (McLaren and Jandrić 2020: 256).

Towards a Postdigital Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy of Hope

Hope is an ontological imperative: to be hopeful is not an obligation but an existential concern (Freire 1992). Surfing between the dystopian nature of today’s society and hopes for a better world, *Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology* (McLaren and Jandrić 2020) is a key reading for everyone interested in potentialities of revolutionary critical pedagogy. Building on legacy of Paulo Freire, McLaren and Jandrić magnificently summarize their own academic and personal trajectories, doubts, and evolutions, and develop basis for a contemporary and inclusive revolutionary critical pedagogy for our postdigital age. *Postdigital Dialogues on Critical Pedagogy, Liberation Theology and Information Technology* (McLaren and Jandrić 2020) is an inspiring, inclusive multi-dialogue that equally challenges its authors and their readers and invites development of new forms of collective thinking and cooperation aimed at development of a post-capitalist future.

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