

COUNTERING PRIVILEGE: TOWARD A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF
COMPASSION IN THE TEACHING OF UNITED STATES HISTORY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

It is the thesis of this paper that privileged students can develop compassion for their peers who are given minority status in our society by having United States history teachers teach history in such a way that the affluent come to have a greater understanding for the “other.” The study begins with a discussion of concepts of privilege, compassion and empathy, and the poor. This is followed by an historical overview of traditions of teaching United States history and the textbooks used over the years, beginning in the late 19th century up until the 1980’s and 1990’s. This is not intended to be an exhaustive study but one which gives the main ideas of different eras and to show how they shifted from generation to generation and according to the political/social climate in the United States. In the third chapter I address issues of power, ideology, and education in the teaching of U.S. history. The consciousness of teachers and its importance in teaching for compassion is crucial to this process. In Chapter Five I do a textual analysis of three commonly used American history books in public high schools, and I also look at the texts used by American history teachers in the Champaign-Urbana community, in terms of their propensity to teach compassion to the privileged. The study ends by looking at compassion, how it can be understood, taught, and learned. This includes a conclusion and recommendations, as well as important questions to be asked at this point about compassion and teaching United States history. The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire is very relevant here, as is critical theory and, in addition, critical race theory.

We must find a way through public education to reach privileged children and help them understand their history and that of our country. To understand is to be empowered and that is true for everyone. The affluent must be brought to a place where they can understand, at a deep level of meaning, what has brought them to where they are, an accident of birthplace and status,

if we are to have them as part of the struggle for equality. The twelve years they spend in school is an invaluable time to reach them. If we do not use this time to do so, it is a wasteful tragedy.

Keywords: compassion, empathy, U.S. history, privilege, teaching, critical pedagogy, critical theory, critical race theory.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction: History Without Compassion	1
Chapter 2 Teaching U.S. History: A Historical Overview of the Tradition	20
Chapter 3 Power, Ideology and Education in the Teaching of History	47
Chapter 4 Compassion and Education	65
Chapter 5 The Hidden Curriculum of History Books: A Textual Analysis	83
Chapter 6 History and Compassion: Conclusions and Recommendations	94
References	145

Chapter 1

Introduction: History Without Compassion?

Thomas Ross, Professor of Law at the University of Pittsburgh Law School, in his book, *Just Stories: How the Law Embodies Racism and Bias* (1996), begins his account of the historical pathology of the law and the process of its construction in the United States by recounting his own lived experience growing up in the 1950's and 1960's in Maryland:

I do not see myself as responsible for the racially separated school systems that I inhabited, or for the racism that accounted for them. I do not think it is a matter of guilt for me. On the other hand, like my father, I am complicit. I can never give back the advantages I enjoyed by growing up in the 1950's and 1960's in a society that stacked the educational, social, and employment deck in my favor by virtue of my race.

And complicity doesn't stop with the inequalities of the past. As I cannot give back the advantages of my childhood or erase the disadvantages experienced by my black contemporaries, I also cannot avoid the continuing advantages I experience while living in a culture still gripped with prejudices that accord to me an assumption of worthiness that it denies to blacks, women, and others deemed different by the dominant class. *This is the terrible and unwanted gift I receive every day of my life* (my emphasis). And the fact that I receive it, wanted or not, keeps me in a state of complicity...Even those who reject stereotypes cannot escape the correlative advantages which our culture accords to them. We are all tangled up in it (pp. xiii-xiv).

For too long the disenfranchised and marginalized have struggled for their rights, for their survival, against the biases and barriers of the dominant class in our society. The privileged, in the meantime, have found it easy to look the other way, living in a separate world with no connection to those who help to create this world for them with their labor and sacrifice. This study has as its purpose to demonstrate that if we are to create a world of true equality across all groups, we will need the involvement of the minority of people in our country who hold the majority of wealth and political power and who exercise their privilege, at the expense of the majority.

It is the assumption of this study that for change to occur at a fundamental level, at a level that is solidly grounded in democratic ideals of equal opportunity and equal access to resources, then we will need an awareness and commitment to these changes on the part of the privileged group who control the majority of natural resources and are responsible for carrying out the majority of political decisions in the United States. Many say that change happens from the bottom up and this has often been true. In fact, except for a few token instances in our history, there has been little real and sustained change that has originated from the top to the bottom.

The point of this study, however, is to demonstrate that the privileged are capable of recognizing not only their part in maintaining the marginalized oppressed, but the structural policies and practices that function to obstruct their freedom.

In an effort to address the practical issues related to challenging privilege, this study seeks to show that using critical pedagogical methods of teaching American history in our high schools can encourage activism and, thus, seems most appropriate for addressing questions of asymmetrical relations. Students who are at the adolescent stage are often ripe for discussing issues of truth, conflict, and contradiction that exist in American history, generally overlooked in almost all textbooks. As such, students are not asked to question nor taught to think critically about what they read and what they are taught. They are expected to accept facts at face value and accept these as if they have no meaning beyond the isolated events, themselves.

If privileged students were taught history from the point of view of the “other”, that is, balanced by a diminution of the point of view of the dominant perspective, if they were taught that present events are always connected with past historical, ideological and political conditions, if they could acknowledge and understand the suffering that results from all discrimination, all degradation, all dominance. They might come to realize that to understand American history

implies that they, consequently, utilize their empowerment and social agency to transform the society in which we live today.

This is a paper about privilege, subordination, compassion (and lack thereof), and the understanding of these issues in our society by privileged students by a new approach to teaching American history. To begin, a working definition of these terms is necessary. Diane Goodman, in her 2001 book, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People From Privileged Groups*, explains privilege in this way:

The term *people from privileged groups* implies that there are people from non-privileged groups. Systems of oppression are characterized by dominant-subordinate relations. There are unequal power relationships that allow one group to benefit at the expense of another group. The various ways people name the two sides of this dynamic reflect these qualities: oppressor and oppressed, advantaged and disadvantaged, dominant and subordinate, agent and target, privileged and marginalized, dominator and dominated, majority and minority (p. 6).

Goodman prefers the term “privileged” because it is the term most people are familiar with. Yet the term “dominant group” also is useful because it suggests that the privileged group not only gets privileges and has greater social power but also “sets the norms” (p. 6). “Its values, images, and experiences are most pervasive in and representative in the culture—in other words, dominant”(p. 6). Goodman makes it clear that she in no way looks at the privileged group as deserving of these qualities, but that they are socially constructed and reproduced.

We generate stereotypes, as in the idea of “human progress” being a product of Western “civilization” while ignoring the exploitation and misery that has occurred. These stereotypes get constantly reiterated and reinforced in a multitude of everyday acts of mistreatment of minorities by whites, in “incidents that range from the subtle and hard to observe to the blatant and easy to notice” (Feagin, 2001, p. 139). The subtle discrimination that results (like the hiring of whites over blacks even though the black person may be better qualified) is, in part, “the

unconscious failure to extend to a minority the same recognition of humanity, and hence the same sympathy and care, given as a matter of course to one's own group . . . the selectivity results, often unconsciously, from our tendency to sympathize most readily with those who seem most like ourselves. Yet oppression is not less serious because it is more subtle" (p. 140).

White Privilege," says Peggy MacIntosh (1992), is "an invisible package of unearned assets which (she) can count on cashing in each day, but about which (she) was meant to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurance, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks (p. 33).

There exist the "race-conscious," "right-thinking" white racists, according to Tom Ross (1995) in "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being." They "reject the tenets of racism, and understand that race is a purely social construction, and a vicious one at that" (p. 254). The problem, says Ross, is that while the "race-conscious" reject racism, they have not completely rooted it out of their consciousness and they live with "a presumptive sense of worthiness and belonging . . .the myth of the racially unassisted life . . . the terrible and illicit gift of Whiteness" (pp. 254-55). But without recognizing this as a myth and the role it plays in our lives, whites cannot be "effective agents in the dismantling of racism" (pp. 254-55). In order to be truly effective, whites need to do more than give their support to such reforms as the undermined Affirmative Action, etc. They must "rip away their own Whiteness" (pp. 254-55).

Recent Research on Privilege, Class, Racism and Compassion

In addressing the issue of the hierarchies of class and schooling, Michelle Fine and April Burns (2003) discovered little research on privileged youth, especially within the fields of social (in)justice. They propose that the privileged are more capable of being sensitive to the plight of the less privileged than researchers may have come to expect: "Given the paucity of research on

privilege, especially within the fields of social (in)justice...the absence of a sense of responsibility in privileged youth is assumed” (856). Similarly, shame is assumed to characterize the emotions of the children of the working class and the poor. Thus researchers have rarely addressed the development of critical consciousness among privileged youth.

Fine and Burns (2003) conclude: “We sell privileged youth short. They too notice the fractures of a class-stratified system and in the right settings, with sensitive methods, may whisper words of responsibility and distress” (p. 856). They call for research with privileged youth in relation to social (in)justice as a necessary and significant area for future research. They ask such questions as: Under what conditions do privileged youth experience dissonance? Once they have arrived at a critique of the system, what is the relationship to activism? Or, once arriving at a critique, what is the relationship to a sense of helplessness?

In this sense multiple ethnicities would be considered in a way that heretofore have been unacknowledged, or if acknowledged by elites, given low social status for a variety of reasons. Bringing their dilemma into the light, as a legitimate subject for examining the privileged in our society, can create a more honest and authentic dialogue in classrooms.

Interrogation of Privilege/Inequality in Society

Research directly focusing on the attitudes of privileged adolescents toward inequality is included in the 2003 edition of the *Journal of Social Issues*, within which several such studies were published. Searches elsewhere have so far revealed no research directed on this specific issue.

In “Social Class and Adolescents’ Beliefs about Justice in Different Social Orders” Flanagan & Campbell (2003) compare adolescents in “security” societies with those in

“opportunity” societies. *Security Societies* are defined as those in which “for forty years prior to the study, the state guaranteed the basic needs of citizens. Justice was based on the principle that outcomes generally should be equal.” These societies are in transition from state-centered to market economies: for example, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Russia (2003, p. 712).

Opportunity Societies, by contrast, have had liberal or market principles in place for many years, and the state plays a relatively minor role in regulating the economy, in compensating for its vagaries, or in providing entitlements for citizens. “In these nations, equal opportunity or a level playing field is the foundation on which individuals prove their worth. Justice is based on principles of equity (i.e., that rewards such as income or status are deserved because they were earned by one’s own work),” for example, the United States and Australia (2003, p. 712).

The thesis of this research was that “Societies remain stable when there is a general consensus that the social order is just” (Flannagan and Campbell, 2003, p. 711). This consensus is maintained by social policies and practices of institutions, such as schools, which configure people’s options and inform their normative beliefs. “The goals and practices of schools accommodate to fit the needs of changing social orders” (p. 712). The authors argue that adolescents’ beliefs about what “ought” to be will be a reflection of the arrangements to which they are accustomed, in other words, how the social contract works for people “like them” (p. 712).

In relation to the differences between adolescents in security societies compared to those in opportunity societies, working-class teens in security societies were more likely than their middle-class peers to feel that the state should continue providing a safety net for citizens (Flannagan and Campbell, 2003, p. 727). Furthermore, middle-class teens in both security and

opportunity societies were more likely than working-class peers to want student autonomy promoted at school (p. 728). Finally, opposition of middle-class students in security societies to society helping non-college bound students find jobs as well as endorsement of competition at school suggests an emerging middle-class consciousness (p. 728).

In “Privileging Class: Toward a Critical Psychology of Social Class in the Context of Education,” Ostrove & Cole (2003), do not address privilege but do examine the contradiction between the image of public schools and the actual experience of marginalized youth in them. They argue that public schools in the United States are the embodiment of the belief that the United States is a classless society. Yet, “intense classicism” among students and teachers is a vicious cycle which wears down working class and poor students to the point that they “live down” to negative teacher expectations (p. 684). Narratives describing the social opportunity and mobility by white working-class boys demonstrate that they have difficulty articulating their discomfort with their own positioning in the social strata, while boys of color expressed a structural critique grounded in their racial/ethnic experience and identity (p. 687).

In “Class Notes: Toward a Critical Psychology of Class and Schooling,” Michelle Fine and April Burns (2003), found that when *unchallenged*, privileged youth confidently endorse self-rewarding meritocratic beliefs, bolstering their own sense of entitlement, and distancing them from responsibility for others (848). Working class youth expressed feelings of institutional betrayal, but to an audience of the privileged who largely refused to listen or act. Thus it is alienation and critique that are associated with *critical* class-consciousness. The least privileged students narrate the strongest critique of the class structure. At the same time, poor and working class students criticized the institutions within which they hope to achieve, indicating a split/double consciousness. However, when educational institutions supported

equity, privileged students in fact came to see their status in terms of a *responsibility* to work toward change in schools; while poor and working-class youth were able in many cases to convert shame and embarrassment to outrage and activism (p. 853).

In summary, privileged youth were inclined not to question the arrangements of their society. Marginalized youth in these studies were more capable than privileged youth of generating a critique of their conditions. It is also of interest that white working class youth had great difficulty articulating a critique of their alienation. Privileged youth, in most cases, could not express an understanding of the plight of their underprivileged peers unless put in a situation where they were challenged to question the legitimacy of their own affluence. In these cases, they were capable of achieving an awareness of their status in society and the corresponding inequities that mark the lives of their lower status peers.

The “Poor”

The term “poor” will be used in the sense it is taken by Abram De Swann (2005) in his article, “Elite perceptions of the poor: Reflections on a comparative research project.” Here De Swann discusses:

The development of welfare arrangements (as) equally determined by the political culture in a particular society. In this respect, what counts especially are the relations between the elites and the masses, who neither possess economic means nor political resources, and who for the sake of brevity will be called ‘the poor’ (p. 184).

We need to be clear that there is no such thing as giving up one’s privilege to be ‘outside’ the system. One is always *in* the system. The only question is whether one is part of the system in a way that challenges or strengthens the status quo. Privilege is not something I *take* and which I therefore have the option of *not taking*. It is something that society *gives* me, and unless I change the institutions which give it to me, they will continue to give it, and I will continue to *have* it, however noble and egalitarian my intentions (Brod, 1989, p. 280).

Amilcar Cabral (1993) addressed privilege in a similar way. Cabral was a Marxist and nationalist politician who was assassinated in 1973 in Guinea-Bissau, where he was a leader of the national liberation movement. When addressing the possibility of the petty bourgeoisie becoming a socialist political force in the Third World, he emphasized how such a process must end in a kind of “class suicide.” That is, if the petty bourgeoisie were to be grounded in a material base of new social institutions, they must at that point be prevented from taking power as the privileged before them had. In other words, they must resist becoming the new privileged. The only way this could happen, according to Cabral, was for the institutional structures of radical socialist democracy to be incorporated into the materialist experiences of leaders—beyond simply a change in their consciousness or will. That is, all hierarchies of privilege must end.

Current Anti-Democratic Education Reform: The Example of the Texan “Miracles”

We find ourselves today in a situation with regard to education which is literally creating citizens who are doomed to be an un-educated, mis-informed citizenry, a tendency which has been steadily increasing since the 1980’s beginning with the Reagan administration. There are many examples but most recently the state of Texas is robbing us of our right to be a truly democratic society. One could say Texas began its rampage in the 90’s with G.W. Bush as governor. High-stakes standardized tests were introduced as required in all schools, and the claim was that it was a successful move in getting students to perform better. Deemed “The Texas Miracle” the federal policy of No Child Left Behind was modeled on this policy, and brought with it among other problems that of “cheating.” Students who were low-performing were asked to stay at home on the day of the test, and schools figured out how to “fudge” their

scores by other means as well. And so it is with NCLB. President Obama plans to allow 4.35 billion dollars (<http://learningmatters.tv/blog/on-the-news-hour/race-to-the-top-the-race-is-on-pt2/3758/>), considered the “dollar pie” has 40 states and D.C. all hoping to win a share for their schools, which he calls “Race to the Top.” Washington wants more charter schools (see CNN report of abusive teacher in charter school currently on most news broadcasts). Washington wants more charter schools, merit pay for teachers, and plans to put the best teachers in the worst schools. “According to the U.S. Department of Education, some states will walk away with hundreds of millions of dollars, while others will be left without a cent.” Adding insult to injury, the Texas State Board of Education has made other changes consistent with its tendency to be ultra-conservative. Led by a dentist, Dr. Don McLeroy, who declared that “academia is skewed too far to the left,” textbook publishers are being told that the State demands that United States history textbooks must stress the superiority of American capitalism (using the term “free enterprise” instead), remove the fact that the Founding Fathers wished for a secular society (removing their emphasis on the separation of church and state, replacing the study of Thomas Jefferson with that of John Calvin, a Swiss Protestant who sterilized Christianity by interpreting it as a punitive religion and removing all meaningful rituals). Yes, as Dr. McLeroy has said, “history has been skewed.” But as will be seen later in this paper, the skewing of history has actually made it into a subject with a lack of depth which the Texan Board has succeeded in worsening. No one on the Board is an historian, and they succeeded in such nasty tactics as refusing history textbooks to include more Latino figures as models for all the Hispanics in the state’s population. Rather, they required that the study of history now include a focus on Phyllis Schlafly, the Moral Majority, and the National Rifle Association. Joseph McCarthy’s, students will learn, witch-hunting actions were justified. One member of the Board, Barbara Cargill, won

passage of an amendment requiring that students learn “the importance of personal responsibility for life choices” in a section of the textbook on teenage suicide, dating violence, drug use, and eating disorders. Cargill complains that sociology blames society for everything, and instead expounds her compassionate conservatism.

What kind of people will our children become if fed a constant diet of such unremarkable figures in our history, and starved of the ideals like those of Thomas Jefferson, with all his acknowledged faults, for reasons that reflect a total misunderstanding of ethical human behavior? Teaching Empathy in the History Classroom in the 1960’s and 1970’s

In an article entitled “Stepping into other people’s shoes: Teaching and assessing empathy in the secondary history curriculum” (2004) Richard Harris and Lorraine Foreman-Peck explain how empathy became a part of teaching history in the 1960’s and 1970’s, but was eliminated in the 1980’s and 1990’s. They are of the opinion that it needs to be re-integrated into the history curriculum. They make a rather tedious intellectual argument for this, approaching the teaching of empathy as one would approach teaching mathematics, their argument being so hyper-rational, and lacking in an awareness that empathy (and compassion, I would add), are not something you teach by exercises and practicing. This will be dealt with later in this paper, but suffice it to say at this point that there is a very basic humane-ness in such experiences, and this is something that Western Liberal rationalizing cannot completely grasp.

Finally, this study seeks to show that such an emancipatory social agency must be anchored in compassion—a compassion that can only fully evolve within students of the privileged class when they are both challenged and supported to engage the hidden and silenced histories of suffering that fundamentally inform unfair access to privilege and power. This understanding of compassion is in line with Sharon Salzberg’s (1995):

This strength that arises out of seeing the true nature of suffering in the world. Compassion allows us to bear witness to that suffering, whether it is in ourselves or others, without fear; it allows us to name injustice without hesitation, and to act strongly, with all the skill at our disposal. To develop this mind state of compassion...is to learn to live with sympathy for all living beings, without exception (p.103).

To further elucidate the meaning of compassion as used in this study, I will take the definition as used by Robert A.F. Thurman of Columbia University in his Foreward to Lorne Lander's book, *The Lost Art of Compassion*. (2004):

The English word compassion is used to translate the Sanskrit *karuna*, which is etymologized as "suspending happiness." To feel compassion, you must turn away slightly from your own focus on superficial happiness to sense the true condition of others, honestly facing their pains. This turn is considered the key to expanding awareness from its habitual imprisonment in self-centered states of mind, by nature always unsatisfactory, and to connecting with the feelings of others, through which real satisfaction becomes possible. *It is thus an open-hearted empathy for the suffering of others and the wish to free them from it* (my emphasis). It is the twin of another powerful emotion, "love," Sanskrit *maitri*, which means the wish for the beloved others to be happy. To succeed in making others happy, it was long ago discovered, you must develop the kind of deeper happiness within yourself that only increases when you share it (p. ix).

Empathy is akin to compassion, involving understanding the feeling state of another person. The main difference is that compassion brings with it the desire to change the perceived state of affairs, where empathy does not involve this dimension. "It could be argued that some degree of empathetic thinking is necessary for moral development since the consideration of others necessitates understanding others" (Harris and Foreman-Peck, 2004, p. 2).

Examples of Those with White Privilege Addressing Social Justice

"In the last years of his life, Robert F. Kennedy became increasingly estranged from Washington's political elite" (Talbot, 2007, p. 338). He had a commitment to a new, multi-racial America, a commitment that placed him next to Dr. Martin Luther King in his non-violent politics. He visited South Africa, eager to be a part of the anti-apartheid movement there, and his

critique of American Foreign Policy during the Vietnam War became more and more passionate. During his time in South Africa, Kennedy directly challenged the morality of apartheid. He denounced the brutal treatment of black citizens, and encouraged white citizens of South Africa to have the courage to overthrow this regime. In a speech at Capetown in 1966, that Arthur Schlesinger called the speech of his life, Kennedy made clear his motivation:

Kennedy spoke out wherever Each time a man (sic) stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance” (p.338).

At one point he went to South Africa. At a dinner party in Pretoria he said:

What does it mean to be against communism if one’s own system denies the value of the individual and gives all the power to the government—just as the Communists do? (p. 339).

The Cold War had provided a cover for the United States and its despotic allies to abuse their own populations. Kennedy demanded the end to this era.

“Everywhere Kennedy went he challenged his white hosts to question their deepest assumptions” (p. 339). When he learned that the major church in Pretoria, made up of the white population, taught that black inferiority is divinely ordained, he said:

“But suppose God is black”...a remark which brought silence. Afterward, Kennedy went back to his hotel and was met by a crowd of black South Africans and sang with them, “We Shall Overcome.” Calling Soweto a “dreary concentration camp,” he was followed first by students, then more and more of the general population. He visited banned opposition leaders in their homes. Upon leaving the country, the Pretoria regime, relieved at his departure, Kennedy remarked: “If we stayed another two days, we could have taken over the country” (p. 339).

Robert Kennedy was part of the white elite establishment yet drew his passion from his awareness of this unfortunate inequity. He recognized clearly the privilege he had and used that privilege to intervene and confront the judgment of Blacks as inferior to whites. He didn't believe a word of it. He was active in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States which probably caused his assassination, but was fearless, having a strong sense of compassion and social justice and was willing to risk his life for his commitment to these beliefs.

Personal Experience With Privilege

My own experience with being born privileged has been full of conflict. My first memory of concern for those discriminated against was when I was ten years old and made a scrapbook of Pope John XXIII. My mother was dismayed because I was not Catholic, but all I had read about this Pope indicated that he was, in my opinion, a great humanitarian. I have spent much of my adult life working with those considered of a "lower status" by the dominant class. I am white and therefore experience the "psychological wages of whiteness" (Roediger, 1991) and working with members of the subordinate class brought me to the realization, that I could have an impact on their disenfranchisement. As one professor responded to me years ago, when asked what the privilege could do to change things, "Intervene, intervene, intervene." My anger, my outrage, that helped me realize the structural nature of race and class in this country, increased my activism. It also made me question "Why does it have to be this way?" Yet I knew that at bottom I was not innocent.

I decided on this study after years of working with the poor and marginalized. I had used my privilege to help people needing medical care but without health insurance to get the state to pay for their treatment. I worked for 10 years in Geneva, Switzerland, for the International Red

Cross in the Refugee Section with Iranian and Bosnian refugees. These people became close friends. I listened to their stories of the horrors of war, I watched them as they adjusted to a culture that was rarely welcoming of them and their children. In the past few years, I have been working with two Public Defenders in Champaign County to use my status as a privileged concerned citizen to convince the State's Attorney's office to reduce the felony charges against African-American youth to misdemeanors, and at times to get the charges completely dropped. This I did by providing support, advice, and much transportation so that these young people could fulfill the court's requirements before going before a judge.

As a person of privilege, I began to see that I could intervene and actually influence the lives of these people. As I did this, I began to think more and more about how the privileged in this country allow injustices to occur. I began to think that there must be a way to reach the privileged and change the way they perceived societies' inequities. Why, I asked myself, is there a need for the privileged to forget? Teaching United States history in such a way so as to develop compassion in privileged high school students, to give them the truth about our history, seemed the best way to reach them. Students should not leave high school without a genuine understanding of this history, without reading the perspective of those they consider naturally subordinate and the significance of "whiteness" and "white supremacy in this story. I believe that if this were to happen on a large scale change would more likely occur at the level of our institutions, chipping away at institutionalized racism. Our country would become more democratic, and the populace would have educated, well-informed opinions about disparities. From here, the elite could come to a recognition of their responsibility and desire to act to create change.

In my teaching, I am clear about where I stand. I am clear about where I find people in the past and present at fault. For example, when we briefly study *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, I make sure they know that the Supreme Court at the time claimed that Blacks should not feel inferior to whites by given a Black section of the train, but rather whites could also feel inferior given that they cannot sit on the Black side of the train. I find this outrageous and when I tell my students about it, they look incredulous. I am not neutral in any way, and I think students appreciate learning the truth, ugly as it often is, because there is a sense that they are being respected. To learn the truth also gives them some power, beyond the power of being white, because it is a way to understand, an access to what they have been protected from, yet it makes them stronger allies in the struggle against discrimination.

Methodology

This study employs an interpretive methodology grounded in critical theory in order to expand upon the research literature on the topics of history teaching, privilege, and compassion. The study examines, consistent with Critical Theory, the problem of how power is unequally distributed in our society. The point of Critical Theory is to help people live more democratic lives. In this study, agency will be focused on the dominant class: How can they use their power to realize change? The meanings that are drawn by the researcher from these contexts will ultimately depend on the way that social actors themselves shape meaning within these own contexts. This refers to what Clifford Geertz has called “experience-near” or “emic” research. The goal is to pursue a contemplative work that reflects a commitment to human freedom and social transformation.

The use of critical theory and critical pedagogy are appropriate in this study, given its concern with the impact of power relationships in society, in our schools. Critical theory “tends to emphasize relationships that involve inequities and power, and a desirable aspect of critical research involves helping those without power to acquire it” (Willis, 2007, p. 82). Critical theory typically begins with the experiences and stories of people who have been disempowered, attempts to understand how current social conditions have come to exist, and suggests a relationship between this increased understanding and the subjects’ human agency and empowerment.

Again, this study, will focus on the already empowered, and work toward understanding how to bring them to a place where they recognize the inequities inherent in their power and the suffering it causes unnecessarily. It will, in terms of schooling, be consistent with critical pedagogy, working toward facilitating the conditions for this dominant elite to unlearn relations of power and privilege and relearn truly democratic relations of power. This inherently supposes that they can expand their understanding of the inequities that perpetuate their unfair access to power and privilege and, thus, points to their potential capacity for compassion for those whose life conditions are on the other side of the privilege coin.

The case will be made for the relationship that exists between the perpetuation of privilege and the historically skewed version of United States history that is taught in our high schools today. Students learn about facts and events, all of which are decontextualized. Florida State law recently passed a standard for schools that all history be taught in terms of facts, no interpretation. The elite in our society have no way to make connections between the past and where they are now. Teaching United States history in such a way as to engage the students to think critically would increase their consciousness of their status, a status that is considered

merited. It is this status of merit, expressed in privileged schools, that leads to all the misunderstandings and outright lies about the positionality of those of privilege.

I begin this interpretive study with a review of the history of teaching United States history and its effects on schooling. I next look at how the way we teach creates students with particular mindsets, which stifles their capacity to engage issues of inequality with compassion and commitment to social change. I examine the ways in which students from privileged backgrounds differ from their classed and racialized subordinated peers, who have been the victims of deeply rooted educational injustices. Finally, I identify and discuss the role compassion can play in creating students who recognize their responsibility in perpetuating the inequalities in our society, and recommendations for how we could teach United States history to support that end. History should be taught to encourage a sense of feeling for facts and events, as well as providing accurate knowledge which is interpreted in such a way so as to engage students. This would encourage students to learn how to think critically, in order to question the situation we find ourselves in, and unlearn stereotypes.

Historical textual analysis often reveals discrepancies between memory and fact. The memories, experiences, of actors in history are often required to be retold by a professional historian who can place them in a proper historical context. This can provide a window into mores and ideals of the period, providing a template of the historian's craft, where there is less concern with pedantic writing and more concern with readability. The historian, thus, is responsible for exposing us who are engaged in interpretation of the past to collaborate in an uneasy relationship between history and memory. Narratives are an important piece of this work.

I would like to illustrate how a privileged high school student is capable of understanding the importance of narrative in teaching history. My daughter, at the age of 13, wrote her own interpretation of this particular process of recording history:

It is usually about ordinary people who aren't famous enough to be in a history book, but whose stories are valuable. It focuses on the way people live, rather than dates, times, and factual events. It brings us inside their minds, and tells us more about their emotions, inner struggles, and personal dealings with life itself. It is very important for everyone in society. It teaches us about people's lives in ways that touch us deeply. For example, after a terribly difficult event, it's very likely that someone will tell a story about how horrible it was for them to go through it, and their feelings toward others involved in the event. The facts of the event may be written down, but it's the actual story that will touch people and make them realize how horrible the event, and each person's part in it, really was. By truly listening, we shape our future, for feeling horrible about the past helps us prevent it from repeating it.

Chapter 2

Teaching U.S. History: A Historical Overview of the Tradition

What is man born for but to be a Reformer; a Remaker of what man has made; a Renouncer of lies.”

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.”

--Oscar Wilde

For the purposes of this study, it is important to reflect on how history has been perceived and the importance of virtue and character throughout history textbooks and history teaching since the beginning of the 20th century. These traits, along with patriotism and progress, were the dominant themes taught to students. The textbooks did differ in some of their qualities and emphases, and when looking at history teaching and privilege, it is significant to observe how at some level history teaching and textbooks have been able to shift their emphases at different periods, but never reconcile our country’s collection of “isms,” racism, sexism, and classism.

Neutrality/“Objectivity” in the Field of History

In *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*, Bessie Louise Pierce (1926) examined history teaching and textbook content in terms of laws, content, teachers, the textbook publishing industry, and the influence of propaganda. She wrote during the decade after the term “propaganda”—used then in a positive sense as political persuasion in the public interest—had been coined by the promoters of the entry of the U.S. into World War I. Pierce applied this concept, retroactively and without an assumed positive connotation to the history of history teaching.

History had been designated as a subject to be taught in public schools during the pre-Civil War Common School era (1827-1860). This Common School version of history was essentially a continuation of what had been taught in more explicitly religious contexts since the early 17th century in Massachusetts. During the course of the 19th century, the social function of schooling was broadened from religious obedience to social morality. “The individual would become virtuous, polite, and an exemplary force of the community” (Pierce, 1926, p.3). History was to teach patriotism and government as aspects of “right living.” This pan-Protestant secular history evolved throughout the 19th century in response and adaptation to immigration, expansion, war, and economic transformation.

The early 19th century also saw more explicit notions of childhood development, with more psychologically sophisticated forms of indoctrination. Public school reformers increasingly promoted schooling as a central influence on children during the most impressionable period of their lives, developing both explicit and tacit knowledge that persists into adulthood. “It is the age in which the child’s ideals can be fired by the sayings of famous men, and in which the story of valorous deeds stirs a responsive enthusiasm” (Pierce 1926, p. 13).

It is with this virtue- and character-based idealism in mind, according to Pierce, that textbook authors calculated their impact, albeit according to the priorities of their particular era. Propaganda can breed negativity, encouraging false pride and divisiveness based on jaundiced characterizations and polarizing divisions in society. But at the same time, it can promote inclusiveness, albeit of the sort determined by elite interests and values. Such nationalism strongly emerged in the United States with the industrial revolution of the mid 19th century, and with the increasing association of formal schooling with general prosperity and upward mobility. By the late 19th and early 20th century, many reforms on various institutional levels promoted a

spirit of a national morality to counter increasing class, racial, ethnic, and gender conflict. Public schools introduced vocational training, along with its implications of class bias and tracking. Much of such training consisted of mental adjustment to the prospect of repetitive and wage labor. In contrast, history and patriotism could serve to define what was born of capitalism and class conflict under the unifying notion of “social progress.”

In her consideration of the 20th century, Pierce emphasized that while there had always been limits on teachers’ freedom of expression, World War I brought heightened suspicion and repression regarding teachers’ potentially “subversive” political views. This suspicion focused on “history teaching and history textbooks (that) are in danger of being an expression of certain religious, racial or other partisan opinions” (Pierce, 1926, p. 213). Participating in this intensified and militarized promotion of American patriotism were the “Hearst newspapers, the Knights of Columbus, and other patriotic societies of this country, all involved in a pro-British bias” (p. 213).

Advocacy of “Anglicization,” and the silencing of the voices of the racial and ethnic groups whose culture had never been accorded recognition and dignity, was reflected in textbooks by historians employing “scientific methods” to describe Americans as a homogenous, Protestant people. This continued alongside the evolution of “nativism,” a term coined to distinguish racism directed at Europeans and Asians from that directed at African-Americans (Higham, 1955). By 1924, the doors to virtually free immigration had been shut. There would have been nothing in popular history textbooks up to that point to contradict the stereotypes that justified such a measure. While history teaching as a means of indoctrination is by no means unique to the U.S. or to formal schooling, it is only during the past century that this phenomenon must be understood in terms of the consolidation of the public school system, a profitable

textbook publishing industry, the rise of the corporate state, endemic class, gender, and racial conflict in an ostensibly meritocratic society, and increasing U.S. global militarism and hegemony.

Schoolbooks of the 19th Century

Ruth Miller Elson (1964) wrote what remains the definitive study of early school-based history, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the 19th Century*. The word “schoolbooks” (rather than “textbooks”) must be stressed, as specific history texts were neither a required nor established feature of the Common School era. Instead, historical perspectives were transmitted through literally thousands of readers and spellers, the most widely-used of the former being *McGuffey’s*. Moreover, the non-academic nature of this history must be stressed, an aspect of what Elson calls the “anti-intellectualism . . . that is thoroughly embedded in the schoolbooks that have been read by generations of pupils since the beginning of the Republic” (Elson 1959, p. 422).

In the most general terms, Elson (1964) critically judged this school-based literature to be a “world of fantasy . . . made up by adults as a guide for their children, but inhabited by no one outside the pages of the textbook” (p. 337). This was an ideal world, “peopled by ideal villains as well as ideal heroes . . . Virtue is always rewarded, vice punished” (p. 337). But Elson also cautioned that while adults may indoctrinate their children with these ideals and stereotypes, children inevitably find that life is not so simple; virtue is not always rewarded, and progress for one group usually comes with costs for another. They come to see that “Catholics can be sincere, Indians gentle, Negroes intelligent and Jews generous” (p. 337). With such awareness, children

can begin to question the history they have been taught, and to develop their own experiential—and perhaps more visionary—perspectives.

A fundamental assumption in 19th-century Common School schoolbooks was the virtuous moral character of American culture. “Only a moral nation can achieve lasting power” (Elson, 1964, p. 338). Unlike contemporary schoolbooks, these had not even a pretense to objectivity or neutrality. They avoided the serious issues of their day in service to a more abstract Protestant didacticism, and considered moral beliefs (rather than social or political issues) to be fundamental: Combining the practical morality of Benjamin Franklin with an idealized image of leaders such as George Washington, they emphasized “love of country, love of God, duty to parents, the necessity of developing habits of thrift, honesty, and hard work in order to accumulate property, the certainty of progress, the perfection of the United States” (p. 338).

These texts portrayed a seamless continuum of values, from personal to religious to political—extending even to the global. Ethics are “absolute” and unchanging, emanating from God. The child learns values by rote. “His behavior is not to be inner-directed, nor other-directed, but dictated by authority, and passively accepted” (Elson, 1964, p. 339). Textbooks were explicitly written to persuade the student that America is superior to all other countries – “freedom is frequently discussed as a chemical component of the very air of America” (p. 339). Americans, valuing “usefulness,” will save Europe from corruption and decline. Indeed, European art and scholarship is associated with decadence, in contrast to an American virtue that is based in practicality.

Schoolbooks were consistently conservative, in ways that are currently echoed by William Bennett, although not necessarily recognizable in terms of “compassionate conservatism” and the ruthless “free market.” America’s achievements were to be venerated, and

the American system would eventually include the entire world. Contemporary problems and reform movements were ignored. While being taught about democracy, the student was also taught “the necessity of class distinction” (Elson, 1964, p. 340). No attention was given to class divisions in American society resulting from the industrial revolution; organized labor was ignored until late in the 19th century and, when noticed, was identified with “violence and property destruction, carried out by irresponsible elements” of society (p. 341). Any woman unsatisfied with her lot was thought to be ungrateful. Thus children were told that “America is serene and united” (p. 341).

Students learned to tolerate other religions, but were not taught to see them as equal to Protestantism, which provided the true moral basis for a nation-state with a transcendent global destiny. In texts prior to the Civil War, slaves were to be pitied, and the Abolitionist Movement was unacknowledged. After the Civil War, freed slaves were henceforth ignored. The social ideals of the New Republic of the early 19th century were to be taught and preserved, regardless of cataclysm. The question “What is an American?” preoccupied society, evidence of both optimism and insecurity. While 19th century schoolbooks confidently described the “American character,” they also struggled to achieve a sense of certainty about the nature of this character in the midst of dramatic changes that reflected industrialization, immigration, religious diversity, and conflict over the “peculiar institution” of slavery. Nevertheless, schoolbooks promoted a specific vision of students as practically-oriented citizens of “republican virtue.”

In that general sense—if not in the specific meanings of the term—we can acknowledge that schoolbooks and history teaching are inevitably not only about the past, but about the present and future, capable of presenting profound choices rather than merely prescriptions regarding morality, autonomy, democracy, justice, and America’s vision of itself in the world. In

concluding a consideration of the Common School Era, it must be stressed that while schoolbooks provided inspiration rather than information, they were read (at least by white children) who—according to Elson—in their daily experience could see evidence that the health of the republic indeed depended on its common citizens, not just its elites and experts.

Power, Privilege and Racism

Frances FitzGerald's journalistic account of the history of American history textbooks, published in book form as *America Revised* (1979), was appropriately criticized for its lack of explanatory power. Nevertheless, this book was and is indispensable for bringing a discussion of history textbooks to the broader public, and for provoking much-needed academic debate regarding the role of the history textbook in American political culture—as well as the arguably cynical role of scholars in the production of those texts.

FitzGerald described the structure, dynamics, and ideology of the textbook industry, what the eminent radical historian William Appleman Williams called a “disgusting and disgraceful business” (Williams, 1979, p. 405). She stressed the failure of scholars to be substantively involved in writing history textbooks. Meanwhile, those who have been most involved in shaping content, including teachers, generally had not had the intellectual skills to implement the changes that she deemed necessary in pursuit of a “usable” democratic past.

As FitzGerald recounted, supporting Elson, early textbook historians were concerned with manners and morals, i.e., character development, in children. Most schools in the 19th century were religious in a pan-Protestant fashion, with a view of “American civilization as an arm of Christian civilization” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 76). While all white Americans were assumed to be Protestant, Catholics and especially Spanish Catholics were cast as the enemy of

Protestantism and indeed Christianity. In the 1890s, texts became virtually silent regarding religious matters, ceasing the violent anti-Catholicism; instead, they emphasized the United States as a nation-state that could (hopefully) incorporate immigrant cultures—although some more than others—into an Anglo-Saxon ideal.

By the early 1900s, textbooks increasingly emphasized the English origins of the nation, with established white Protestant Americans confronted with the arrival of Eastern European and non-European immigrants. These immigrants were considered a “problem,” provoking nativist rhetoric that cast them as primitive, subversive, and threatening to “American” values. In the 1930s, textbooks finally included carefully selected mentions of African-Americans, but only as part of this “problem” (FitzGerald, 1979, 83). The books of the early 1900s maintained a pro-British but anti-foreign rhetoric. Writers like David Saville Muzzey (*An American History*, 1911, 1925 and *A History of Our Country, A Textbook for High School Students*, 1948, 1950, 1955) exemplified the mindset that FitzGerald described as “Empire as a Way of Life.”

The Great Depression of the 1930s presented Muzzey’s popular text with an ideological challenger, a ninth-generation New Englander named Harold Rugg. Rugg was not only a professor at Columbia University, but also had worked in a textile mill as a weaver; he well understood industrial labor and life at the bottom of the social ladder. Rugg was committed to that aspect of John Dewey’s philosophy that stressed critical-mindedness, and alerted teachers to the importance of tolerance. By the mid-1930s, and in the midst of Depression-era social unrest, Rugg’s books, although admired by many, were scorned for “spreading Communist lies” (Nash and Crabtree, 1996, p. 9). Rugg was accused of being anti-American because he quite appropriately questioned “whether all Americans shared in the rising standard of living that had resulted from the development of industrial capitalism” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 173). And yet, as

Jean Anyon asserts, (1979, p. 382), while Rugg's curriculum was the most radical of any history textbook in the history of the United States, "ideological support was offered for the fundamental arrangements of political and economic power."

After World War II, Muzzey's texts again became widely popular—or at least widely used. But by the 1950's and 1960's his books were again scorned, considered subversive during the hysterical anti-Communism of the McCarthy years. Paranoid textbook publishers refused to address racial, socialist, or labor conflict. Textbooks, even when assuming a moderately critical perspective, were pressured to become bland and compliant: "Their aim was to offend nobody" (Nelson and Roberts, 1963, p. 178). It wasn't until the early 1960s that the image of America as consisting of a single group was challenged; this change originated not from the pressure of Irish, Jews, Italians, etc., but from the Black Civil Rights Movement.

FitzGerald argued that over the decades, textbooks had become even more contradictory and confused, still reflecting a mythical American culture even while that culture had begun to question its conventional assumptions, practices, and ideology. Contradictions were inherent among the ideology of Empire, the psychopathology of Manifest Destiny, the rhetoric of equal opportunity, and the myth of upward mobility being available to all Americans. The realities of race and class, and the inherent violence in overseas expansion all failed to shake a textbook publishing industry and school culture that was driven by the notions of American "unity" and "greatness."

Nevertheless, FitzGerald compiled an accurate and illuminating list of grievances against the American history textbook. She noted the absence in the vast majority of mainstream history texts of considerations of the deplorable treatment of African-Americans and Native Americans; as well as ideologically-driven views of Reconstruction, post-Civil War immigration, and the

industrialization and urbanization of society. She was highly critical of the failure to address economic realities and their connections to political and social life. While textbooks have considered aspects of political economy—such as the Puritan and slave-based economies, and the mercantile and the laissez-faire ideologies—they have never approached the critical reflection that would result from taking only a half-step away from capitalist pieties and examining the real and diverse effects of “progress” on all social classes.

Ironically, FitzGerald herself did not seriously consider the power of corporations and the corporate state in the 20th century, and their impact on curriculum and pedagogy in the textbook publishing industry. Nor did FitzGerald adequately explore how historical revisionism that adopts the points of view of the disenfranchised might arouse a search for new paradigms to guide textbook writing. Such writing is exemplified by, for example, Howard Zinn (1994, 1999, 2004) and Eric Foner (2002), whose works are cohesive while far more authentically inspiring than texts based on a contrived ideological commonality of American values that in fact serves the interests of the privileged by excluding radical possibilities.

James D. Anderson (1994) speaks directly to the problem of secondary school history texts that construct and maintain the ideology of race in our society. He claims that the ancients did not have an ideology of race, and thus were not racists in any sense that relates to the current context. They in fact delighted in diversity and had a capacity for empathy. Slavery existed but was not based on race, as the ancients had no concept of inferior and superior races. Rather, all human beings were seen as having a common human nature.

Anderson asserts that the ideology of race in our society is not based on “natural” phenomena. This needs to be discussed in high school history textbooks as part of a discussion of what race therefore *is*—a social construct. In addition, according to Anderson, students should be

learning about the racism not just of the South, but also of the early 19th century Middle West, when many states excluded African-Americans and therefore had very small proportions of them. The problem was not with African-Americans, but the “flaws in American democratic ideology and contradictions in the social order” (Anderson, 1994, p. 94). Anderson devotes an entire section of his article to “The Textbook View of Race in America.” He refers to “race thinking,” and how race as an ideology has been historically constructed for particular reasons; that is, the enslavement of Africans that led to the concept of race, not the other way around.

Textbooks, needless to say, do not teach students such a perspective. Students learn that racial and ethnic groups are natural categories with an empirical basis. Moreover, white students are taught that it is “natural” to be suspicious and fearful of those who look different, and that those who share common physical characteristics have limited conflict and oppression. Once again, as Anderson stresses, “race thinking” is taught in history textbooks, and students have no way of discerning that it is flawed. The fact that economics and politics created a “demand” for slavery, and that an ideology of inferior races followed and justified but did not precede and cause these events, is what Anderson calls “loose thinking about race” (Anderson, 1994, p. 100). Textbooks suggest that only certain groups—but certainly not whites—need to think about their own racial category. Ignoring whiteness as a racial or ethnic category has allowed students to consider its hegemony as “natural,” thereby reinforcing it. Students learn that whites are normative Americans, while other groups are identified by racial and ethnic characteristics, all of which can be found in any textbook index.

By the early 1970s, some textbooks had been rewritten to include a limited history of African-Americans in America, citing not only Booker T. Washington but also W.E.B. Du Bois, while dramatically revising the history of the Reconstruction (1865-1877) with its longstanding

and sordid narrative of southern white innocence, southern African-American lassitude, and northern white perfidy. According to FitzGerald, all popular texts revised the jaundiced view that the South progressed only when Reconstruction ended and “the (white) Southerners regained control of their government” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 85). The texts exposed how Reconstruction ended with a secret deal between Republicans and Southern businessmen, “saving the Union” but robbing African-Americans of the vote, and “putting them at a serious economic and political disadvantage for a century” (p. 89). The Ku Klux Klan reign of terror and lynching that had its origins in Reconstruction also entered some texts during the 1960s, primarily as a result of Civil Rights Era advocacy and historical revision. Yet FitzGerald concluded that at the time of her writing, still relatively few textbooks explored the rise of an organization that was central to the maintenance of 100 years of segregation subsequent to the slave era.

Prior to the 1930s, textbook portrayals of Native Americans as savage and barbarous were, for a time, accompanied by recognition that they had also been treated badly. But by the end of this decade, they had been essentially eliminated from most textbooks altogether. In the mid-1960s, texts again began including Native Americans, casting some light on the destruction that had been systematically meted out to them by U.S. government policies. Also during the 1960s, textbooks began to acknowledge that America is a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-cultural society. But images of minorities were still not realistic: African-Americans were all portrayed as middle-class, wearing business and lab coats; Chicano farm workers were smiling as they worked, “as if they all took ‘happy pills’” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 100). The textbook industry seemed to have recalled one of its original principles: “The inclusion of nasty information constitutes bias even if it is true” (p. 96).

The newly-fashioned social studies “inquiry method” of the 1960s promoted texts written for a literate, white upper-middle class audience, inadequately addressing cultural diversity and social conflict in ways that did not challenge anything fundamental about the status quo. Meanwhile, mass-market texts for the less literate continued to suggest that all Americans are essentially alike, no matter their race or class. By the late 1970s, there were few books that used the word “capitalism,” or spoke of the complex reality of “free enterprise.” There was no discussion of “conglomerates” or “multi-nationals”—i.e., “no discussion of the relationship of economics to political power and the way people live” (FitzGerald, 1979, 109). The 1960s saw the “discovery” of poverty, but spoke of it as a disease, concluding that government had no call to eliminate it; thus Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty” and “Great Society” were not discussed at any length in textbooks in the decade subsequent to their rise and demise. There was no discussion of poverty in terms of the basic structure of capitalism, or of essential conflicts between rich and poor, owners and workers; nor of how the privileged influence government policies to their advantage. Categories of race, class, and gender were treated as mere concepts rather than social constructs determining real outcomes, not fleshed out in a way that would make them relevant and critically usable analytical tools for open-minded students. Since the brief attempt during the 1930s to include relatively mild perspectives on basic social conflicts, we saw publishers remove discussions of class, race, and religious conflicts that in any way suggested that the United States did not essentially aspire to be one big happy family.

How These Views are Perpetuated

FitzGerald’s own explanatory perspective was incisively criticized by Williams (1979) for not “locating the jugular,” while evading the central notion that early textbook historians

“were consciously laboring to create a culture and an ideology (and) the vital role of ideology in creating national identity” (Williams, 1979, p. 406). At the heart of this ideology, including Muzzey’s, was “Empire as a Way of Life.” Textbooks had become, in FitzGerald’s words, “contradictory and confused,” because—according to Williams—by the 1960s “the culture, for the first time, is facing the necessity of questioning its traditional assumptions, practices, and ideology” (p. 407).

In a similar vein but related to domestic politics, Walter Karp (1980) faults FitzGerald for not defining her topic in a more straightforward fashion as “the education—and miseducation—of a self-governing people,” who initially strongly opposed at local levels the standardization of history teaching that emerged from the adoption of textbooks by increasingly consolidated school districts in the first decades of the 20th century. Even Muzzey, for all his WASPish elitism and contrary to the promoters of the progressive notion of “industrial democracy,” believed that our history is “largely the history of the vicissitudes of democracy” (Karp, 1980, 82). But from the promoters of “industrial democracy” early in the 20th century, to those of the “New Social Studies” in the 1960s, Karp criticized reformers who proposed to replace history with an abstracted form of sociology, silencing political history, leaving us with only “problems” that are the fault of nobody and call for solutions from nobody—least of all from democratically-minded individuals and social movements. In the midst of the heady era of civil rights and antiwar activism, whether through social science concepts, an often-banal notion of relevance, or reference to ethnic and racial pride, “the educational establishment has found another way (through the non-teaching of history and its inclusion into Social Studies) to secure a rather small degree of knowledge of, or participation in, public affairs” (Karp, 1980, p. 84).

Finally, in comparing FitzGerald's work to her own, Jean Anyon (1982) credited her for a kind of practical social science that was *empirically grounded*, but criticized her for not fulfilling the requirement that social science be *socially critical*. Anyon faults FitzGerald for assumptions that are socially legitimating, a result of having based her analysis on the market, consensus, and interest group pluralism, to name just a few. Anyon argues that "these reasons and assumptions lend ideological support to the underlying social structures and economic and social class interest and power, and to the facts of ideological dominance" (p. 36). Instead, Anyon—although not necessarily to her own satisfaction—attempted to expose the underlying processes of class ideology and power.

In addressing American foreign policy, a standard theme has been American "altruism" abroad, concealing the elephant in the room of "Empire as a Way of Life." The Cold War added both paranoia and militant self-interest to a customary sentimentality. Until the late 1940s, textbook writers minimized discussions of foreign policy, as if the U.S. had no foreign relations of note, except to mention our role as a peacemaker during the 1930s, mediating European quarrels, and our role as the sole champion of freedom in the world by 1950, as the Cold War with the Soviet Union escalated.

The mid-1950s Sputnik-related educational panic—with its conventional but misguided wisdom that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in educational achievement—engendered both reform and immediate results. Edward Fenton (1966) proposed a reformed inquiry text which coined the term "New Social Studies." The "New Social Studies" along with the "New Math" were essentially forms of vocational training, broadly construed, as if citizenship is a job that one reports to every couple of years at a local polling place.

While these curricula had some practical value ostensibly related to the future development of technology, they did not succeed in the educational marketplace. Many teachers objected to them, arguing that they were elitist. Fenton and others had a low opinion of teachers; they saw retraining them as part of a process by which teachers would learn to assess students by the intellectual skills acquired, not by how much they learned in terms of rote knowledge. These intellectual skills were not necessarily, however, critical skills intended for citizens in a democratic society. Teachers may have been resistant, but at some level they were justifiably resisting a “fool-proof” curriculum that de-skilled and disempowered them in the classroom. The “New Social Studies” was part of a larger curriculum reform movement that was rooted in a respect for disciplinary learning (mainly sociological). But it was also largely detached from the truly exciting and critical revisionist work in the historical discipline that had begun in the early 1960s, and has continued to the present. Curricular reform grounded in the notion of technological progress and managerial values did not lend itself to a “usable” past in an era of grass-roots and democratic social movements demanding profound changes in the American political landscape.

For FitzGerald, the greatest failing of U.S. history texts was the absence of intellectual history, making our political life appear “mindless.” Historical judgment, ungrounded in a serious understanding of critical intellectual discourse both past and present, simply becomes a matter of opinions, past and present, with the two rarely distinguished, collapsing upon each other in arbitrary, bland, and impenetrable fashion. The smarter the child, the more likely he or she will notice the difference between fictitious or simplistic interpretations and the world around them. For example, texts “leave out not only radical, unfashionable ideas, but also those of the ‘heroes’—they were like stick figures deprived of speech” (FitzGerald 1979, p. 151). But

the United States, according to FitzGerald, was “not a land of philosophers but of visionaries—W.E.B. DuBois, Emma Goldman, and many others were those who gave the country its real life force—to deny their visions is to drain the soul of America” (p. 152). The sad result—for the life of the mind and the life of a democracy—is that students are bored by their history education. Moreover, it serves established interests that they are bored, rather than motivated to criticize and challenge the social order.

Thus “The textbook substitute for intellectual history has always been editorial moralizing” (FitzGerald, 1979, p.153). Blood-soaked battles have been assigned moral purpose and virtue. Good guys and bad guys have replaced the genuine dilemmas of historical personalities. Character—in this simplistic, superficial form—has been the primary focus, and to a certain extent remains so to this day.

John Dewey felt that to devote so much attention to selected individual leaders was undemocratic. But by the same token, textbooks in the pursuit of “industrial democracy” have instead offered portrayals of seemingly impersonal institutions and disembodied social forces beyond the influence of individuals. FitzGerald argued that “to neglect character is an aesthetic impoverishment” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 153.). But, she continues, in the absence of personal complexity and choice being presented as an aspect of social conflict, one-dimensional “character” and decontextualized “problems” have served a “natural disaster” theory of history (p. 159). Texts can condemn some individuals without condemning the system as a whole. Students themselves are expected to carry the burden of history in a social vacuum, with textbooks exhorting children to “face challenges,” and “meet responsibilities” (p. 160), without, for example, any study of social movements and the complicated interactions of those who people them.

At the analytical level of “social forces,” there has been a lack of connections among class, race, and culture on one hand, and the economic, political, and institutional basis for the disenfranchisement of certain groups of people on the other. For example, there has been no link to connect the end of Reconstruction in the South with the Civil Rights Movement, history thus becoming “just one damn thing after another” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 161), rather than a compelling narrative that incorporates the economy, the law, and social movements across the political spectrum. Such discontinuities are disorienting; unrelenting moralism eliminates a sense of historical context for students interested in making connections between past and present. The persistent litany of American “values” implies that values have not changed in 400 years, but this litany is seemingly constructed in order to defy serious examination, ultimately trivializing the very notion of values in relation to history and society, and paralyzing political action.

During the Civil Rights Era, schools and the curriculum became contested terrain among the anti-political sociologists of the New Social Studies; idealists who saw schools as a basis for genuine political praxis; and right-wingers who saw any reform at all as challenging the sanctity of American unity and superiority in a hostile world. For some in the first group and (by definition) all in the second group, the real failure of American education was not its mindlessness but its *heartlessness*. This counter-cultural movement, emphasizing authenticity, proposed that academic disciplines had created a specialized and compartmentalized mind, out of touch with emotions—a “mere servant to a runaway technology that destroyed nature” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 190).

These critics called for textbooks that would address issues of immediate social concern, leading to a greater sense of social responsibility, as exemplified by the tradition of John Dewey in its more radical interpretation. By 1970 this had resulted in, among other things, bringing

more attention to the concerns of disadvantaged students. Funds were taken from the New Social Studies and given to Head Start and, for example, to books for “slow learners.” The emphasis was increasingly on *social action*, including that for the inclusion of a more accurate depiction of the history of minorities in textbooks, including through local actions in places like Detroit and Newark. Nevertheless, although inclusion is now taken for granted, it often takes the form of what Stuart J. Foster has called “mentioning,” that is, “adding content to the text without altering the books organizing framework or central message” (Foster, 1999, p. 271). Thus “Contemporary textbooks perpetuate the vision of America as a land of opportunity to be shared by all ethnic groups. . . . students learn that the story of America, despite setbacks and obstacles, remains one of unremitting progress and triumph for people to enjoy” (Fitzgerald, 1979, p. 272).

Nevertheless, and predictably, a right-wing backlash to even such unthreatening reforms ensued in the form of book-burnings, the reappearance of creationist arguments in texts, and the “Back to Basics” movement: back to drills, rote work, and the mean-spirited philosophy that schooling is somewhat brutal (as well as dull) by necessity. Such “essentialist” complaints about the decline of education go back at least to the 19th century. The “Back to Basics” movement was not a true movement, but rather another “mood” that historically coincides with the end of wars and the periods of economic slowdown (in this case the end of the Vietnam War); “a quest for certainty in an uncertain world” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 207). But, if leftist critics of the New Social Studies were correct, the right had little to fear in terms of radical change from most of those who called themselves liberal, progressive, or multicultural reformers.

Citing Santayana’s aphorism that “those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it,” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 82) FitzGerald claimed that this held true for educational reformers. In the early 20th century, Progressives had believed in social reform through education

and turned the public's attention toward the plight of children in urban slums. To highlight the problematic nature of this view, FitzGerald related the ironic account of a white middle-class suburban high school that sent some of its students into the black ghetto led by Jonathan Kozol, hoping to awaken in them a sense of empathy and compassion. These students were "doing" history. But in the end, the experiment had the reverse effect. Students returned saying that they were well aware that they had the "good end of the deal; we talk about things we don't intend to change. Why change a situation that puts us right where we want to be and other people...are so far away that we don't even need to know that they exist?" (p. 201).

FitzGerald concluded that this project was naïve, as students may have neither the capability nor the willingness to put themselves in the place of another. Students who have always lived a life of white privilege and have not been exposed to a mindset that encourages caring for others, as well as to a broader sense of historical injustice, may well resist feeling compassion after one such excursion. This experiment ended as another unfortunate example of how schooling can be a decontextualized experience for students; in this case, decontextualized of the consciousness-raising about the past that might have prepared students to better have compassion for their less privileged counterparts. In this case, "book-learning" might have promoted compassion and engagement rather than resistance and complacency.

Students who have been taught history with textbooks that discourage a connection to the disenfranchised throughout history will likely need many such experiences, supported by in-depth historical reading, to process such an experience in a way that encourages them to constructively engage those in a social world of which they have little knowledge and no personal experience. William Appleman Williams commented that "Such is the failure of history in America. It informs no one, not even the professors, of the relationship between past and

future. It fails to provide you with the sense that what is so far away today will tomorrow be roosting on your doorstep” (Williams, 1979, 407).

Nevertheless, many students are willing to explore social problems and issues in depth, and are capable of being involved in social action. There are many examples of students joining organizations—Peace Corps, Americorps, Habitat for Humanity, anti-war and anti-racist groups, etc., where they work for social change while learning about personal and structural aspects of social inequality. There is a dynamic among the blind spots of privilege, the insights of critical learning, and the capacity for compassion and social action. Although the understanding of concepts does not automatically equate with a capacity for compassion, it is a beginning and a potential improvement over the detached and rote memorization of historical facts.

The exploration of such a dynamic can redress what FitzGerald and many others see as the inadequacy of Progressive Education as it manifested itself both in the early and mid-20th century: its neglect of critical perspectives. In 1930, George S. Counts concluded that teachers could not hope to change society in any fundamental way, only to humanize it (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 203). But the progressives themselves had defined limits on what could be taught. This, said FitzGerald, was “simply taking the fundamentalist viewpoint and turning it upside down” (p. 204).

In the late 1970s, Houghton Mifflin promoted textbooks that it claimed would “increase empathy and decrease the inclination in students toward egocentrism, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping” (Anderson, 1976). Children would be encouraged to “do history”: to learn how to make valid judgments and decisions about the problems of a global society. Predictably, this did not happen. Teaching “empathy” meant “showing photos of smiling children in various tropical areas... Teaching valid decision-making” meant “photos of trash cans and other ecological

aids”...and teaching “values clarification” meant “high school students looking at Watergate or Japanese internment camps” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 213). Since children cannot, in FitzGerald’s opinion, put themselves in the place of another, they will reflect what they think the teacher wants them to hear and, and in the end, become cynical—even doubting the competence of the teacher, further precluding an enthusiasm for history, democracy, politics, and social activism.

One of the foremost critics of schooling and ideology, Jean Anyon, has stated: “By identifying the ideology of power in curriculum content, we make apparent an underlying perspective that has provided continuity over generations of students” (Anyon, 1979, p. 382). For Anyon, textbook history functions to control how students think, and to predispose them toward certain conventional political choices. The gamut of public school reforms has substituted for reforms of adult institutions that can provide a basis for more thorough social change. One result of the political importance placed on school reform is that “schooling” has been confused with “learning” and “education;” the latter derived from the Latin root meaning “upbringing.” The belief that public schools can provide the means for the lower classes to move up the economic ladder has been true in many individual cases, but false in general, while undermining educational values related to both personal growth and social justice.

There is, of course, a correlation between academic achievement and economic success, but one that is in no way “natural,” having been created by a system that establishes a market in credentials in order to regulate opportunity. Nevertheless, “Schools cannot create equality of opportunity by themselves” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 216). *Brown v. Board* is an example of this. Not only schools, but adult institutions such as corporations, labor unions, and government programs need to be included in systematic reform. Affirmative action in higher education and busing for integration in schools were self-defeating in a larger context, insofar as they put the

burden on less privileged students, and were very easily circumvented to the benefit of the more privileged.

Yet the teaching of history must be viewed as an important arena of social conflict, consciousness-raising, and idealism. Our dogmatic and persistent textbook culture, with its distortions, omissions, and outright lies, has fostered an ideology of meritocracy and privilege while emphasizing rote learning, thus decreasing the possibility for compassion. “Their naiveté about child psychology can only be matched by their lack of respect for history” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 218). “To teach history with the assumption that students have the psychology of laboratory pigeons is not only to close off the avenues for thinking about the future: It is to deprive American children of their birthright” (p. 218).

Nash and Crabtree (1996), good faith collaborators in the writing of a genuinely progressive history textbook, who endured scurrilous attacks during the Reagan-era “culture wars,” have asserted: “No historian or parent anywhere wants children to be sickened or unnerved by reading a history of horrors. But to learn a story of America’s struggle to form a ‘more perfect union,’ a narrative involving a good deal of jostling, elbowing, and bargaining among contending groups, a story that includes political tumult, labor strife, racial conflict and gender oppression can fortify rather than dissipate the resolve of young people and encourage their efforts to pursue the common purpose and nourish the American Creed” (p.17). “Students need to be able to think, investigate and interpret rather than merely memorize and recite” (p. 17).

History teaching and history texts—with few exceptions—have failed to contribute to the American people’s pursuit of social justice, or even to raise the possibility of such a pursuit to a persistent level of consciousness. Few have learned how to connect the past with the future, with

all of the transformative possibilities that such “thought crimes” present. For exploring the roots of this failure, we should be thankful to FitzGerald, Elson, Pierce, Anderson, Anyon, and many others. While academic history is not “the answer,” it is arguable that by translating the scholar’s history into the public’s history, history might become “hot because it is contested. This is certainly not to be lamented in a democratic society” (Nash and Crabtree 1996, p. 18). Indeed, given that ideologies have real power in schooling, changes in ideology in the public school curriculum can shift from supporting “patterns of power and domination, . . . (and) can be used to foster autonomy and social change” (Anyon 1979, p. 385).

In his article, “New Perspectives in the History of Education 1960-1970” (1973), Sol Cohen maps out the changes he thinks are necessary during this period in the history of education. At the time he was writing and describing the history of this discipline, he stated that:

In general, an artificial conception of the nature of public education prevails in America. There is a tendency to believe that educational policy-making is dictated only by the loftiest democratic values, or by advances in the Science of Pedagogy, or by the inexorable finger of Progress, or by some process of ratiocination uncontaminated by profane motives. *But education is a field supremely loaded with value* (my emphasis) (p. 83).

Cohen makes the point that it is time to recognize that the schools serve social interests, social purposes, and even social prejudices. We know very little, he says, about significant matters such as: “Who has the power? Where is power located? How is it exercised? Whose interests are served?” (1973, p. 83). Since the 1960’s, Cohen says, historians of education began to look at social and political perspectives of education. They started to ask different questions, “bringing to their work an awareness of the racial, ethnic, and religious conflict with which American history is permeated” (p. 84).

The role of textbooks in the transmission of culture began, in the 1960’s, to be recognized. The role of the child’s personality, environment and culture became acknowledged

as more important than textbooks and school boards. But the new, revisionist history of American education was in danger of homogenization. “The conservative frame of reference is giving us a bland history, in which conflict is muted, in which the elements of spontaneity, effervescence, and violence. . . scholarship is threatened with a moral vacuum” (Cohen, 1973, p. 90). Furthermore, the “cult of objectivity” has squeezed out the morality in history, that “what historians have forgotten is that facts, either human or social, become inescapably moral facts (p. 90). This has left historians of education unprepared to explain the conflict and strife in American education. And there is a great need for some historical understanding of the problems in American education today (1973).

Empathy, considered part of the teaching of history from the 1960-1970’s, became problematic. As Phillips (2002) states:

Few aspects of teaching history in the late twentieth century became more hotly debated and contested than the teaching of empathy . . . empathy was particularly singled out within the “discourse of derision” of the New Right --by politicians and media—as the epitome of the apparently misguided, woolly and ideological new history . . . because of the controversy associated with empathy, many history teachers lost confidence in seeking to teach anything that could be construed as the “E-word” (p. 45).

Interest Convergence and Tension in Society

Critical Race Theory has a concept which it calls “interest convergence” (see Lawrence, 1995). Interest convergence refers to how white privileged members of society will only allow change when it is in their self-interest to do so. So if we were to appeal to their self-interest it would be in saying that, as a society, we cannot any longer allow for the inequities that are a result of the domination/subordination dynamic, that we **MUST**, in order to avert the crisis, in order not to sacrifice humanity or our planet, in order to leave a healthy world for our children

and grandchildren, recognize our privilege and face the domination and subordination in our selves as well as in society.

As Diane Goodman (2001) says in *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating people from Privileged Groups*, if the dominant class accepts their worldview as “natural,” they will not be motivated to bring about change. “If they assume that efforts to promote equity will diminish their lives, they will resist altering the status quo” (p. 190). There is a need to encourage the privileged to develop alternative visions and the sense that these can actually be achieved.

People from privileged groups lose an understanding of themselves and others. History books are a good example of how the experiences of both oppressed and dominant groups are misconstrued. While most of the literature that attempts to understand the social and psychological effects of oppression focuses on the experiences of the marginalized in society, there is very little that examines these effects on privileged groups. There are psychological costs on the mental health and other negative consequences for the advantaged (Goodman, 2001, pp. 103-104). Any analysis of oppression must also be a consideration of this aspect of oppression. As Martin Luther King stated in *Strength to Love* (1981), “All men {sic} are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever effects one directly, affects all indirectly” (p. 7). History books, known to misconstrue the experiences of the oppressed, also misconstrue the experiences of the dominant class. This interferes with the privileged gaining self-knowledge based in a deep understanding of history that is grounded in truth.

Goodman (2001) quotes a white woman’s experience of an African-American community:

I was so enriched when I worked with African American families and came to see a different worldview of collectivism—Families taking care of family members, communities, themselves. What a loss had I not experienced this other possible worldview. It has changed my life and my priorities (p. 116).

Ignorance, fear, and stereotypes create distorted perspectives, which have major social consequences. Again, the woman above explains, “As a member of the upper middle class, classism and ‘blaming the victim’ prevented me from knowing and reaching out to those who are less privileged than I am. I was prevented from seeing others as “human” until I learned more about my own privilege” (p. 116). Hence, key to the evolution of compassion entails the ability to understand the politics of privilege and difference, as well as the manner in which individuals and institutions reproduce inequality and suffering.

Chapter 3

Power, Ideology and Education in the Teaching of History

Ideology: How Teaching Reproduces and Perpetuates Privilege and Inequality

Throughout the history of educational reform in “free societies,” there has been a debate about the role of schools in democratic society. In the late 18th and early 19th century, there was much emphasis on the school’s role as educating for an informed citizenry, as a common good of American society—for example, Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann.

With the industrial revolution during the 19th century, which was especially reflected in progressive reform ideologies at the beginning of the 20th, reformers concerned with “social efficiency” became similarly concerned that the democratic function of schooling was being taken too literally and seriously, undermining both the docility of the masses and the leadership of the elites. The perspectives of “scientific management” defined the views of “administrative progressives.” But also in the early 20th century and into the depressed and potentially radical 1930s, voices emerged that challenged the desiccation of democratic schooling in an industrial context. Thus George Counts (1932), asked “*Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?*”

Counts considered the school a place where teachers should give children a “vision.” He saw the school as an instrument for the reconstruction of society, democratic in spirit and open to all social classes. Counts wanted to rid society of class basis, and train teachers about what was politically relevant for their teaching. Progressive education, he asserted, could not be truly progressive without freeing itself from the “American Aristocracy” which controlled so much of society, including schools.

John Dewey as well thought that the school should aid in reducing the problems in American society and uniting the people on the basis of economic equality and political solidarity, rather than an enforced patriotism which is no more than the glue for an oppressive and unequal social order. He advocated a systematic scientific methodology, embodied in a problem-solving method that is also democratically accessible, as central to an experiential process of instruction. Dewey may not have gone far enough for many of the radical theorists who followed him. Nevertheless, he did have the revolutionary idea that schools, by way of how teaching occurred, could help to create a political community in which politics would no longer be “the shadow cast by big business over government.”

Over 70 years later, the sense of empowerment that can arise from basic historical truths remains one key to disrupting the hidden curriculum, something that most teachers are unaware of as it occurs in their classrooms. James D. Anderson (1988), for example, has recovered accounts of how African-Americans challenged post-Civil War second-class schooling, which was implemented by northern philanthropists and industrialists in collaboration with southern elites. The stories of Black women and teachers who worked to create viable schools for African-Americans serve as examples in the midst of our current predicament. Such perspectives have never, however, been part of history textbooks and teaching. This and other empowering scholarly perspectives regarding women, Latinos, urban schools, etc. can serve as one foundation for challenging the passivity engendered by the hidden curriculum.

The second source of this state of affairs is *socialization*: This point is vital to an understanding of the workings of the hidden curriculum. Socialization is in the form of “learning and internalizing norms, etiquette—necessary for an individual to function in society” (Loewen, 1995, p. 307). Teaching as socialization influences students to unquestioningly accept the

“rightness” of our society, to be arrogantly and complacently proud of America. “The more schooling, the more socialization, and the more likely the individual will conclude that America is good” (p. 307).

Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) argue that “Any history is always someone’s history...yet external reality has the power to impose itself on the mind; past realities remain in records of various sorts that historians are trained to interpret” (p. 11). As such, “Objects arouse curiosity, resist implausible manipulation, and collect layers of information about them” (p. 260). In *Telling the Truth About History* (1994), Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob explain the flexible, contextual nature of an historical artifact or event. This relates to the teaching of history insofar as it suggests a method that allows for flexibility, interpretation, and reinterpretation of meaning; the telling of many different stories from different perspectives, both subjective and “objective.” For example, the dress of a “Southern Belle” of the early 19th century could tell the story of upper-class fashion of the time, or it could tell a story from the point of view of the slave who made it. Thoughts, conversations, and individual sensibilities are all part of the story, the narratives, the history. This is a strengthened perspective in allowing multiple perspectives. Generally, the questions of context, multiple perspectives, and deeper meanings have been neglected.

The teaching of history as one truth—that from the perspective of the dominant social class, has its origins in the 18th century, when science became the quasi-official basis for all truth among the educated classes, and history attempted to imitate science. United States history was taught, of course, from the perspective of elite white Protestant males. The U.S. was seen to be an ideal for all humanity, in terms of modernization, industrialization, and the democratic (albeit

individualistic) possibility for self-improvement. It was an “overdetermined story of progress” (Appleby et al., 1994, p. 125).

This myth informed the dominant American mentality, but could not explain the real problems of suffering people, most clearly slaves and indigenous peoples. In teaching history, we need to tell the “whole story,” not just fragments chosen by those who have no understanding of its entirety and *context*, or if they do, deny its meaning. Teaching patriotism and disguising national failures is a way of ignoring history’s alternative possibilities. Teachers need to see how the methodology of history textbook writing, and of teaching by the text, has not allowed for elaborate context, for “typical” stories, or for a critique of how our own biases shape our perceptions of the past. History is an ongoing endeavor, shaped not just by an “objective past” but by the political present, one aspect of which has been, since at least the 1960s, the needs and demands of groups that were previously invisible. The “objective” (dehumanized) history of the past did not represent the “other.” The “subjective” (humanized) history of vital social movements can represent not only the “other,” but the aspirations of the more privileged to participate in movements that are just and inclusive.

In “The Power of History” (1998), Appleby used Nietzsche to make these points. “I am convinced that, in good times or bad, critical ones, transitional ones, or normal ones, history can help human beings think better, live more richly, and act more wisely” (p. 1). The benefit of history is not as science or compilation, *but as a way to form human character*, opening the psychic space of the mind. “It must,” says Appleby, “be a personal possession to do its work. (The public) knows that a subject whose very certainty bored them into the ground has suddenly begun to shake like the St. Andreas fault” (p. 2). Social science methodology, supplemented by computer technology, allowed for masses of marginalized people to be thoroughly studied. The

working class and oppressed minorities have had their voices heard, challenging the implicit and explicit assumptions of conventional history. Nevertheless, such facts and statistics have often been interpreted as social laws, undermining the liberating and empowering potential of human agency.

The status of “reason” as an aspect of domination has been questioned in the post-modern critique, challenging a conception of history as an objective discipline. The notion of a society constructed by political ideology that masquerades as rationality, changing and more explicit paradigms, and the disciplinary language of power become the basis for history teaching that has also incorporated objective methods, critical theory, creative interpretation, and political empowerment. The rational process is thus viewed as a source of either domination or liberation, depending on how it is employed—and to a certain extent by whom.

Appleby reflects Nietzsche’s view of history’s significance in its usefulness for life. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1978), Nietzsche spoke of the human spirit as having three stages: The camel that became a lion that became a child. First, the spirit is like a camel, living tradition. Once mature, the spirit recognizes that there are problems with tradition and it becomes a lion, challenging that paradigm. When the lion succeeds in challenging and overcoming the old paradigm, the spirit becomes like a child, free to create a new understanding of the world, and of itself. For Appleby, the question is that of the child—“What now?”—without the usual pitfalls of determinism and objectivity. “(We) can close the door on the popular view of history as an uninterpreted body of facts, we can open it to the infinitely more interesting issue of how questions lead to knowledge through the mediating filter of culture” (Appleby, 1998, p. 12).

In “The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” (1997), Nietzsche similarly referred to his third mood toward history, the suprahistorical: the need to move beyond historical events

toward the eternal. We must see the aspect of the unhistorical in history; this includes the injustice, the blindness, the arbitrary, where “God is dead,” i.e., the gods of history, of objectivity and rational historical processes, in the “in-between” of objectivity and certitude. Meaning and meaningful conclusions can be created from historical study in our schools, as individuals understand their agency, rather than seeing only historical objects and events. History can itself be empowered, and the past seen as the source of future action and creativity. This can contribute to ending the exclusion of oppressed groups and forgotten events.

There is the ever-present danger that Nietzsche will be misunderstood. He did not want to abandon the quest for historical knowledge. Rather, “There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective ‘knowing’; and the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of this thing, our ‘objectivity’” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 119). We need the full awareness of the difficulties of historical re-enactment in order to return to individuals their power of agency. Teachers of history can be artists and translators, refracting meaning from the past to the present, and in this way they can promote the power of history in cultural and political life.

Michael Apple (2004b) encourages educators to critically question their assumptions about how education really functions; or, to put it another way, what it *does*. Many of these assumptions operate at an unconscious level, and prevent our educational institutions from being recognized as a part of the larger and unjust society—instead giving the impression that they are disconnected from it. His approach is “to speak directly to cultural and ideological dynamics that (are) not totally reducible to economic relations, even though they (are) clearly influenced by them. For him, “what schools do ideologically, culturally, and economically is very complicated” and no simple formula will suffice to get us out of an over-determined hegemonic reality. Apple

asserts that it is important to resist the tendency to deal *only* with economic controls and determinations, and to address cultural and ideological dynamics. “The theories, policies, and practices involved in education are *not* technical They are inherently ethical and political, and they ultimately involve ‘the common good’” (Apple 2004b, p. x).

The Hidden Curriculum

The first person to use the term “hidden curriculum” was Philip Jackson (1968) in his book, *Life in the Classrooms*. What he was referring to was how schools do more than simply pass on knowledge to their students, that there is a socialization process that occurs. Knowledge that is “socially approved,” is what is transmitted: “valid” knowledge, “acceptable” levels of understanding, etc. Norms and values are “taught” as part of this socialization process which transmits the status quo from one generation to the next.

The concept of the hidden curriculum is broad and multi-faced, referring to a wide range of socializing influences and processes, sometimes interrelated, sometimes self-contained. “It works differently for different types of students” (Feinberg, 1998, p. 62). Perspectives on issues such as gender, race and ethnicity get communicated in this way. Students learn things that are not taught in the formal curriculum, given that the learning process is organized so that students are given interpretations, constructions of knowledge and subjects. In this way, they learn how to learn, conforming not just to the formal rules of the school but also the informal rules, which include beliefs and attitudes. This socialization process includes students learning to accept the denial and interruption of their own personal desires and wishes. Their “voices, judgments and longings are often missing, as well as their perceptions, which are often more interesting than those of adults, as concerns the day-to-day realities of life in school (Kozol, 1991, pp. 5-6).

The concept of the hidden curriculum also refers to the way the learning process gets organized within our schools. First there is the *conscious* organization, the physical organization of the school itself. Inner-city schools with their enormously inferior physical facilities communicate a message to their students: “This is all you deserve; choices have been made and you are not a child worth investing in.” The system is built around the ideological concept of efficiency, which is determined by profit margins, and children of poverty are not considered a “good investment.” Corporate officials who have business-related ties to education are interested in making as much money for their shareholders as possible. That is, they feel no social responsibility to promote a free society (except for maintaining good public relations). This, says Chomsky (2001), is a form of tyranny, which defies freedom. Corporations are not persons nor do they fall within the moral realm, given that the only moral realm, given that the only moral responsibility or a CEO, the “person” or the corporation, is to be a “moral monster” (p. 2). In public education, it is the teachers and principles who determine the parameters of the debate, and students who challenge the status quo learn to be subversive in order to challenge authority.

Another aspect of the conscious hidden curriculum is in the organization of the classroom itself. The teacher, who stands at the front of the class, with pupils in rows manifests his/her authority. “Students are rewarded for obedience and passivity – schools are the first training ground for the troops that will enforce the muted, unending terror of the status quo . . . not to challenge established doctrine and authority (Chomsky, 2001, p. 11).

The hidden curriculum can also be expressed in an *unconscious, reflexive* way. For example, the way teachers interpret the behavior of pupils: Their interaction with and feedback to students sends messages to students as to what is acceptable and what is not, shaping thought

and behavior. This is what Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1998) call “symbolic violence” (quoted in Feinberg and Soltis, p. 62). “Symbolic violence is the imposition of the meaning system of one group onto that of another” (p. 62). Subordinate groups are reproduced and the dominant group maintains its unthreatened status. This result in the hegemony of the authority figures and the resulting “false consciousness” which schools also reproduce. Learning that “science is very important” would be a covert norm because what it leaves unstated is who primarily profits from science. And then there are the textbooks. It is possible for even a math textbook to give messages about class stratification by simply using story problems about well-off individuals. The hidden curriculum here is of a society stratified by class, race, and gender in such a way that the current status quo is deemed natural. Poverty too is *naturalized*, and questions, discussions, doubts about such depictions are most often discouraged by the teacher.

“Teachers tend to classify students very early in their school life on the basis of nonacademic attributes” (Rist, 1970, p. 441). They interact more frequently with those who they considered well-groomed. These classroom politics, in the end, “normalize” certain ways of being and “marginalize” others, setting standards for conforming to certain norms. Students internalize these external forces of control and in this way, accept the denial and interruption of their personal desires. The important thing to keep in mind here, is as Foucault would say, that these categories of thinking about “right” and “wrong” are socially constructed and can be deconstructed, confronted and changed.

Phillip Jackson (1968) explained that the hidden curriculum is how cultural values and attitudes get transmitted, values like obedience to authority, punctuality, and delayed gratification, through the structure of teaching and organization of schools. Jackson actually points to three aspects of the hidden curriculum: “crowds, praise, and power” (Marshall, 1998,

p. 1). This contrasts with the formal curriculum given that it has nothing to do with topics studies or subject matter. “In classrooms, pupils are exposed to the delay and self-denial that go with being one of a crowd; the constant evaluation and competition with others; and the fundamental distinction between the powerful and the powerless, with the teacher being effectively the infant’s first boss” (p. 1). Jackson’s analysis was based on the sociological theory of Emile Durkheim, who was one of the first to recognize that schools reflect the larger society, and the hidden curriculum functions to “sustain inequality through sexism, racism and class bias” (p. 1).

Both the overt and covert curriculum need to be scrutinized, according to Apple (2004b), and educators will need to compare it to their own commonsense ideas. In addition, social relations in the schools, which are partly reflection of certain cultures and groups, need to be considered as part of a *particular historical moment*. Schools provide our children with ideological values and knowledge, knowledge that is commodified, what Apple refers to as “technical knowledge.” This knowledge is required to maintain the dominant economic, political, and cultural status quo in terms of education, class, race, ethnicity and gender relations.

For Apple, the hidden curriculum acts as a form of hegemonic control – “students...are presented with a view that serves to legitimate the existing social order since change, conflict, men and women as creators as well as receivers of values and institutions are systematically neglected” (Apple, 2004b, p. 102). These meaning structures are *obligatory*; i.e., “students receive them from significant others in their lives, through their teachers, other role models in books, and elsewhere” (p. 102). Apple claims that for this to change, teachers, the people whom students look to as “authorities” or “experts of knowledge,” *must change*. Educators need to understand that teaching is a political act. Educators in our schools need to have sensitivity and a

political and cultural understanding of ideological meanings so that students can actually understand how to *speak* to the power behind these meanings and *can place them back into* the “actual social processes which generated them” (p. 102).

The positivist and technical logic which is part of the belief structure creates the formal and hidden curriculum, with students ultimately conceived as the human capital that results from this cultural production. Hegemonic relations cannot be easily challenged, rooted as they are in a “common sense” of what is “natural,” which makes it difficult for students and educators to see the “ideological *saturation* going on (my emphasis) (Apple, 2004b, p. 103). Furthermore, according to Apple, the curriculum field itself has “*limited its own forms of consciousness* so that the political and ideological assumptions that support its normal patterns of activity are as *hidden* as those that students encounter at schools” (my emphasis) (Apple, 2004b, p. 103).

Educators need a critical analysis and understanding of their own latent assumptions, of how the “ideological values work through them” (Apple, 2004b, p. 104). Creators of curriculum must *constantly attempt to bring to consciousness and then act* on those hidden epistemological and ideological assumptions that they carry with them into the classroom, and which recreate hegemony. We also need to give tools to students, both political and conceptual, which are necessary to their facing a dense social reality. We need to help them to ask questions, such as: What is a false consensus and do our assumptions help to maintain it? Are those assumptions simply aspects of hegemony, and how so?

The Politics of Schooling

Schools should, according to Michael Apple (2004b), engage in advocacy. Along with advocating for student and teacher rights, they have “the task of creating access to knowledge

and tradition, especially those areas that have been the victims of selective tradition, the question of a student's right to have free access to *politically and culturally honest information* and to public expression based on this, which cannot be divorced from our own pursuit of just educative environments" (Apple, 2004b, p. 164).

There is also the curriculum which has been referred to as the "curriculum of the dead" (Ball, 1994, cited in Chomsky, 2000). Chomsky points out how "most of our existing models of education tend to ratify or at least not actively interrupt many of the inequalities that so deeply characterize this society. They actually exacerbate racism, gender-ism, and classicism. The questions of whose knowledge, who chooses what is taught, and how these choices are justified are all part of a supposedly "neutral knowledge," a "neutral curriculum" that "is linked to a neutral system of accountability. The question is "how do official interpretations of events, official language, and official knowledge work to legitimize certain interpretations of the power relations surrounding us, while marginalizing others? But these ties that link curricula to the inequalities and social struggles are complicated. It is up to educators too, to do what they can recognize (Rethinking Schools, Fall, 2002), to be aware of the political nature of teaching, and how decisions in the classroom that have political implications are made everyday. In order to do this teachers will need to educate themselves, and in terms of teaching history, they need to "ground themselves in the history and worldview of those who have been left out of history" (Peterson, 2002, p. 15).

The transformation of the contradictory liberal discourse about choice (vouchers, charter schools, tax credits) into truly alternative institutions can help us to develop and practice alternative models of pedagogy, if that is their goal. A clear understanding of what is true reform and what is just a rearrangement of the status quo is needed. Schools, says Apple (1995) are not

simply sites of reproduction of capitalist inequities; they are also sites of a culture of contestation, and class resistance, even if at only an informal level. We need coalitions of groups who have been left out, e.g., workers, blacks, latinos, to mention a few. “Students need to see the history and legitimacy of these struggles. How to do this requires knowing the balance of forces within a specific area, to have a sense of the history of economic, political, and cultural domination in a specific area (Apple, 1990, pp. 120-148).

In *Ideology and Curriculum* (1990) Michael Apple takes the position, like Bowles and Gintis, that structures of social power are reproduced in schools (i.e., relationships of class, gender and “race”). In his new Preface, he looks at the prevalent conservative movements and asks what, really, counts as legitimate knowledge. Whose knowledge is of most worth? This is a significant question given the pressure on schools to form labor for business and industry. The tragedy of the conservative movement for school reform is that the practices and policies of dominant groups, in terms of authority relations, have been placed on the schools and they make the claim that their project will be the great solution for eliminating social problems and inequities. But this, says Apple, is like making discussion of schools like the discussion of the weather – which it is not. It is rather a question of culture and history – the question of whose culture and history is taught which says a lot about who holds power. Power invades curriculum and education by determining whose knowledge is taught.

Apple explores how the structures of power relationships of class, gender, and “race” are reproduced in schools. He sees that the dominant ethic of today, of privatization, individualism at the price of community, and the desire for profit to the point of greed, along with a very high tolerance for poverty with its “blame the victim” mentality, are all part of the ideology of American life. This is kept in place by an ahistorical hegemony, making it seem like it is “just

the way things are.” Apple wrote the book to help educators critically question their assumptions about how education really functions, or to say it another way, what it does. Many of these assumptions operate at an unconscious level, and prevent our educational institutions from being recognized as a part of the larger and unequal society by giving the impression that they are disconnected from it.

Henry Giroux (1981) points out how the history students learn is “context free” (p.53):

That is, knowledge is divorced from the political and cultural traditions that give it meaning. In this sense, it can be viewed as technical knowledge, the knowledge of instrumentality...this results in students being so overwhelmed by the world of ‘facts’ that they have enormous difficulty making the jump to concepts which controvert appearances” (p. 53)...By resigning itself to the registering of ‘facts,’ the positivist view of knowledge not only represents a false mode of reasoning that undermines reflective thinking, it does this and more. It is also a form of legitimation that obscures the relationship between ‘valued’ knowledge and the constellation of economic, political, and social interests that such knowledge supports. This is clearly revealed in a number of important studies that have analyzed how knowledge is presented in elementary and secondary social studies textbooks (p. 53).

History, Democracy, and Education

How can we use history to make schools more democratic? First, we must ask if it is indeed possible to make them more democratic. Giroux (1988) argues that this indeed is the case. He asserts that we must develop a language of possibility and critical pedagogy, always struggling for freedom and social justice. As educators and policy makers, we must communicate that vision to students. Teachers must resist conforming to the role of “high level technicians” (p. 121). The message customarily sent to teachers is that they “do not count when it comes to critically examining the nature and process of educational reform” (p. 121). Giroux’s plea is *for teachers to engage in self-critique* in order to resist dominant social patterns in schools that have kept teachers and students from raising serious questions about what is taught, how it is taught,

and what are their larger goals. Seeing schooling as a *project, a mission, a vision* would help students to “develop a deep and abiding faith in the struggle to overcome economic, political, and social injustices and to further humanize themselves (teachers and students) as part of this struggle” (pp. 126-127).

“The student who resists or rejects critical perspectives or who openly expresses racism or sexism the classroom has, unfortunately, become a familiar figure in the literature on critical pedagogy” (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1512119>, retrieved May 15, 2010). “In teacher education courses, white students respond in ways that reflected their ‘vested interest’ in justifying their own power and privilege. Students must be given the opportunity to read and analyze portraits of white students that challenge them to think about race and racial identity in new ways.”

Giroux (2003) discusses how we, as educators, cannot completely remove all indoctrination that students experience in school. But we can, he says, “work against a politics of certainty, a pedagogy of conformity, and institutional formations that close down rather than open up democratic relations” (p. 44). In order to have a democracy, we need a politics that continually questions itself. “Democracy should not become synonymous with the language of the marketplace, oppression, control, surveillance and privatization” (p. 44). To make our society one in which is imbued with democratic values that “deepen and expand democracy” (p. 45) is crucial for how we can engage those who argue for less democracy and freedom. Especially since 2001, democracy has become increasingly threatened and compromised in the name of security. Real security would mean protecting democratic freedoms, our basic constitutional rights and freedoms, and educators need to make their voices heard in order to “create the conditions for debate and dialogue” that “expand and deepen the possibilities of a vitalizing and noisy democracy itself” (p. 45).

If we are, following Giroux, to develop a discourse that “unites a language of critique with a language of possibility,” (Giroux, 1988, p. 128) then a critical teaching of history in our schools which educates for an ability to “speak out against economic and political injustice” (p. 128) would give students the knowledge, courage, and guidance to struggle against despair. Such a discourse would help them to see how we got here, and how in the face of persistent social injustice we have developed the psychology and personalities that can move us from indifference and despair to hope, with the capacity to see history’s potential for informing change. As Paulo Freire said repeatedly, “As historical beings, our actions are not merely historical, but also are *historically conditioned* (my emphasis) (1995, p. 222). In seeing themselves as subjects of history, students can “experience the freedom to break through the imposed myths and illusions that stifle their empowerment . . . (and have the) space to take individual and collective actions that can empower and transform their lives” (Darder, 2002, p. 111).

All of us—schools, teachers, parents, and students— must begin to see how we live in a classed, raced, and gendered society in order to take history seriously and to ask ourselves “how and by whom our own understandings are constructed” (Giroux, 2001, p. 5). As Giroux reiterates, in order for schools to become democratic, we need to develop a “language of possibility, through the enactment of critical pedagogy.” We need a vision of history that is committed to possibility—to an unwavering belief that the future must always be considered as a site for hope” (p. 1).

There is also the issue of whites, as the dominant group, taking responsibility for their oppression of African-Americans and other minorities, in particular, by becoming aware of the language they use and its ideological underpinnings. Such statements as “Black people need to get their own house in order; Blacks need to be more ambitious, willing to meet whites halfway;

to take education more seriously; to stop victimizing each other” (Dalton, 1995, p. 117) have at least two undesirable consequences:

First, thinking about race as “the black man’s burden” leaves whites disempowered – that is, how can they effect change, change in the hierarchal system of dominance which affects so many dimensions of our society, if they don’t “own” America’s problem with racism? In general, whites have a great amount of difficulty recognizing that they may have contributed to or benefited from other people’s pain and subjugation. Many whites fear that giving more to blacks will mean their own lives will change in undesirable ways. Yet first the ideology, the rhetoric, about blacks, as well as other minorities, the propagation of information that claims to legitimize inequality, must give way to truthful, responsible, caring perceptions.

The other consequence is that putting the entire responsibility on blacks and minorities for their subjugation keeps America from becoming a democracy—where all people have a voice.

One of the most difficult issues facing those in our society who would like to see a fundamental transformation of American society in terms of it becoming truly a democracy is the question of coalition-building among different subjugated groups. According to Cornel West (1999):

At the psychocultural level, the forms of fear and insecurity and anxiety associated with others come from the prevailing systems that socialize us in a way that reinforces the fears and anxieties associated with “other,” for example, gay, lesbian, black, brown, red, and so forth. The powers that be know that as long as there are no bonds of trust or very, very weak bonds of trust, there won’t be any effective coalition-building or any substantive alliances among communities of resistance. And they’re right (p. 408).

It is the conception that each and every human life is a precious and unfolding story that, if viewed that way (and this paper hopes to show that this is critical) could confer a sense of membership to each of us in a true democracy, a kind of emerging global “tribe.” One of the

ways that we keep ourselves disconnected from one another, unable to become allies is in our speech, both what we say and how carefully we listen to what others have to say. Language matters.

In the textbooks of the 18th and 19th century, there is an uninterrupted continuum of values. Ethics are “absolute,” unchanging, and they come from God. The child learns these values by rote. “His behavior is not to be inner-directed, nor other-directed, but dictated by authority and passively accepted” (Elson, 1964, p. 339). Textbooks are determined to persuade the student that America is superior to all other countries—freedom is frequently discussed as a “chemical component of the very air of America” (p. 339). America will save Europe from corruption and decline, not the other way around.

Textbooks at this time were consistently conservative. Students were taught that America’s achievements were to be worshipped and that the American system would eventually include the entire world. Contemporary problems and reform movements were ignored. While being taught democracy, the student was simultaneously taught “the necessity of class distinction” (1964, p. 340).

Chapter 4

Compassion and Education

Social Justice and Compassion

To teach for social justice is to teach for enhanced perception and imaginative explorations, for the *recognition* of social wrongs, of sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise. It is to find models in literature and in history of the indignant ones, the ones forever ill at ease, and the loving ones who have taken the side of the victims of pestilences, whatever their names or places of origin. It is to teach so that the young may be awakened to the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they may become healers and change their world. Maxine Greene, (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn 1998, p. xlv)

In *Interracial Justice*, Eric Yamamoto (1999) describes what he calls the “four dimensions” of interracial justice, “dimensions of an approach for inquiring into and acting on intergroup tensions marked both by conflict and distrust and by a desire for peaceable and productive relations” (p. 174). While Yamamoto did not write his text to directly address teaching history, he does specifically address a progressive approach to teaching American history in the search for social justice. Maxine Greene (quoted above) argues that the progressive teaching of history for social justice requires teaching toward *recognition* of the wrongs in our society, teaching for “enhanced perception.” Yamamoto’s concept of *recognition* recalls Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (2001) concept of “perspective recognition,” and requires confronting what Kincheloe and Steinberg refer to as “amnesia,” “social ignorance,” the truth being the property of the status quo, and the problem of “epistemological colonialism.” Yamamoto’s four dimensions are useful when speaking about a progressive approach to teaching American history for social justice in general, and the role of compassion, although this word is never used, given that they refer to social justice not simply as a goal but as a process.

Yamamoto's (1999) four dimensions can be understood as a pedagogical framework for a creating a society where compassion is a prominent factor in the consciousness of its citizens, and thus the policies of that society. More specifically, these include:

1. *Recognition*: acknowledgment of the wrong committed and of the sources of the conflict
2. *Responsibility*: acceptance of appropriate responsibility for group harms, by recognizing the extent of group agency
3. *Reconstruction*: reconstruction of the relationship, including acts of apology, bestowal of forgiveness and refashioning of stories about self, other and the relationship
4. *Reparation*: repairing material racial harms

Any progressive, social justice approach to teaching history must address the range of injustices in our society—from racialization to the education debt, but more importantly, it must address the multi-layered aspects of injustice, recognizing justice not only in terms of ideas and ideals, but also as something “experienced,” and therefore both “conceptual and practical” (1999, p. 173).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate each of Yamamoto's dimensions, I will focus on “recognition,” given that to teach American history in high schools with compassion and a commitment to social justice requires that students initially experience this dimension. For Yamamoto (1999), recognition is a prerequisite for the other dimensions to occur. The first step toward recognition is an acknowledgement of disabling harm and/or constraints imposed on one group by another, resulting in group wounds. This acknowledgement is not to be taken lightly. It requires: “Interrogation: Critical sociological inquiry—critical analysis of intergroup histories, their particular/contextual and structural/discursive aspects” (p. 179).

Recognition begins, according to Yamamoto (1999), with an investigation into the uses of power. Where has there been direct oppression? Where has there been systemic subordination? What were the particular interests, agendas, reactions, and methods of those in power? What is the nature of the institutions and the media? An understanding of group histories requires examining *stock stories*, reinterpreting them, and *unpacking* them. How do these stock stories reflect the uses of power in conflict and injustice, and what role do they play in its dynamics? How can they be reinterpreted and unraveled?

Yamamoto (1999) employs the slavery narrative, where the focus has been on slavery's physical cruelty, giving the impression that it is now a closed issue. Once unpacked, it becomes clear that there is more of the story to unpack. Slavery has led to the linking of Blackness with subservience in the American unconscious. It has dehumanized African-Americans, while whites have used and continue to use this dehumanized image to rationalize that the subjugation of African-Americans is normal in light of their presumed inferiority. This is an element of "facing history," confronting it in relation to both "facts" and methodology.

A second important aspect of recognition is that of "facing ourselves." This requires confronting our own role in maintaining subordination. The experience of oppressed, marginalized, and disenfranchised groups has been compared by some to the victims of trauma (Davoine & Gaudilliere 2004). The significance of the person/group that has had the role of perpetrator/oppressor *finally admitting the act of wrongdoing and acknowledging the problem of*

accountability is equally important if a process toward social justice is to be sustained. *There must be an accounting for power imbalances as a first step toward transformation.*¹

The third aspect of recognition for Yamamoto is of the humanity of the “other.” This involves, on one level, “recognition of the class commonalities and joint social justice interests of all groups . . . in the construction of a non-racist democracy, transcending ancient walls of white violence, corporate power, and class privilege” (Delgado & Stefancic 2000, p. 448).

On another level, it pertains to “seeing into the woundedness of the ‘other’” (Yamamoto 1999, p. 176). For Yamamoto, this involves empathizing with their anger, suffering, experiences of oppression, and hope: “The treatment of suffering must reach beyond the body into the social self, the personal soul . . . to see the immediate harm as well as collective memories of a group” (p. 176). How do we begin to teach students to humanize and empathize with the other? First, we can listen intently in order to break through the walls, to undo the “bad coherence,” to connect with each other and each other’s narratives, stories. In listening intently, we are prepared “to take seriously the possible truth offered by marginalized people . . . (for) a weak neutrality in listening is not enough. *The centrifugal force of dominant culture is not resisted by standing still*” (Matsuda, 1990, p. 1766).

One challenge in this regard is that offered by the rhetoric about poverty in the U.S. media today. For those in a position of privilege, “the experience of hearing and reading this rhetoric may *diminish the possibility for empathy*. So long as we think of those in poverty as “them” and not like “us,” we are less likely to share in their sense of pain and humiliation. We

¹ Related to this, *Facing History and Ourselves* (www.facinghistory.org) is also the name of an international educational and professional development organization founded in 1976. Ethical and moral philosophy are considered essential to teaching history and social studies classes. The organization provides professional development, curricular resources, and tools to encourage teachers to bring students to a critical examination of history, especially in terms of that violence which is left out of conventional, traditional history textbooks and teaching of history. The goal is to encourage a progressive teaching of history in order to, as is their premise, teach civic responsibility, issues of racism, tolerance, and social action.

can imagine that they do not suffer as we would, or that their suffering—unlike ours—is inevitable or even deserved. As social philosopher Richard Rorty has written:

(human solidarity) is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. *Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created*. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Our inability to imagine the poor as strong, successful, and responsible people who win the battles of life also *blocks empathy* (as cited in Ross, 1996, pp. 90-91).

If we do not listen to others' stories with recognition, we become enclosed in our own limited world. Mari Matsuda (1989) in "When the First Quail Calls: Multi-Consciousness as Jurisprudential Method," speaks of the "bifurcated thinking" that comes with oppression, the "shifting in and out, that tapping of a consciousness from beyond and bringing it back to the place where most people stand" (p. 8). This multiple consciousness is one way to describe a consciousness of oppression, *and it resists abstraction and detachment, which are ways to avoid confronting oppression*. Instead, it recognizes such realities as "the dominant white conception of violence (that) excludes the daily violence of ghetto poverty" (p. 8). It means "choosing to know the lives of others by reading, studying, listening, and venturing into new places" (p. 9).

It is "not a random ability to see all points of view, but a deliberate choice to see the world from the standpoint of the oppressed. That world is accessible to all of us. We should know it in its concrete particulars" (p. 9). But "it is more than consciousness-shifting as skilled advocacy. It encompasses as well the search for the pathway to a just world" (p. 9).

If we cannot understand this pain that women, that Indian women, that Black women, that Hawaiian women, that Chicano women go through, we are never going to understand anything. All the mega-theory will not get us anywhere because without that understanding, mega-theory does not mean anything, does not reflect social reality, does not reflect people's experience. Patricia Monture, *Words that Wound*, 1993, p. 18.

"Recognition," in particular among those students of the privileged group in our society, will not occur unless the privileged learn through history how to understand and to feel others' pain—to see the injustice in their lives, to see their part in it, and to confront that within

themselves. It is in connecting with other people's experience that we can reach a point of understanding, *acting to heal* the world of injustice and the abuse of power. Through narratives, listening to other voices, reaching out to those who are disenfranchised, and confronting ourselves with honesty, we will begin to understand others as well as ourselves. It is through this lived experience that we can eventually become even more than we are now: *to recognize helping others as a mode of being*, so that things can change.

Inquiry-Based Learning

In the context of an iconoclastic and wide-ranging "textbook" on the historical and social foundations of education, Allan Ornstein (2003) straightforwardly addresses and critiques the history of teaching and schooling in terms of "extreme topics that deal with war zones, extermination camps, racial lynching, rape and plunder, famine, human stupidity and human misery, political and economic oppression, religious fanaticism, and death" (p. xv).

Ornstein (2003) suggests that our idea of an "educated" person is too narrow (p. 261), and that we need to see the educated person in different terms. In order to prepare teachers of history to incorporate social justice issues into their pedagogy, they need to be "steeped in an understanding of the humanities and social sciences, which stems from (an understanding of) history" (p. 261). Teachers also need to understand the history of education itself, in order to understand the relationships between what students have learned (past) and what they are learning (present) and what they need to learn (future), *so that our society can begin to dismantle the current situation* in which the "barbarians" still wait at the gates of civilized society.

Ornstein's (2003) book begins with Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann, and continues through the post-9/11 era, emphasizing the need to "say no to convention and popularity—to

move the issues from the private to public sector, from what is politically acceptable or neutral to what is philosophically honest and poignant” (p. xv). In order for justice to be served in teaching history, one must declare that “we are all humans first; Americans second; men and women third; actors, lawyers, teachers, or bricklayers fourth. Then we can talk about race, religion, ethnicity, and shades of color” (p. 500). Ornstein warns that either we learn these lessons or we will fail as a civilization. “Our decline will have little to do with the loss of Christian values, faith, and ideals ...or with the rise of gloom, defeatism, and anti-intellectualism” (p. 501). It will have more to do with our failure to promote subjugated knowledges and peoples, and the “inability of whites to understand, respect, and appreciate people of color” (p. 501). As long as minority groups cannot move into better-rewarded economic spheres, as long as they are oppressed, as long as the same historic grievances toward American society remain, the teaching of “American” concepts such as equality, opportunity, and mobility should be brought into question. *The teaching of history is crucial in bringing empowerment to the subjugated and awareness to the privileged.*

Samuel Wineburg (1991) in his research with privileged students with high GPA’s and high SAT scores studying American history found many problems with the students’ processing of the information as well as with the pedagogy of teaching American history. The students tend to see the textbook as presenting neutral facts and do not consider the value of primary texts (p. 501); they read for content, the right answer, but are incapable of identifying subtexts. In their processing of the texts they do not actually engage them; they treat textbooks as “divinely inspired” (p. 512).

Teachers, he says, must develop students’ capacity to read both text and subtext, as well as a capacity and willingness to question the text. Students tend to equate such terms as

“freedom fighters” and “contras” and teachers need to help them develop the ability to be critical readers. Students tend to treat such “appellations as neutral rather than charged symbols tapping different meaning systems, which makes students vulnerable to any nonsense presented to them” (p. 519). In considering the way we teach the question of constructing representations was presented to a social studies teacher who told the researchers that interpretation and representation, “had little role to play in historical understanding: History is the basic facts of what happened... You don’t ask how it happened. You just ask, ‘What are the events?’” (Wineburg, 1991, p. 512). In addition, says Wineburg, teachers are needed who model caring attitudes and do not engage in authoritarian power relationships with students about subject matter. This is necessary in order to make teaching critical thinking a possibility.

John De Rose (2007) in teaching United States history to his 11th grade students found that the way in which students regard United States conduct in the past influences how they view the exercise of U.S. power today. “Every teacher,” says De Rose, “has an obligation to offer students diverse perspectives about our nation’s historical role in world affairs, including those that criticize U.S. policies” (p. 33). Passages used in history classes that proved to be the most valuable were those that directly challenge the accounts found in textbooks. Obviously from De Rose’s experience, classrooms need to be democratic spaces that help students think about history and current events “beyond the tidy textbook narratives” (p. 35). In order to have the capacity to exercise the critical thought that is so necessary at this time of war and occupation, in order to participate as democratic citizens, students must be able to “detect limited perspectives in historical accounts” (p. 35).

Robert Bain, in *Rounding Up Unusual Suspects: Facing Authority Hidden in History Classroom* (2006) used his own high school history classroom as a case study to investigate how

to encourage students to “raise disciplined suspicions of the typical sources of scholastic authority” (p. 2080). And furthermore, how might we make textbooks and teachers “the objects of students’ historical study?”(p. 2080).

Bain concluded that there is a lack of investigation in teaching history. Both the history textbook and history teacher are considered as having the facts. “Suspicious are rarely raised, except the suspicion that the students have not yet mastered the facts found in the text and classroom materials” (2006, p. 2081). The use of primary texts is suggested as well as encouraging students to criticize both the textbook and the teacher in the process of reframing the history.

For Bain, the value of history education is in its capacity to engage students in a rational investigation of the past. If we can’t change the past, we should make an effort to attain the most accurate knowledge of it that we can. This involves being able to evaluate and criticize their own and others views, and for students to make informed and honest interpretations. While this may be history education’s “most difficult and complicated instructional task...there are few challenges more worthy of our efforts” (2006, 2107).

Teaching Race as a Social Construct

Racism has been defined as the creation or reproduction of “structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 71). Essentialism (or, rather, the “error of essentialism” Harris, 1990, p. 71) is to be understood here as “a belief in real, true, human essences, existing outside or impervious to social and historical context” (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 71). How does this belief in human essences, this “essentialism” contribute to

domination, and what is this “need” of domination to see human beings in this way? How does this perspective contribute to the formation of the “other,” the subordinated?

Whiteness is, among much else, a bad idea . . . The Wages of Whiteness, which is cast as a tragedy destructive to Americans across color lines . . . is not at all about blame and guilt . . . but I decidedly do argue that white identity has its roots both in domination and in a desire to avoid confronting one’s own miseries” (Roediger, 1991, p. 186). “The tone here strives to emulate that of Black Reconstruction, and thus to be more tragic than angry” (p. 13).

This is an important piece of history that students in public schools in the United States need to learn. They need to know what both Du Bois and Roediger mean by the “psychological wages” of whiteness. They need to be able to understand the reality of an analysis of power and exploitation. Roediger looks at the ways that white racial superiority became part of the consciousness of white working men. He does not stay at the results of this thinking but tries to determine what the motives were. That is, Roediger doesn’t just stay with the material benefits of “white skin privilege” but looks at how white working men themselves constructed this meaning of “whiteness.” With its “psychological wage” came status and privileges which helped to compensate white workers for the exploitation and alienation they experienced in their class relationships with whites of the dominating class. The historical possibility of forming a coalition with Blacks against the ruling white man was missed.

Students need to understand that race is a social construction. They, more importantly, need to understand that it has a history, a story, and a very illuminating one for those who have no real grasp or conception of how it all began. It makes a difference when studying the concept of “democracy,” to know this story. It is important that they know not only the facts and events surrounding the American Revolution, but that they understand that democracy in the United States has rarely fulfilled its promise. Roediger talks about “herrenvolk” democracy, a German word that describes a political ideology where there is democracy for the master race but tyranny

toward subordinated racial groups (Roediger, 1991, pp. 59-60). Does this resemble the situation we find ourselves in now, in the 21st century, as we struggle to be a “multi-cultural” society? The main point here is that it reassured whites that no matter how far down they might go economically and materially, they could never lose their “whiteness.” As Roediger says, this 19th century Republicanism “easily degenerated from its lofty hatred of slavery into a clear disdain for slaves, and then free Blacks, and then into mere racial pettiness” (pp. 59-60). It is this “mere racial pettiness” that students must understand the historical roots of, in order to understand where we are today and from there, that they have the desire to confront and eliminate it. This is an example of how understanding history is key to understanding racialization, classism, sexism and other forms of subordination, which, in turn, opens up the possibility for white privileged students to live consciously and truly see the world they live in. Once an authentic and honest view of history is made available to them, the possibilities for compassion and empathy will open up also.

The need for compassion in our society is nowhere more obvious than in the racialization of minority populations. Matthew Silliman (2003) addresses this problem in an article titled “Structural racism and the failure of empathetic imagination: A comment on Lawrence Blum.” Silliman’s article is a critique of what he sees as Blum’s inadequate analysis of racism as a personal and moral problem, which fails to confront racism at its root as a structural problem. He cites Charles W. Mills (1997) suggestion as to why “both structural and personal racism have proven so durable: a systematic undermining of our capacity for empathetic imagination” (2003, p. 303).

Blum is preoccupied with the idea of intention. That is, if there is no intent to discriminate (e.g., in our criminal justice system where morally unfortunate unintended

consequences occur in spite of basically good moral intentions), then the fact of its power to damage lives can be somehow excused, deemed inconsequential. Silliman's response to "What is the engine that drives structural racism so relentlessly?" is what he refers to as an intuition: "*The evil of modern society isn't that it creates racism but that it creates conditions in which people who don't suffer from injustice seem incapable of caring very much about people who do*" (my emphasis) (2003, p. 311).

There are several reasons why our empathetic imagination fails us. Most significantly, says Silliman, is the rationalism of the Enlightenment—"social atomism, mechanized production and exploitation of resources, consumerism, the limiting of relationships to voluntary associations, and the constraining of passion to the desires of ownership, which externalizes and limits imagination to what are reductively called the 'rational' and the 'objective' (that is objects that may be bought, owned, and consumed)" (2003, p. 311). Silliman concludes that our failure to rid ourselves of racialization is not only due to supremacist ideologies or personal vices, "but something more like a systematic failure to value and cultivate affective imagination, specifically the sort for effective empathy". "Revolutionary" is the only word Silliman feels accurately describes a deep transformation of this failure," (p. 312).

In their article titled "Empathy and Antiracist Feminist Coalition Politics" (<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/psundar/home>), Maggie Caygill and Pavitra Sundar begin their introduction by stating their rejection of empathy as a tool for building coalitions between white women and women of color. Empathy, they claim, results in a similar hierarchy to that which we begin our efforts for transformation. They explain that "Empathy (alone) cannot foster horizontal comradeship because it is, like sympathy, based on vertical, hierarchical power relations." Rather than empathy there must be a "conscious disavowal of white supremacist,

capitalist patriarchy.” White women subscribe to oppressive ideologies that must be critiqued in terms of how we benefit from them, and this should lead to outrage and action. But the outrage and action must come from all progressives, not only those who are advantaged because of them, for we are all at a disadvantage by ideologies such as racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Interestingly, Caygill and Sundar refer to a commentary on Arundhati Roy’s distinction between concern and empathy. For Roy, concern is “distant, disengaged.” Empathy, to the contrary, “incites one to action.” It leads to passion, to incandescent anger, to wild indignation.” But Roy’s empathy is accompanied by intellectual understanding, recognizing the kind of personal anger that those of privilege feel when recognizing the situations of the poor and displaced. As Cunningham (2004) was quoted above, in order for empathy to be effective, it needs to be accompanied by the facts. And Audre Lourde writes that anger, when loaded with information and energy, is the appropriate response to injustice. Throughout the article, Caygill and Sundar argue that intellectual understanding accompanied by guilt—rather than the passion of anger—is counterproductive, whereas anger and outrage can be meaningful and productive responses to oppression.

What it means to be an American citizen and a participant in the civic life of a democracy among adolescents of diverse backgrounds was the focus of an article by Beth C. Rubin (2007) entitled “‘There’s Still Not Justice’: Youth Civic Identity Development Amid Distinct School and Community Contexts.” The study used an expanded notion of civics which included “civic *experiences* of youth, particularly those from traditionally marginalized groups” (p. 450).

Four social studies classrooms from New Jersey middle schools and high schools were used as participants in Rubin’s study: (a) Green Middle School, a magnet school for the

performing arts which served predominately African-American (80%) and Latino (15%) from poor and low-income backgrounds; (b) Somerset Middle School located in a middle to lower-income racially diverse neighborhood, many who were recent immigrants to the US; (c) Burnside High School is a predominately white (82%) and Asian (14%) upper-middle to high-income suburb; and (d) Willow High School which serves a racially and socioeconomically integrated suburban area. Forty-seven percent are African American, 43% White, 5% Latino, and 5% Asian American.

Rubin's (2007) study centers on the interpretation of civic ideals on the part of privileged high school students and to some extent the contrast with marginalized students, given that the question of this study is how to bring privileged students to compassion through teaching United States history. While Burnside High School provides little information to compare marginalized and privileged students, Willow High School, being a diverse group of students, will provide a good comparison to the homogeneity of Burnside. Most students from Burnside expressed satisfaction with their lot, however, a few showed that they were aware of injustices and articulately addressed what they saw.

As an example of the attitude of satisfaction with privilege and affluence and a lack of regard for those who do have such experience, an 11th grade white student from a privileged background (Burnside School) expressed that his comfortable lifestyle, i.e., his house, car, school, showed that his life lived up to the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence, given that it was a life reflecting safety, comfort, and opportunity (2007, p, 459). This was an interesting connection made by privileged students: safety and the ideals of the United States. A white 11-th grade girl at the same school expressed a similar sentiment: "I think the reason the

country is so great is because...I always feel safe...I don't feel like I'm going to be arrested because I look a certain way or because I said a certain thing" (p. 459).

However, at Willow High School, a more diverse, less affluent school, a white 11th grade girl had a very different interpretation of liberty and justice:

There is not liberty and justice for all. I mean...there are so many examples. Like more African-American people are on death row than white people and like half those people won't even be proven guilty. That kind of thing. There are so many people who live in poverty and who don't get equal benefits as like someone who works as a lawyer as opposed to someone who makes shoes (p. 462).

These perspectives were echoed by several students at Willow, one of whom used slavery as an example, saying that while we had overcome that, the incomes of African-Americans compare to those of whites just as they did one hundred years ago. These students use their history classes, teachers and parents as sources for their information about injustices. A white eleventh grader at Willow reported how about once a year a history teacher will tell them about some atrocity in U.S. history and then say sarcastically, "With liberty and justice for all" (p. 463).

Another student at Willow High School, who was white and in the eleventh grade articulately pointed out the conflicts between the realities and the ideals in U.S. society. Slavery, he said, was the most obvious example. Although we have come a long way since then, the income disparities between African-American and white people remain where they are not so different than they were a hundred years ago.

The differences in outlook between students at homogeneous Burnside High School with its high-income population and diverse Willow High School are interesting insofar as they point to the critical thinking that takes place in diverse settings which is lacking in schools where

marginalization is never part of the equation. However, oddly enough, Rubin's examples from Willow High School with all its diversity were from lower-income white students.

When it came to questions of active or passive civic participation, a white eleventh-grader at privileged Burnside expressed how civic actions have brought America from its past injustices closer to its ideals. In economically and racially diverse Willow High School, a white eleventh-grade student made the connection between his definition of citizenship which included social action:

I am not like down on the government...but now that I am more aware of some social injustices...they are not always blatant, they are sometimes subtle...I know that since I am a citizen I can do something about it (p. 467).

To summarize, students had a range of attitudes regarding civic participation, from active to passive. At diverse Willow High School, students were more inclined to display active attitudes than students at Burnside. At privileged Burnside, the majority of "students defined civic participation as perpetuating the status quo of stability and economic prosperity enjoyed by their families and community" (p. 469). In this study by Rubin, the contrast between students from privileged Burnside and diverse Willow High Schools demonstrated a shift from "privileged complacency to concerned engagement" (p. 474). The more active and aware civic identities of Willow students were encouraged by being in a diverse setting and having the experiences of this setting, amid "classroom practices that fostered relationships among them, encouraged frank discussion of issues of power and privilege, and presented social action as desirable" (p. 474).

The fact that such experiences are easier to achieve in such settings is "testimony to the great power and possibility of integrated school spaces" (474). However, the teachers must be willing to engage the students in discussion of issues of difference, of power and privilege, and

to use these discussions to create meaningful democratic experiences for the students. These settings in economically and racially diverse schools are in contrast to the complacency of most of the students at Burnside High School. Students in these settings must be challenged to look beyond their immediate interests. The lack of parallel discussions of power and privilege resulted in the complacency and passivity of most students at affluent, homogeneous Burnside High.

Although many educators choose to avoid controversial social, historical, and civic issues in their classrooms, these were the very practices that students cited when describing a shift to a more active civic identity. The sense that something is wrong is *compelling*, especially to adolescents who are already developing their own critiques of the world (2007, p. 475).

Jonathon Kozol (1991) has been writing for decades about schools as integral to American “institutionalized racism.” In *Savage Inequalities* he describes the urban schools he visited, and where he found levels of poverty that the dominant class in America is for the most part completely unaware of. He describes East St. Louis, a place where white Americans pass on the freeway, and should they find themselves within its limits, they become completely frazzled and can think, not compassionately about how these people have to live, how these innocent children are so deprived, but rather about how they can as quickly as possible exit the town. Kozol has been exposing this aspect of American society, especially education, with enormous outrage and compassion. Why, he asks, do we allow this to go on? What, he asks, keeps us from recognizing the misery, the misery that the privileged in our society have the luxury, if we choose, to ignore? What does this say about our sense of moral justice in our supposed society of democratic values?

Morality in Education

In the case of teaching morals in our public schools, it needs first to be recognized that “morality” is a question of “discourse” in America. The predominant discourse about what morals to teach tends to come from authoritative publics, such as the government, churches, and most relevant to this paper, academic policy makers. This discourse about morals begins with the question of *what* values to teach. Stacey Smith, in her article “Morality, Civics and Citizenship: Values and Virtues in Modern Democracies” (2000) quotes Patricia White’s discussion of “civic virtues” which include “hope, confidence, courage, self-esteem, self-respect, friendship, trust, honesty, and decency” (p. 408). These values, common to people of “goodwill” and “so obvious as to be anodyne” are identified by Smith as “moral intuitions” common to all human beings (p. 408).

This discourse of “goodwill” (e.g., social welfare, charities, “random acts of kindness☺) is one dimension of the priorities for teaching morals present in the discourse of the authors cited in Smith’s article. Talk is of “goodwill” and discussions are about “friendship, decency and honesty.” The discourse on morals by the disempowered, those with little “relative” power challenges the discourse of “goodwill.” Rather than teaching “random acts of kindness” the discourse of subordinate or oppositional groups speaks of the importance of taking responsibility for the moral atmosphere of society as a whole. In the words of Martin Luther King: “Affluent Americans will eventually have to face themselves with the question that Eichmann chose to ignore: “How responsible am I for the well-being of my fellows?” (King, 1983, p. 18). Here the discourse is more one of responsibility than goodwill. The discourse of “goodwill” and the qualities of those with goodwill co-opt and defuse Dr. King’s assertion, and dilute it into a practice that is no longer one of confrontation with the issue.

Chapter 5

The Hidden Curriculum of History Books: A Textual Analysis

In this section I begin by presenting the textbooks and other materials that teachers in the Champaign-Urbana area are using to teach history. They do not all conform to the following section which deals with the textbooks that are considered the most frequently used in the United States in general. But it is interesting to see how they attempt to make their history courses relevant and interesting for their high school students.

The following section will be of three high school history textbooks. In choosing textbooks to analyze I used a short publication by the American Textbook Council on “Widely Adopted History Textbooks,” published in 2009 (<http://www.historytextbooks.org/adopted.htm>) and secondly, a publication of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute in 2004, edited by Diane Ravitch, entitled “A Consumer’s Guide to High School History Textbooks” (<http://www.edexcellence.net>). I chose the textbooks that overlapped on each list. The American Textbook Council merely lists the textbooks, while the Fordham Institute does a serious review of the texts they consider, with each text reviewed by at least one scholar. Each text was considered in light of several criterion: accuracy, context, organization, selection of supporting materials, lack of bias, historical logic, literary quality, use of primary resources, historical soundness, democratic ideas, interest level, lack of bias and graphics. Each book was given an overall score, with 100% being the highest score. I will report these findings briefly but not in full, and given that my focus is their potential in terms compassion, injustice, and their approach to inequality, this will be the focus of my review of each textbook. The descriptors I will use will be slavery, the Indian Removal Act, immigration, Jim Crow, Plessy Vs. Ferguson,

and Brown Vs. Board of Education These are all points in history where there was a shift or rigidity in how the law was involved in the racialization in this country.

Local Teachers Teaching High School History

In terms of the local high school history teachers, there is quite a bit of variety in what they use as texts and other teaching materials. One high school history teachers told me that he teaches both AP U.S. History and the lower-level college prep U.S. history (It just so happens that he uses “The American Pageant” for his AP course. I did not analyze this book because it was on none of the lists of frequently used textbooks. I do mention it briefly earlier in this dissertation. What was remarkable about it was that it had 1100 pages and only 9 pages on the subject of slavery. This teacher also uses a test-review book for his AP courses from AMSCO United States History Preparing for the Advanced Placement Exam, 2006 edition). He reported to me that next year each of his students will get a copy of Zinn’s “A People History of the United States.” For his college prep courses, the uses “The Americans,” (2007 edition). This was one of the books most frequently used and which I one on list of textbooks I will be looking at. However, the teacher informed me that he does not use this textbook often. He is in midst of teaching a pilot course that integrates the use of graphic novels. For that class, the students also read “The Arrival,” “Kings in Disguise,” Barefoot Gen, Vol. 1,” “The Graphic Biography of Malcolm X,” and “Last Day in Vietnam.” The students, he says, love these books.

A second teacher reported the he uses “The American Vision” of which Joyce Appleby is an author, but this book was not include on the frequently used list, In addition he uses two other books, “Reasoning with Democratic Value” published by Teachers College Press and the Nexttext series of historical readers published by Houghton-Mifflin.

The third teacher also reported using “The American Pageant” for AP level courses and “The Americans” for college prep level. He also teaches a course in American History and Film and Music for which he does not use a textbook. As far as other resources, they are quite numerous, including but not limited to scholarly journal articles, online resources, a very broad range of primary sources, audio, video, and much more.

The fourth and final teacher I consulted is distinct from the others insofar as he teaches at an elite public school. In terms of history textbooks, he uses a “generic” one but tell his students it is just for reference. What he actually teaches (according to what people tell him but he has not checked it out carefully) resembles Howard Zinn’s “A People’s History.” He also teaches a course on “Class and Race.” He sent me the text, which he has written himself, and told me he hopes to publish it someday, so he would prefer that I not disseminate the text. Headings in this document are such as “19th Century Social Dynamic of Middle Class Respectability (working and social assumptions),” “The Dynamic of Class Tensions and Values.” “Historical Contexts, Diagramming the Phenomenon,” and “Completing the Definitions (privileged/subordinated),” and “Race and Respectability.”

These teachers, although I know very little about how they teach these materials, when compared with teaching the text, tend to be progressive. Few of them use only one of the assortment of history textbooks frequently used for high school students. They each seem to have their way of supplementing textbooks, not using them at all, or supplementing textbooks/replacing them with history materials that they feel augment any history textbooks they might use.

Compassion, injustice, and their approach to inequality; this will be the focus of my review of each textbook. The descriptors I will use will be slavery, the Indian Removal Act,

immigration, Jim Crow, Plessy vs. Ferguson and Brown v. Board of Education. These are all points in history where there was a shift or a rigidity in how the United States dealt with internal affairs that had to do with the acceptance or rejection of those who were not in the category of white men. I will not go into the question of women, because it would entail a study of women of different backgrounds which is a study in itself. But I will try to give an image of what these books consider important and how they talk about what they find important.

America: Pathways to the Present (2003). Cayton, A., Perry, E., Reed, L, Winkler, A.

In a “Consumer’s Guide to High School History Books,” in terms of American History, this book received a score of 71% out of 100%, a C+ (the highest score was a 78%). This put it right in the middle in terms of its score compared to the scores of other textbooks. In terms of historical soundness it received an 8 out of 10% and in terms of lack of bias it received a 7%. Accuracy brought it a 7.25%, and democratic ideas brought it a 4.75%.

This textbook is sparse on information which would give an accurate background to the problem of discrimination up until the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s. It begins with “The Atlantic World to 1600,” as its first chapter, but it isn’t until Chapter 6, page 220, that it addresses this history. A four-page entry on “Native American Resistance” is covered with photographs and boxes. However, in these four pages the text succeeds in describing the effect of the American Revolution on Native Americans, and does acknowledge the difficulties that the Native Americans faced regarding European culture, and what their options were. It was all a question of war or losing their culture, according to the text. The Native Americans, had four options: Accepting white culture, Blending Indian and white cultures, Returning to Indian traditions, and Taking military action (p. 220). These are all briefly explained, one paragraph

each, but at least acknowledged. There are several small boxes on the four pages with questions regarding the problem for Indians of assimilation, but most of the pages are covered with paintings and drawings, giving little historical context to the issue.

In Chapter 10, the text addresses “The Case Against Slavery” (p. 346). It described the difference between the North and the South on the subject of slavery. It emphasizes Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and the reactions to her description of the immorality of slavery. Students are asked to discuss the ways in which slavery divided the north and the south, but nowhere is the inhumanity of slavery addressed, nor an approach which could help them see the inhumanity of what was done to the Native Americans. Facts are there, draw your own conclusions, but besides knowing the facts of who said what, there is no definitive conclusion about white men exploiting other cultures.

Chapter 15 which is entitled “Politics, Immigration, and Urban Life” (1870-1950), begins on page 518 of the text, and continues for two pages. Datelines are given for certain events (the Chinese Exclusion Act, Ellis Island, Angel Island, etc.). These are done in a graph, and there is little text to explain them.

Section Three is entitled “The World of Jim Crow,” (page 564.) which is a relatively intelligent and compassionate way of describing this period. Compassionate in that it gives enough details for a student to be stunned by the realities of this time. But this would depend, also, on the teacher. It is done so briefly, and in so little reading, that students could brush over it and consider it some past mistake from which we suffer not at all at this moment.

In Chapter 28 of the text (pp. 926-966), the Civil Rights Movement is addressed. It has a section on *Brown v. Board of Education*, explaining the final Supreme Court Decision but also including the reaction in the country to this decision (especially the South), the Montgomery Bus

Boycott, and Little Rock High School. The students are given minimal information to make a judgment on what actually occurred, but certain matters are included which give them some leverage to make a conclusion. The chapter is very thorough in terms of the events beginning in 1950 and ending with 1968. It included sections on Demands for Civil Rights, Leaders and Strategies, The Struggle Intensifies, and The Movement Takes a New Turn. In each section there are descriptions that give a small text on the historical events and figures. There are boxes with quotes from Thurgood Marshall (*Brown v. Board*), Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the significance of the Nation of Islam, making a distinction between King and Malcolm X ideas for the advancement of African-Americans. However, the teacher would have to emphasize the struggle that took place, for although it is mentioned, and each historical figure is described, it is possible with no elaboration by the teacher for the essence of this struggle to be missed.

Holt American Nation (2003). Boyer, P.

This textbook received a composite score of 73% by The Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks. It received an 8.5 out of 10 for Accuracy, a 6.25 for lack of bias, a 9.25 for historical soundness and a 5 for democratic ideas. The text begins with 7 pages of primary sources used in the book, along with the page number where they can be found.

The text is littered with visual clutter (all three textbooks are to a great extent) which makes it difficult to focus on the main points in each section. It begins with a history of Native Americans, which first looks very briefly at two Native American myths. It does a good job of describing the different groups, Aztec, Maya, Incas, but does not address the fate of these people at the hands of the Europeans. It has a section, "Sacred or Scientific Sites," which basically argues that the digging up of Native American artifacts was justified for scientific reasons,

although the Native Americans protested that it was disrespectful. But this is only briefly mentioned and the entire discussion is in a small box on the margin of the page. There is no mention of the Indian Removal Act.

In Chapter 8, *Regional Societies (1793-1860)*, there are two pages on “The Slave System” (p. 271) Twenty pages later it has a section on the abolition movement which is also two pages in length. It is extremely brief about the realities of slavery and attempts to give a balanced view between those who were pro-slavery and the abolitionists. In this respect, it offers very little to students that would help them to really understand the reality and cruelty of slavery, again, unless the teacher takes the few bits of description of slave’s lives and elaborates on it. There is no mention of Jim Crow, and very brief depiction of Reconstruction. On page 254 there is half a page devoted to the wealthy, the poor, and the middle class. What is remarkable about this section is that when it describes the conditions of the poor, it “lightens up” at the end of this one paragraph, stating that “Most poor people, however, held on to their hope for a better future. Many believed that the new market economy would provide them with opportunities to improve their situation.” This statement functioned to nullify the previous three sentences describing the conditions of the poor, by saying as much as “Oh well, they had hopes for a better life, so it doesn’t really matter.”

On page 879, “Voices of Dissent,” there are three short paragraphs on *Brown v. Board*. This is described in 4 short paragraphs. It does include information about Thurgood Marshall’s argument of the case, in which the authors include his stance on how segregation leads to a psychological state of inferiority for Blacks. But again, this is so briefly described, in one sentence, with no background about how he made this argument, that students can easily skip over it unless the teacher dwells on it in detail. Chapter 31, which has 20 pages on the Civil

Rights Movement, includes four pages on Martin Luther King. It includes a portion, two short paragraphs, of King's letter from the Birmingham Jail. There is one very short paragraph on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It explains in one short page the Voting Rights Act, and about 8 pages on the Black Panthers and Malcolm X. But these texts describe events and ideas of certain figures, but each page is broken up into two or three paragraphs on the subject matter, and then charts, boxes with small charts on, for example, gains made by African-Americans, and although they are connected to the major story, are distracting for the reader. The busing controversy is short and, like other subjects dealing with Black activism, reports the details of the events without an examination of the intense struggle on an emotional level which confronted Blacks as they fought for freedom and their rights. There are 8 pages devoted to Hispanics in America, the Spanish Empire, but this section mainly discusses the Spanish missions and their architecture, haciendas and ranchos, and their successful control of Native Americans. Again, each page has at least five to six different sections, and they report the facts and discourage any deep level of understanding by the constant distraction of their very brief reporting and the way pages are littered with graphs, maps, charts, "That's Interesting" comments in the margins that students could not possibly understand these issues in any depth, the format being so distracting.

The Americans (2007). Danzer, G.

This textbook was given a rating of 57% by A Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks. It was rated 5.25 out of ten for accuracy, 4.25 for lack of bias, and 6 for democratic ideas.

This textbook begins with a section on West African Societies Around 1492. It includes one out of 4 pages on slave labor. This page (p. 76) has two short paragraphs on slave labor, very briefly describing it, and is broken up into five sections on this one page. One section is on “Now and Then: Kente Cloth.” Other sections on this page are on learning terms and names, taking notes. Under the “Main Idea” box are sections on “West Africa’s Climate Zones,” West Africa’s Major Geographical Features,” and “Three West African Kingdoms and their Climate Zones.” There is absolutely nothing on these pages which would draw students to a place where they could commiserate with West African victims of the slave trade.

The Indian Removal Act (pp. 244-245) is described in two pages, with a section called “Point/Counterpoint” where the authors attempt to show “both sides of the story.” This is done in half a page, describing it first as a “terrible injustice” and then as “unfortunate but necessary.” This is followed by a description of the Trail of Tears, which is done in ½ page, which admits that the Native Americans, in this case the Cherokees, suffered from the winter, the length of their journey, and their arrival at land that was far inferior to what they had had. This admission is important, but in such a short length the description does not evoke any feeling for the Cherokees, but a set of facts, very briefly described, that can easily be dismissed as just the way it was.

Later in the book is a section on Civil Rights (p. 926). It begins with three questions: Are all Americans entitled to civil rights? What are the risks of demanding rights? Why might some people fight against civil rights? This sets the tone for the chapter. It mentions Plessy v. Ferguson, and how it armed white Southerners with a law that permitted Jim Crow. It also describes Brown v. Board, the Montgomery bus boycott, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and a statement by Robert F. Kennedy, and Malcolm X. King has a special little box on one page

devoted to him as a “Key Player.” The quote from Bobby Kennedy includes the words: We have the choice to do as Martin Luther King did, “to replace violence and that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand (with) compassion and love.” This is the first and only citation from the three textbooks that addresses “love and compassion.” However, it is in a small box of about ten lines with a notation next to it for the students which says “Vocabulary: Polarization: Separation into opposite camps.” Of course there was more going on than just the separation into opposite camps. Kennedy was trying to get across a message about people of all groups having a relationship with each other which required them to be decent human beings.

In conclusion, all three of these textbooks are so replete with pages that, without exception, are overwhelming with a combination of important information and charts, graphs, maps, drawings, photographs and occasionally primary source information that a student could not possibly derive from it what is essential and what is “fluff” used to fill up a page. Never do they dwell on an issue, such as the cruelty of slavery, to the point that a student could internalize and use their judgment to come to a conclusion about what was seriously damaging to any group exploited, even exterminated, by the Europeans. Never is the term “white oppressors” or the term “white supremacy.” It is always the “Europeans” and the Blacks, Indians, Chinese, etc. There is almost never a reference to Hispanic or Japanese subordination, much less that of Blacks, Indians, etc. It is all told in a narrative that “simply reports what happened.” This is reminiscent of Rush Limbaugh’s statement that there is nothing to be interpreted about history, it is simply “what happened.” These texts make history not only boring, but overwhelming, for students of high school age who without the aid of a progressive teacher cannot detect who was exploited and how and why. There is never any indication that white Europeans may have been

wrong, abusive, and cruel. Everything was in the interest of Europeans, and when it meant cruelty to others, that was just the way the story goes. For this reason, I cannot imagine teaching history with such chaotic descriptions and information. (I did not analyze “The American Pageant” because it was not on either of the lists of commonly used textbooks, although I read in several sources that it is commonly used for AP History courses). Each of these textbooks are at least 1,000 pages in length, so it is startling that they give so little attention to minorities and how they integrated, assimilated, or kept apart with their own culture is essentially left. The detail is in the events but the textbooks totally miss the point of what might encourage compassion once students understand the events at a deeper level.

Chapter 6

History and Compassion: Conclusions and Recommendations

Social Justice and Compassion as Missing in Teaching

There are unpleasant aspects of our national history, and it is better for our children to know about them than to become party to reproducing them.

Herbert Kohl, *I Won't Learn From You: And Other Thoughts on Creative Maladjustment* (1994, 111)

Given the condition of U.S. history textbooks today, one would have to say that social justice and compassion are, in general, missing from history textbooks. The textbooks used in the review are mediocre at best. As has been said, they flood the students with facts, events, and figures, making them incapable of drawing any feeling from what they read. The emphasis is on facts as truths, and any serious interpretation or serious analysis is missing. In one of the most commonly used textbooks for high school, *The American Pageant* (2002), written by David Kennedy, of Stanford, and Elizabeth Cohen, of Harvard, is a textbook often used for AP American history courses. I did not use this textbook in my analysis given that it was not included in the list of most frequently used textbooks, even though elsewhere it was noted as a commonly used textbook. One of the remarkable things about this textbook is that in its 1100 pages there are only 9 pages devoted to the subject of slavery. The fact that the chapter begins with a quote from Emerson (1841) that “if you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own” is reflected in the text which attempts to look at the cruelty of slavery while also giving equal space to discussion of the cotton gin and the economics of the slave trade. When the index is checked for entries, there are only about 10 entries about slavery in the entire book. The same is true for Mexicans and Latinos, which do not have a chapter

devoted to their entry into American society. Women have several times more information, with about 100 entries, but the “woman question” is a safer subject for conventional history textbooks than are either African-American history or Latino/Hispanic history.

This is significant because the quality of a teacher depends on how they teach a subject and what is considered important knowledge. American history textbooks do not have entries or discussions for social justice and, of course, compassion. Consideration of the Civil Rights Movement is scattered over about 100 pages of this text, giving no cohesive analysis of its successes and failures. It is basically a textbook that gives token attention to these issues.

Howard Zinn’s historical pedagogy has been firmly rooted in a progressive, commonsense, and class-based critique of capitalism based on his own experience of growing up in poverty, and his participation as an academic activist in the Civil Rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s. Zinn (1980, 1995), the original and most prominent of the radical “peoples’ historians,” straightforwardly addresses the issue of teaching American history for social justice. In Zinn’s (1995) work this involves both relating history to current issues, and distinguishing between a social scientifically fetishized “objectivity” and the morally evaluative truth-telling that *leads to political action*.

For Zinn (1995), it is important that students understand that the origins of poverty, racism, and other inequities are not inevitable, as they have been led to believe, but that they are social constructions anchored in relations of power. Teachers need to avoid the self-censorship that results from trying to teach history from an “objective” point of view; instead, they need to share their own emotional intensity with their students. “Objectivity” is not possible or desirable (p. 97). Teachers need to “emphasize those things that will make students more *active and moral people*” (p. 97).

The title of Zinn's (1994) memoir, *You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*, characterizes his philosophy on the relationship between teaching history and social justice. Zinn does not bring an elaborate pedagogical or methodological analysis to bear on his promotion of the necessary relation between history and social justice, but encourages teachers to trust their passion for justice. Regarding his teaching of history to college students, Zinn (1999) explains,

I would be taking stands on everything . . . that this would not be a neutral course . . . it was in fact impossible to be neutral on a moving train, in the sense that the world is already moving in certain directions. . . . Wars are taking place. Children are going hungry. In a world like this, to be neutral or stand by is to collaborate with what is happening. I don't want to be a collaborator, and I didn't want to invite my students to be collaborators. (Zinn, 1999, p. 60)

Zinn motivates students to question and challenge authority, including his own.

Pedagogically, he relies upon his own narrative work and that of other critical historians who have revealed the struggles of the oppressed and "ordinary" people throughout American history, from the genocide of Native Americans to Vietnam and beyond. His pedagogy relies on the transmission of that knowledge in the context of lively debate, and on what he considers to be equally important activities outside the classroom. For Zinn (1999) "education does not come simply through classrooms, books, degrees, teaching" but by "*getting outside the classroom and encountering what was happening to real people in the world outside*" (p. 69).

Zinn's views are theoretically and practically complemented by Jean Anyon's fundamental critical work on the hidden curriculum of history textbooks. In "Ideology and United States History Textbooks" (1979), Anyon claims that although the history curriculum has seen substantial changes in the past century, the perspectives of dominant groups remain the primary focus in our so-called meritocracy. This permits the dominant structure of power to maintain control in a system that, according to Anyon, relies less on force and more on socially approved knowledge disseminated by agencies such as schools. In a sense, this is a more

insidious and intractable form of control, because psychological manipulation is not recognized as oppression in the same manner as physical coercion. Views advocated by history textbooks support some groups' activities while excluding some choices as unacceptable, providing invisible, intellectual, internalized, and perhaps unconscious boundaries to social choice. These boundaries are a basis for social management and control in democratic capitalism.

Given this reality of the school curriculum and history textbooks, Anyon (1979) draws the non-cynical conclusion that if educators have the power to determine social attitudes *they also have the power to change those attitudes*, to “foster autonomy and social change” (p. 385). Critical discussions in history classrooms that offer new information, critical interpretations, academic research, and class-based analyses, can contribute to creating a climate of social change in society. This also speaks to the forging of different expectations as to what counts as textbooks and school knowledge, and to embracing the potential of American schools to promote a more equitable social structure by means other than individual competition.

Both the “peoples’ history” and a critique of the hidden curriculum point to the importance of social history more generally defined—history told more broadly and from the bottom up, with an *emphasis on conflict and struggle*—rather than traditional, dominant, and more narrowly construed political history focusing on elite and powerful. Clearly, this trend has lent itself to providing a historical knowledge base—as well as compassion and inspiration—for social movements and social justice. In recent decades social history has been ascendant in higher education, sparking “culture wars” at both the post-secondary and secondary levels. For example, *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics* (Kramer, L, Reid, D, and Barney, W., eds., 1994) is an anthology that examines history teaching in the context of the academic culture wars of the 1990s. The volume, divided into four parts: (a) Textbooks, Survey

Courses, and Historical Education; (b) Rethinking Categories of Historical Meaning; (c) Popular Films and Historical Memory; and (d) Political Culture and Historical Interpretation, examines the question of how a diverse, democratic public can acquire a more profound knowledge of the history of *all* Americans and thus participate in informed debate. Several of the chapters in the text are particularly pertinent to my discussion here.

Mary Beth Norton (Kramer et al., 1994) in “Rethinking American History Textbooks” discusses how the historical “canon” which pervades most history textbooks “plays a crucial role in the codification of historical knowledge ... students often believe that information is not important if it does not appear in a textbook” (p. 8). Norton proposes that the new social history, which includes a broader definition of “politics,” and which includes not only the politics of political parties but the politics of grassroots movements and organizations *which have made a difference in society*, can resolve the problem of omitted and distorted information in history textbooks.

In “Teaching High School History Inside and Outside the Historical Canon,” Alice Garrett (Kramer et al., 1994) advocates for a pedagogy “in which students constantly intervene personally in a past they have reconstructed” (p. 11). She also points out that it is important for teachers to stress how history is and has been made by those who “stepped out of the officially sanctioned ways of doing things,” thus promoting a classroom situation where it is a “site where the student acquires skills that are needed to become an active citizen” (p. 11).

James Anderson (Kramer et al., 1994), in “How We Learn About Race Through History,” critiques the conventional understanding of “race” as a natural category “rather than a historically created ideology of human cultures” (13). This unfortunately promotes solidarities among those who consider themselves the same, and conflicts between those who are defined as

different. Anderson encourages teachers to instruct students regarding the socially constructed ideology of “race” by examining its historical roots, and *empowering students to understand that socially constructed ideologies can be changed*. Anderson, however, emphasizes that multicultural education, as it is currently understood and practiced, ---by offering token information about various minority groups,--is not the answer to this problem. “The challenge is to weave the evolution of race as an American ideology into a new synthesis, one that depicts issues of race alongside other issues that were central to the origin and development of our country” (p. 102). The issues of race originate in this historical context.

Textbooks and Curricular Activities for Teaching History to the Privileged

Textbooks which address history as more than facts are essential to any development of a perspective of compassion for the marginalized in our society on the part of the privileged. Currently this position on teaching United States history on the part of those with the authority to make policy holds little favor. Jensen (2006a) recently reported in “Fear of history: Florida’s new law undermines critical thinking,” that new standards for teaching history insist that it be taught as a collection of facts and no interpretation will be tolerated. Progress in policy is difficult to find.

Still, there are plenty of sources to find which do give a full and authentic view of American history. As referred to earlier, the work of Howard Zinn and James Loewen stand out. s elicited feelings of outrage in his readers, often a precursor to compassion.

It is difficult to develop compassion in the teaching of American history if the focus leaves out a thorough acknowledgment of what history has to tell us about ourselves. In teaching history to privileged students this is essential, for it reinforces whatever inclinations they may

have toward advocating for equity and social justice. Yet, while American history textbooks for high-school age children which focus on social justice exist, there does not exist at this point textbooks which focus on history taught to evoke compassion. However, many texts exist which indirectly encourage compassion.

As mentioned earlier, *Facing History and Ourselves* (www.facinghistory.org), founded in 1976, emphasizes history taught which includes ethical and moral philosophy. The goal is to promote a progressive critical examination of teaching history which has as its premise the teaching of civic responsibility, issues of racism, tolerance and social action. *Teaching for Social Justice* (1998), edited by William Ayers, Jean Ann Hunt, and Therese Quinn is an excellent source for teachers, with articles on such issues as “Preparing Youth for Participatory Democracy,” “Writing the Word and the World,” “Awakening Justice,” and “Community Building,” among many others. This collection also includes lesson plans for teachers with the goal of raising the social and emotional consciousness of students.

William Bigelow and Norman Diamond (1988) have written a curriculum for teaching the history of work and workers in the United States called *The Power in Our Hands*. It includes a lesson on “Who Makes History?” which has as its goals to (a) help students to better understand the choices that historians make in writing history, and (b) developing an appreciation for the role of ordinary people behind great historical events.

Putting the Movement Back Into Civil Rights Teaching: A Resource Guide for Classrooms and Communities (2004) is a publication of Teaching for Change and the Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) with contributions by Rethinking Schools. This volume of 562 pages includes, among others, articles by Herbert Kohl (“The Politics of Children’s Literature: What’s Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth”), Ida B. Wells-Barnett (“Lynch

Law in America”), James Loewen (“Patriotism over Democracy: A Critical Analysis of U.S. History Textbooks”), and “A Message for Humanity” by Leonard Peltier. Categories of articles include Reflections on Teaching about the Movement, Citizenship and Self-Determination, Education, Economic Justice, and Culture. It is a jewel for anyone teaching or learning about the Civil Rights Movement and beyond.

And of course *Rethinking Schools* has consistently published articles to aid teachers in teaching critical thinking in their classrooms. *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Social Justice* (2007) which, besides containing articles on diverse subjects surrounding equity and social justice, includes an entire section on resources for teachers on poetry teaching, video teaching strategies and curricula and teaching resources. It includes an article by Howard Zinn on “History Book Resources” and an article by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson on “Students as Textbook Detectives: An Exercise in Uncovering Bias.” It is written in a format and at a level which is much more likely to engage students than standard history books with no photos, drawings, comics, and a presentation of history that is with a creatively diverse set of topics.

Another publication by *Rethinking Schools* that is relevant to this study is Linda Christensen’s book on *Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word.* It is a book which speaks directly to teachers of high school students about social issues yet in a way that draws the reader to the subject matter. As far as its focus on American history, it has an entire section on “Unlearning the Myths that Bind Us,” “Building Community Out of Chaos,” “Immigration,” and “Untracking English.”

However, none of these texts deal directly with the issue of compassion. However, it is commonly known that compassion often starts with outrage. These books all tell a story that our

high school students of privilege need to hear. While they were written without this particular group in mind, they will surely educate them in a way that engages them in the enjoyment of learning their own history, the history of their legacy as elite members of our society, and the legacy of subordination for others.

While there has been a plethora of writings about social justice and education, compassion and education have a smaller place in the literature. Most of the writings on compassion and education, however, do speak of compassion as a path to social justice. One must begin with the work of Paulo Freire, beginning with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Across his writing he expresses a passion for uplifting those who suffer the humiliation of oppression, and he looks at their world with a sense of profound humility, compassion, and hope. He was passionate about a hope that would bring “an understanding of history as opportunity and not determinism” (1991, p. 91). His interpretation of literacy as critical literacy and democracy as participatory democracy in the area of education were rooted in a strong sense of compassion for the Brazilian peasants for whom he was both an educator and an activist. Much of the writings on compassion and social justice in education are derived directly from Freire’s moral imagination and transformative practices.

One example is Roger Simon’s *Teaching Against the Grain* (1992), where the effort was made to “develop research and teaching rooted in specific commitments to enhancing the degree of justice and compassion present in the community” (p. xv). This included what he called the “social imaginary,” that is, how cultural production is constituted by what people define as both possible and desirable.

Nel Noddings (*Caring*, 1984) provides a systematic theory of what genuine caring requires. In this way, she contributes to views of ethical and moral education. Understanding

the position of the other is essential to caring for Noddings. In this way, although she does not use such terms as “compassion,” Noddings provides a way of experiencing student-teacher relationships which goes beyond the authoritarian model.

In *Retrieving the Language of Compassion: The Education Professor in Search of Community* (1991), Maxine Greene discusses the importance of school-community relationships and the role of schools and education professors in working to better society and end racism, sexism, and poverty. She stresses the need to change the practice of ignoring social problems by searching for a language of compassion and communication.

Many others have contributed to discussions of education and compassion. Jonathon Kozol (1991), bell hooks (1994, 2003), Robert Coles (1998), Palmer Parker (1993, 1998), Thomas Popkewitz (1998) and Cornel West (1997) and Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano, and Rodolfo. D. Torres (2003) would be to name those among them. With different emphases, these writers have all pointed to the lack of feeling in our society for those who live in the third world of the United States. They have all been determined to use their writings to disrupt the status quo of the denial of rights and any sense of privilege to those outside the dominant class.

Social Justice and Compassion in High School U.S. History Textbooks

More recent books (for example, Barton and Levstik (2004), Evans (2004), and Social Science Education Consortium (1996) have emphasized that the cultural conflicts of the “history wars” are essentially over. They focus on teaching history in terms of narrative, justice, historical empathy, and learning from the past, as well as rethinking teacher education in terms of the purposes of history. Other works, such as *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History* (2000) address the problem of belief and knowledge in history teaching; the redesign of history teaching

methods; the development in historical understanding among different age groups in schools; conceptions of historical significance on the part of teachers and students; and how Americans think about and use the past—to mention just a few concerns.

The issue of the hidden curriculum as discussed in a general sense above has obvious implications for the pedagogy and teaching of history. The messages embedded within the curricula determine “what students can and cannot experience, ways in which they can and cannot act, for in the words of Aristotle: ‘It makes no small difference whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference’” (quoted in Seaton 2002, p. 2). In order for history to be purposeful and empowering, students must have a desire to learn, and must be offered meaning in what they are taught, the result of which is their capacity to view the world critically and act independently, cooperatively, and “responsibly” in the best sense of that word. The discouragement of such engagement with learning history, usually inherent in the curriculum, results in youth “switching off.” As Foucault (2003) explained, “the problem is not one of changing people’s ‘consciousness’ or what’s in their heads; but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth” (p. 4).

The writing, teaching, and learning of history in a way that provides students a chance to understand how power operates would allow them to “use a historical account to ask serious questions about today’s policies” (Apple, 2001, p. 4). The manner in which history is currently taught not only ignores the reality of domination, but discourages students from seeing how this reality operates in the present. This “loss of collective memory...serves to empower some groups and disempower others,” given that students from less privileged backgrounds have a more pressing need to take historical and current events seriously and “deconstruct” them, something that is rarely taught and experienced in the classroom (4). Teaching history requires an

awareness of the consequences of historical events as well as the consequences of the method of teaching: As concluded by Neil Postman, “The purpose of narrative is to give meaning to the world, not to describe it scientifically. The measure of a narrative’s ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ is in its consequences: whether it provides people with a sense of personal identity, a sense of community life, and a basis for moral conduct” (1995, p. 7). Thus it is on the basis of both political critique and humanistic insight that a historical curriculum of integrity can be constructed.

In recent years, there has arisen a literature of social justice in the context of the development of progressive education. This has included several approaches, including those focused on the teaching of American history. In this section of my study I will examine this literature, including approaches of historians of education, humanistic approaches, and critical education theories. I will examine the absence or presence of social justice and a focus on empathy and compassion issues in history textbooks of this genre and the extent to which they do or do not deal with such issues. Many of these texts are an effort toward a pedagogy of American history which deals with the complexity of historical events and personalities and speak of what they call “democratic humanism.” Those that do so encourage critical thinking. There are those who write to describe what needs to be changed and included in teaching American history, such as Jean Anyon, and those such as Howard Zinn who write texts and actually teach young people American history with a passion for the truth. Zinn represents one of those who teaches for empathy, and this comes partly from his own experience growing up in poverty. One question that needs be answered is how do we teach this kind of empathy to teachers who have not lived an experience of marginalization or lack?

W.E.B. DuBois (1935) was one of the first to address the issue of social justice in teaching history, and offered what can still serve as a concise and provocative introduction to the topic. He spoke directly to the problem of teaching their own history to African-American students. In his words, “The results of this kind of thing are often fantastic, and call for Negro history and sociology, and even physical science taught by men who understand their audience and are not afraid of the truth” (p. 332).

In response to the need to address social justice in the teaching of history, extensive educational literature has been generated since the early 1960s, and this literature has moved us beyond discussions of individual merit and achievement in schooling to more fundamental issues of domination, structural inequality, personal agency, and the struggle for social justice in both school and society. This discourse has at its heart the assumption that knowledge in schools is generated in a context of domination, can be contested in a context of resistance and struggle, and can only be reduced to literal and quantified learning outcomes at the expense of both human potential and social justice.

Critical pedagogy has made a significant contribution through its numerous theorists. The contribution of Paulo Freire to critical pedagogy was of course seminal, and has informed the work of many of those studying the problem of social justice in schooling in general and in teaching in particular. In this spirit, William Ayers, Jean Ann Hunt, and Therese Quinn (1998) edited the volume *Teaching for Social Justice* in an effort to better examine this question. *Teaching for Change*, a non-profit organization that promotes social justice in education, has also produced much literature to aid teachers in developing a curriculum of social justice in their classrooms. The more recent *Teaching/Learning Social Justice* series, edited by Lee Anne Bell of Barnard College, also has made an important contribution to the field. The quarterly journal

Rethinking Schools has been an invaluable practical resource for teachers, with a high quality critique and analysis, combined with both accessibility and affordability. The publishers of this journal have also produced many books on social justice in education, including *Open Minds to Equality* (1998).

Critical and activist scholars like Jean Anyon (2005), Gloria-Ladson-Billings (1994), Ladson-Billings and William Tate (2006), Jeannie Oakes (2005), Pauline Lipman (2004), Michael Apple (1986), bell hooks (1994, 2003), Henry Giroux (1981), James Anderson (1986), Antonia Darder (2002) and many others have based their work on the assumption that in a capitalist society, schools are sites for the social reproduction of inequality and a context for social justice struggle. The issue of culturally relevant teaching, addressed by Ladson-Billings (1994) and Jean Madsen & Reitumetse Mabokela (2005), has been central to the evolution of pedagogical practice in teaching for social justice. In addition, such classical critical theorists as Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, members of the Frankfurt School, and others have contributed to critically framing discussions of inequality and justice in terms of domination, the dynamics of power and resistance, and the impact of capitalism and class struggle.

What is meant by “social justice,” by the struggle for social justice, and by teaching for social justice? In *Radical Possibilities*, Jean Anyon (2006) claims that it is essential that we understand that the economic crisis in our society is also a political crisis. The problem is not only in “the economy,” but in a lack of political will to change the structural inequities in the economic system.

In *The Curriculum of Critical Multiculturalism: Historicizing, Analyzing, and Affirming* (2001), Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg explore the realities of domination and subordination and the manner in which “surface harmony heralded by the media, the government

and education is merely an image in the minds of those individuals who are shielded by privilege from the injustice experienced by dominated peoples” (p. 230). Ethnic and racial history topics other than those of the dominant group are considered trivial, not “official history” (p. 231). Since their history is considered to contribute nothing to the career market, the fact that the “conquered and oppressed are not remembered is justified—their memory is not marketable in industrial capitalism” (p. 231). School history is Eurocentric, and even when non-European history is taught it is deemed superficial, decontextualized, and devoid of conflict. This approach to teaching history means that students gain no critical vision of the people of non-European cultures and their problems. “Basic knowledge,” in order to be part of a progressive approach to teaching history, must begin to include not only the histories of subjugated groups, but new ways of seeing the history of the dominant culture and its approach to education.

Students have been taught history that disguises the realities of domination and encourages the subordinated to admire the system that oppresses them. Instead, as bell hooks (1994) has argued, history and history textbooks must include a history of racial imperialism, as well as the history and evolution of institutionalized racism. Children of European immigrants should no longer be told that they have succeeded on the same level playing field where blacks have failed. Kincheloe and Steinberg refer to Anderson’s (1986) work, in which he forthrightly indicts the teaching of a history that promotes “theories of black social pathology and blame the black victim of racism,” keeping students unaware of how Blacks in the U.S. did not have and could not gain the same educational and employment opportunities in the North as did immigrants from European origins.

The reality of institutional racism includes its power to claim racial neutrality even in light of policies that have a discriminatory impact. “The ultimate power of history is in its truth

telling” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2001, p. 236). For teachers of U.S. history, this tension between the “strategic struggle between the subjugated and the dominant knowledges” (p. 237) can be addressed by promoting students’ awareness of how silences and omissions regarding subjugated groups pervade history textbooks and the broader curriculum, not to mention the larger culture and society. Kincheloe and Steinberg encourage teachers to “incorporate subjugated knowledge by forging links with those marginalized communities—not just the dominant culture’s definition of the ‘successful’ elements of those communities, but a variety of groups and subgroups within them” (p. 237), questioning how their knowledge relates to official history and dominant knowledge.

Kincheloe and Steinberg (2001) further stress the importance of teachers and students rewriting history, including “counter-memories” and the expression of repressed memories, the memory of repression, and how such repression has influenced the lives of subjugated groups in the present. This is a shift from the “official,” “disinterested” history taught in schools today--- a history created by dominant groups who benefit from it, while denying that it is a version of history that is in their interest to maintain. This amnesia and social ignorance results in abuses of history (p. 240), and confuses “what is” with “what had to be” (p. 240).

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (2001), *political struggles must focus around public memory*. That means reconnecting public memory with history, and teaching history that promotes awareness among both students and teachers of how the limits placed on what is considered valid history have led to a distortion of our public memory. Why is there this need to forget? How does it function and who does it benefit? The teaching of history must continually address these questions. Kincheloe reminds us, however, that “insight into oppressed history

alone does not provide a pedagogy sufficient for the emancipatory task” (p. 243). *The project then becomes what to make of and do with what has been revealed.*

Critical teachers of history work to “help students gain self-knowledge through the awareness of the social etymology of their mutual emotions and traumas (Kincheloe & Steinberg 2001, p. 244),” while examining how individuals and groups receive knowledge, “by engaging group members in a process of rewriting knowledge” (p. 244). Teachers and students must understand at a profound level the “epistemological colonialism” (p. 245) inherent in the teaching of U.S. history, anchored in a Eurocentric paradigm that separates “spirit and emotion from reason and intellect, [and] in the process promotes the superiority of reason and intellect...positing its epistemological assumptions (as) universal, neutral and objective” (p. 244). Within this context, such knowledge “covertly reifies the status quo” and fashions itself as the “purveyor of truth” (p. 245). This epistemological colonialism has allowed the European “one truth research paradigm” to rationalize crimes against non-white humanity (p. 245).

With all this in mind, teachers of history need to begin to understand the world from the points of view of the marginalized. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2001) conclude that this shift away from the center, the dominant point of view, is needed not only for marginalized students, but also for “students from the dominant culture whose anger toward the marginalized grows daily” (Kincheloe & Steinberg 2001, p. 245). The goal is neither to demonize nor exclude the “official” knowledge of the dominant group, but to critique it and shift analysis away from its limited vision, in an effort to “treasure subjugated ways of knowing” (p. 245). This perspective constitutes Kincheloe’s and Steinberg’s beginning framework for social justice within a progressive approach to teaching history

Books by Douglas Selwyn and Jan Maher (2003) and Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004) for the secondary level take more specific and elaborate approaches to classroom pedagogy and historiography in their views on teaching history. Social justice becomes more of a possible outcome, rather than a primary purpose of a reformed pedagogy. The goal of teaching for social justice is not specifically invoked, but implied in what Barton and Levstik call “democratic humanism,” which is not only a social philosophy but a framework for classroom practices that treat students as if they themselves are historians. Selwyn and Maher’s (2003) *History in the Present Tense* stresses that it is “urgently important that we learn to find both ourselves at the center and to be able to understand the point of view of others at their *own* centers” (p. 6). Theirs is a student-centered approach: “Each unit begins in the here and now, using students’ present concerns and circumstances as a springboard for exploring curricula” (p. 7).

For Selwyn and Maher (2003), students become “history makers” not just in the sense of documenting the past, but of participating in the present in a way that enables them to document it for the future. In this spirit, the tumultuous events surrounding the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 *were seized as an opportunity to enact these dual roles as history makers*: “The first is participation in events themselves. The second is the recording and interpretation of those events for audiences, both contemporaries and posterity” (p. 158). The result was a play that was written and performed, based on interviews with participants and others, that addressed fundamental issues relating to social justice: corporate globalization, unions, poverty, sweatshops, child labor, police tactics, and civil disobedience, to name just a few. The theme of “social justice” is implied and developed in the context of a student-centered

pedagogy and an educational philosophy that incorporates critical inquiry and democratic humanism.

Barton and Levstik's (2004) *Teaching History for the Common Good* similarly bases its pedagogy and historiography explicitly on democratic humanism and participatory democracy, but—in contrast to a “student-centered” approach—offers a more elaborate analysis of our perceptions of the past and a more explicit articulation of historical empathy and caring. The contrast can be seen clearly in the titles of the two books. Historiography is rooted in what Barton and Levstik describe as a “sociocultural perspective” on student learning that “focuses less on individual cognition than on social practice—what people do in concrete settings rather than the conceptual or procedural knowledge assumed to exist in their heads” (p. 7). Students “do history” on the basis of four particular types of actions: they identify, analyze, respond morally, and display. These four “stances” are broken down into distinct and presentistic purposes, such as “creating a sense of individual or familial roots” or “becoming a part of an ‘imagined community’” (p. 8), which are achieved by the use of various cultural “tools.”

From Barton and Levstik's (2004) perspective social justice pedagogy is tied to the “moral response stance”, which revolves “around notions of right and wrong, what should and should not happen” (p. 91). The three purposes of the moral response stance are remembrance, condemnation, and admiration. Condemnation in particular brings to the fore issues of fairness and justice: “We become outraged when we learn about people who were robbed of their life and liberty, who suffered brutality or oppression, and who were denied rights to which we believe they were entitled” (p. 97). This more elaborate social-psychological analysis ultimately lends itself to an explicit articulation of historical empathy as perspective recognition, and empathy as caring. They further argue:

We cannot interest students in the study of history—something they enjoy outside school but often despise within it—if we reject their cares and concerns or if we dismiss their feelings and emotions. Moreover, without care, we could not possibly engage them in humanistic study: Students will not bother to make reasoned judgments, expanding their views of humanity, or deliberating over the common good if they don't care about those things. . . . We care a lot more about the victims of the Trail of Tears than about Andrew Jackson's thought processes (p. 229).

In *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (2001), Sam Wineburg similarly refers to “the role of history as a tool for changing how we think, for promoting a literacy not of names and dates but of discernment, judgment, and caution” (p. ix). Wineburg contrasts this suspicious and skeptical approach to that of right-wing broadcaster Rush Limbaugh, who claims: “History is real simple. You know what the story is? It's what happened.” (p. ix). In contrast, Wineburg invokes the reputable Harvard religious historian Jacob Neusner's fundamental question regarding history texts: “What is the text *doing*? *Doing*, not saying. What is the text *doing*?” (p. x). In order to be able to understand how to successfully encourage his students to read critically, Wineburg explores “how historical cognition unfolds” for everyone from novices to experienced historians.

Wineburg, Selwyn and Maher, and Barton and Levstik attempt in various ways to unpack the act of “doing history” in classrooms in terms of cognitive, sociocultural, textual, and cooperative processes. This line of thinking perhaps contradicts Howard Zinn, who might claim that these processes cannot be taught, but are primarily “learned by doing” in an academic environment characterized by openness, compassion, and general critical thinking skills, and *in a social environment characterized by vibrant movements for social justice*. Jean Anyon, on the other hand, might take issue with a lack of emphasis on the primary influence of social class on the production of knowledge.

Nevertheless, it's important to remember that even young children will arrive in a school classroom with plenty of ideas in their heads about history that are related, for example, to what James Anderson calls "loose thinking about race" (Kramer et al., 1994, p. 100). It may take not only the presentation of alternative narratives, but grappling with students' thought processes. Thus Wineburg quotes Robert Scholes: "If wisdom, or some less grandiose notion such as heightened awareness, is to be the end of our endeavors, we shall have to see it not as something transmitted from the text to the student but as something developed in the student by questioning the text" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 84). Zinn's path-breaking work has taken us beyond a simplistic notion of historical objectivity to one of truth telling, allowing for empathy and compassion to be projected into the past and brought into the present. The task of teaching history for social justice, however, arguably requires the sort of pedagogical sophistication that is developed in the works referred to above.

In his review of the anthology *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, which includes contributions from both Wineburg and Levstik, Stephen J. Thornton (2002) questions what the "cognitive revolution" and the "historiographic revolution" actually mean for the teaching of history. Thornton stresses that it should not be assumed that the goal of history teaching at the secondary level should be to "breach the gap" between how historians and schoolchildren think about history. He instead refers to those contributors who stress the personal growth of students, student interest, and *civic participation* (such as Levstik). These factors, Thornton asserts, attest to "important and legitimate differences between 'scholars' history' and school history'" (p. 31).

While praising those who recognize the importance of these differences, Thornton also concludes that as a whole, the anthology focuses too narrowly on pedagogical reforms that will

lead students to emulate academic historians. In this light, it can be suggested that instead of viewing secondary school history as a simplified imitation of academic history, it should be viewed as having an intellectual life and moral meaning of its own, which are no less serious than those of formal historical scholarship, and will indeed engender a healthy interest in scholarship by less direct methods. One might recall that Zinn's work was motivated not by a desire to do "scholars' history", but to *bring a historical component to the struggle for social justice*, as well as to a lay audience both bored by textbook history and intimidated by academic history. What is both radical and constructive about the best examples of Zinn's alternative reading of history is *not only the content, but the political motivation*. With this in mind, concerns for social justice can—without apologies related to scholarship—become central to secondary history teaching. Again, the distinction between academic "objectivity" and political truth-telling can broaden the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the relationship between past and present, nurturing "natural" historical interests that have customarily been undermined by a one-dimensional or nationalist history, misleadingly presented as "truth."

For Paulo Freire, we make history and history makes us. It is always connected to power relationships and the production of knowledge. Certain histories are privileged, given status as knowledge, while others are silenced and pushed out of sight. People whose history has been neglected and ignored by the society in which they live experience a certain disempowerment, often a lack of knowledge about themselves. Once "the people begin to get their history into their hands, then the role of education changes" (Horton and Freire 1990, p. 218). The official education, one which promotes the dominant ideology, is questioned when the people develop a critical understanding of their own lives and their positionality, as well as the history of that positionality in their society.

When teachers as critical educators understand that “official recorded accounts of history are partial and limited and, thus that much of human history actually lies exiled in the undocumented annals of time” (Darder, 2002, p. 63), they can open up the world of marginalized knowledge and history to their students. Students then become subjects of history—of their own history—and historical processes can be recognized for what they are. *At this point history can be used to create change.* Once students begin to understand that there is no one “truth” but that they have the power to construct knowledge, thus giving meaning to their lives, they can begin to interact with the world as agents. Teachers and students can begin to connect this knowledge production to the larger context of the struggle for social justice. And students begin to connect events of the past with events in the present.

Understanding the historical context of each moment of the struggle for social justice is another important aspect of Freire’s conceptualization of the role of history. As Darder (2002) argues in *Reinventing Paulo Freire*, teachers need to take a dialectical view of knowledge, history, and the world. It is our capacity to observe and interpret the power relationships at work at any given moment within a school or district that provides us with the necessary information *to move fluidly and contextually* (p. 65).

A critical knowledge of these power relationships will help teachers to reflect critically on their teaching, to be aware of when they are privileging certain knowledge, certain history(s) as “legitimate” in their classrooms, and thus *facilitate a revolutionary practice that promotes social justice in the world.* This entails an understanding of hegemony, because without such an awareness teachers can be unwittingly complicit in supporting and sustaining “structures and relationships of economic inequality...acting as agents of the state in carrying out the hegemonic political project of capitalism” (Darder 2002, p. 70). Hegemony has as one of its “inherent

hidden functions” (p. 71) the appropriation of liberatory knowledge, stripping it of its “transformative potential” (p. 71). For example, teachers will then question the mainstream curriculum concerning the genocide of Native Americans and their position in our society today, as well as the diffused knowledge of Martin Luther King. These are products of the political economy of capitalism and its impact on the public school system insofar as they determine our understanding of history and the production of knowledge. Teachers of history can recognize their privilege and in doing so “support new readings of history and participate in unveiling the hidden faces of inequality within public schools” (p. 72).

Freire (1998) repeatedly insisted in his work on the impossibility for education to be neutral vis-à-vis the dominant ideology. In *Pedagogy of Freedom*, he asserts that education is neither simply a vehicle for the transmission of the dominant ideology nor a vehicle for the unmasking of this ideology, because when seen as such, the complexity and struggle inherent are ignored. *If we are going to intervene in our world*, we have to rid ourselves of both our defective vision of history and our defective vision of consciousness. First, “we have a mechanistic comprehension of history that reduces consciousness to a simple reflex of matter, and on the other, we have a subjective idealism that tries to make the role of consciousness fit into the facts of history” (p. 91). The facts and events of history are not solely what make us who we are; who we are is largely determined by the historical forces and conditions that shape our lives (e.g., “genetic, cultural, social, class, sexual, and historical”). The dominant classes have every reason to deny the truth of history, and by doing so, keep the oppressed classes from recognizing their position in society and *eventually challenging* those conditions and forces of inequality that keep them where they are. If we were to spark the curiosity of the marginalized by creating the conditions in which they can learn the truth of their history, this would also mean creating a

context of their self-determination and empowerment. This requires what Freire (1998) called “conscientization,” his “perennial phrase for critical self-consciousness,” (p. 18) requiring the teacher to use “exposition and exploration as elements of the dialogue ... as well as a loving environment for student self-expression” (p. 18).

This empowerment occurs, in part, by the elimination of the hierarchy between teachers and students; the latter become, via dialogical relations, jointly responsible for creating knowledge. This is what Freire (1970) refers to as “problem-posing education” (p. 66), with teachers and students jointly developing the power to perceive their existence in the world critically, creating a “humanist and liberating praxis” (p. 74), within which it becomes “fundamental that men who are subjected to domination *must fight for their emancipation*” (my emphasis) (p. 74). This involves a perception of literacy whereby language becomes a vehicle for the oppressed to dismantle the dominant, colonial voice. History must be problematized, not seen as a collection of inevitable facts leading to a fatalistic vision of the future. The struggle for utopia, for the right to dream about this utopia, must become integral to educational practice if it is to be “an experience in humanization” (Freire 1998, p. 103). The open-minded, progressive teacher must cultivate a knowledge “that concerns the specifically human nature of the art of teaching” (p.127) and promotes the humanity of the classroom. This means in part that the teacher be acutely aware that she/he is “dealing with people and not with things,” offering “wholehearted and loving attention, even in personal matters, where I see that a student is in need of such attention” (p. 128). Freire sees it as essential that the teacher not ignore the suffering of students, that the humanity of the teacher and the capacity of the teacher for empathy and solidarity is in itself therapeutic.

The anthology, *Education as Politics: Critical Teaching Across Differences, K-12* (Shor & Pari 1999), was published as a tribute to the contributions of Paulo Freire. It addresses the issue of teaching history in a context of social justice. In particular, it contains several chapters devoted to teaching particular aspects of history, such as the problematic issues of teaching Columbus, Thanksgiving and the history of Native Americans, *The Oregon Trail*, and a chapter describing Linda Christensen's approach to teaching history through her "Literature in History" curriculum.

As Bob Peterson writes in the foreword, teaching history in the context of social justice means teaching a history that includes everyone, and subverts the perspectives of the dominating class. This is done by teaching students to critique textbooks and allowing them to research what has been excluded, especially the points of view of those who have been historically silenced. Dialogue is emphasized in the classroom, and *struggle and conflict* in history are a part of the history curriculum. Peterson stresses, "Official textbook history is not about social movements. But when a common history of struggle is denied, the past is rewritten in ways that make it easier for those in power to manipulate truth" (Shor & Pari, 1999, p. xiv). This is done by keeping certain historical accounts out of textbooks, and therefore out of the reach of teachers and students. This is in stark contrast to how Paulo Freire saw the teaching of history in light of the *positive role of struggle*. Freire considered conflict to be the "midwife of real consciousness" (p. xiv), and as such, considered it to be an important focus of teaching and learning.

Teaching history from a social justice perspective promotes classrooms that emphasize multicultural and anti-racist curriculum. It is a pedagogy that encompasses those who have struggled for social justice in the past and in doing so, students learn how to take initiatives

themselves in the present, thus learning how to “make history.” This, says Peterson, is “one of the most important outcomes of education for democracy” (Shor & Pari, 1999, p. xv).

Specifically, this involves such issues as corporate welfare, the tax system, and a tattered social safety net—all of these and many more structural realities which are consistent with education policies that reflect the advantages of the privileged and the relative powerlessness of the poor and disenfranchised.

Anyon (2006) stresses that in order for people to be drawn into contentious politics, their sense of personal agency must be heightened. It becomes a question of whether individuals interpret changes in the political economy as opportunities where “the role of human agency is paramount, and explanations focus on the question of *what social and cognitive processes involve people in protest*” (130). Anyon argues that an understanding of social movement theory and the history of political movements provides us with possibilities for change. “History reminds us, however, that rarely does the status quo seem to invite rebellion. It takes the active appropriation of whatever conditions exist to begin transforming the present” (p. 149). Teaching history so as to educate a populace that responds to these realities and possibilities with compassion, recognizing the significance of personal agency and seeking social empowerment *to enact change*, are all integral dimensions of teaching for social justice.

Teacher Consciousness as a Prerequisite for Teaching Compassion and Social Justice

How can teaching history make schools more democratic? But first, is it possible to make them democratic? Giroux (1988) argues that it is, but that to do so we must develop a language of possibility and critical pedagogy, always struggling for freedom and social justice. As educators and policy makers we must have a vision of such possibility, so that we can

communicate that to students. Teachers must resist the status of “high level technicians” (p. 121). The message customarily sent to teachers is that they “do not count when it comes to critically examining the nature and process of educational reform” (121). Giroux’s hope is *for teachers to engage in self-critique* which would help to break through dominant social patterns that have kept teachers and students from raising serious questions about what is taught, how it gets taught, and the determination of larger goals. Seeing teaching as a *project, a mission, a vision* would help students to “develop a deep and abiding faith in the struggle to overcome economic, political, and social injustices and to further humanize themselves (teachers and students) as part of this struggle” (pp. 126-127). This attitude “locks” teachers into their stories, eliminates the possibility for reflexivity, self-criticism, alternative interpretations, or change.

Rather than accepting teachers’ stories as “revealing” something about the “principled self” of the teacher, Covery sees them as having a “performative function”: they *construct* the teacher’s identity, with each teacher’s self-perception based on stereotypes of other teachers’ identities which were themselves *created*. These stereotypes, based on the idea that “good” teachers are always committed, self-sacrificing, dedicated to students, become an image that cannot be resisted lest it reveal a sign of inadequacy and incompetence. This inevitably leads teachers to become alienated, and contributes to a collective repression. Teachers, as well as students, become “victims of their own narratives” (Covery 1999, p. 145). The focus of teachers is kept on presenting *themselves* as sufficiently moral, rather than on the difficult work of raising consciousness.

This unpacking of teachers’ stories is a significant dimension of “recognition,” and is also related to Freire’s concept of “conscientization” (“critical self-consciousness”) (1998, p. 18) because it is precisely this capacity of self-awareness that is needed to promote genuine

recognition among their students. To see one's history—that is, the history of conflict—requires that we abandon our illusions, our “stock stories,” which obscure the truth of ourselves and our history. In this regard, Covery quotes Norman Denzin: “If we foster the illusion that we understand when we do not, or that we have found meaningful coherent lives where none exist, then we engage in a cultural practice that is just as repressive as the most repressive of political regimes” (Covey 1999, p. 145).

If we can help teachers to understand how identity claims come about through narrative strategies, this would promote a shift toward deconstructing these “stock stories,” and would allow the students to “critically explore the students' experience of the teachers' moral intentions” (Covey 1999, p. 145). This may lead to making narrative inquiry a means of improving educational experience, rather than an end in itself.

Covey also looks at the nature of teachers' narratives, their biographical accounts, as a kind of collusion between narrator (teacher) and audience (researcher) who agree to the “nobility of the storyteller” (Covey 1999, p. 141). The consistency of the need to emphasize these noble identities suggests to Covery that the narratives conceal a sense of inadequacy. Teachers' selves are built upon standards made from stereotypes that are themselves reconstructed identities. Ultimately, these heroic identities prevent teachers from being able *to confront their real insecurities*, for fear of being discredited themselves. This dynamic in the construction of identities and the resulting incapacity to confront oneself is one necessary element to grasp in terms of “recognition.” This is an example of “fooling ourselves” rather than “facing ourselves,” of clinging to our self-conception, *thinking all the while that we are being “of service” to others, when we are actually contributing to our own and others' oppression.* An alternative to these

“heroic identities would be more of an “ironic identity””: seeing humility and compassion and honesty as noble. It has its parallel in the progressive teaching of history for social justice.

This connects, once again, to the question of “recognition” and “conscientization”: the confrontation with “bad coherence” and false knowledge that reproduce the status quo. In the words of Mari Matsuda (1990), this constitutes the “the situated knowledge of the golden few” (p. 1764). Rather, what is needed is the unpacking of this bad coherence as we find it in our stories, in our illusions.

The power of history, tradition, and accepted ways of thinking is difficult to overcome. What we have always known as our cultural landscape, we easily assume is natural. “Power at its peak is so quiet and obvious in its place as seized truth that it becomes, simply, truth rather than power” (Matsuda, 1990, p. 1765). It is only through this confrontation with the stories we have always told ourselves and never questioned that we can begin to come to a point of recognition, of critical self-consciousness. In order to take history seriously and begin to ask how and by whom our own understandings are constructed, teachers, parents, and students must begin to recognize that we live in a classed, raced and gendered society. As Thomas Popkewitz has written:

Educational theory is a form of political affirmation. The selection and organization of pedagogical activities give emphasis to certain people, events and things. Educational theory is potent because its language has prescriptive qualities. A theory “guides” individuals to reconsider their personal world in light of more abstract concepts, generalizations and principles. These more abstract categories are not neutral; they give emphasis to certain institutional relationships as good, reasonable and legitimate. *Visions of society, interests to be favored and courses of action to be followed are sustained in history.* (cited in Giroux 1997, p. 17)

This has been an attempt to answer the original question by providing an overview of the literature that explores the question of compassion and social justice within the context of a progressive approach to teaching American history. As can be seen, there are various approaches

to teaching history for social justice, and various degrees to which the subjects of social justice and teaching history are explicitly and implicitly related. Compassion comes in various forms, it includes teachers as well as students in its development. Some focus directly on the content of the curriculum, while others stress critical pedagogy and related critical theory as they explore the structural problems of society which have prevented a progressive approach to teaching American history from being straightforwardly implemented. Ultimately, such implementation depends on teachers and students. The literature examining teachers' approaches to teaching history as well as their broader mindsets must be considered integral to a progressive and social justice-oriented approach to teaching history. This suggests one aspect of the more general problems of *recognition* and *conscientization* that must be seriously addressed. In the final analysis, however, the evidence of the success of such endeavors will only be provided if our efforts result in an ongoing legacy of struggle for future generations.

If we are to develop a discourse, as Giroux proposes, that “unites a language of critique with a language of possibility” (Giroux, 1988, p. 128) then a critical teaching of history that educates for an ability to “speak out against economic and political injustice” (p. 128) would offer students the knowledge, courage, and guidance to struggle against despair by helping them see how we have arrived here; and that we have developed the mentality which can move from indifference (which results from history being taught as a series of facts) and despair, toward both hope and the capacity to see history's potential for fundamental change. Freire stressed, “As historical beings, our actions are not merely historical, but also are *historically conditioned* (my emphasis) (Freire, 1995, p. 222). Furthermore, in seeing themselves as subjects of history, students can “experience the freedom to break through the imposed myths and illusions that stifle

their empowerment . . . (and have the) *space to take individual and collective actions that can empower and transform their lives*” (Darder 2002, p. 111).

Furthermore, teachers of a progressive approach to teaching history who desire to teach for compassion and social justice must also confront what Andy Covery (1999) refers to as their own *stock stories*. He speaks of a “self-assuring autobiographical style in which we incorporate ourselves into unambiguous narratives . . . (always assuming) that because we are guided by high moral values our practices must inevitably operate in the best interest of the students” (p. 140).

Teaching Empathy and Compassion Through History

In “Teaching Empathy in the History Classroom” (2004) Deborah Cunningham emphasizes how “historical empathy” was considered part of leftist political agenda in the 1980’s and 90’s. History is partly an “attempt to understand how people thought and felt in the past” (p. 24). The relevant question for students to ask themselves is not “How would you feel?” but “your feeling of this, your understanding of this, is going to be so different to how it was” (p. 27). Imagination is important, but only when grounded in firm knowledge of the historical evidence. Getting students to simply identify with historical figures may be inappropriate, given their own emotional development and issues in life. Empathy should be distinguished from moral judgment, although it is legitimate for the teacher to be clear about distinguishing certain actions as “wrong.”

Cunningham writes that “...our role as a teacher is not just to teach them history but to turn them into responsible and caring individuals as well” (2004, p. 29). Future scholars must keep in mind that there exists no simple approach to examining the complexity of teachers’ thinking and principles, as well as all the forces at play in classroom conditions.

But empathy and compassion are difficult concepts to grapple with. In “Empathy and Consciousness,” Evan Thompson (1999) refers to empathy as “a unique and irreducible kind of intentional experience...we experience another person as a unified whole through empathy” (p. 16). Thompson distinguishes between “intersubjectivity” and what the Vietnamese Buddhist Thich Naht Hanh (1987) refers to as “interbeing.” Interbeing is a mode of non-egocentric/self-transcendent consciousness, modes and pathways of consciousness that are indeed beginning to be recognized by cognitive science. Thompson continues, “Compassion is the heart of interbeing, and is the superlative expression of the human capacity for empathy” (1999, p. 27). In Mahayana Buddhism, the cultivation of the “awakened mind” has as its main attributes wisdom and compassion, which require such contemplative practices as “meditation on the equality of self and other,” where “one aims to transcend the egocentric opposition of self and other through considering the sufferings of other’s as one’s own” (p. 27). Secondly, there is the “meditation on the exchange of self and other,” where “one puts oneself in the place of others to understand how they feel, and how one appears in their eyes” (p. 27).

Following another ancient Eastern tradition is the concept of commiseration, where benevolence is “innate to the human heart-mind” (1999, p. 28). An example is when one sees a child in danger which stimulates the response to rescue the child, without which “a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man...The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity” (p. 28).

Thompson concludes his article by calling for another Enlightenment to follow the Western European discovery of reason and science, a “value-sensing” enlightenment, one where both kinds of enlightenment are respected and developed together. We need a “science of

interbeing” that integrates Western ideas with the “contemplative and meditative psychologies of the world’s wisdom traditions” (1999, p. 29).

The need for empathy in our society is nowhere more obvious than in the racialization of minority populations. Matthew Silliman (2003) addresses this problem in an article titled “Structural racism and the failure of empathetic imagination: A comment on Lawrence Blum.” Silliman’s article is a critique of what he sees as Blum’s inadequate analysis of racism as a personal and moral problem, which fails to confront racism at its root as a structural problem. He cites Charles W. Mills (1997) suggestion as to why “both structural and personal racism have proven so durable: a systematic undermining of our capacity for empathetic imagination” (2003, p. 303).

Blum is preoccupied with the idea of intention. That is, if there is no intent to discriminate (e.g., in our criminal justice system where morally unfortunate unintended consequences occur in spite of basically good moral intentions), then the fact of its power to damage lives can be somehow excused, deemed inconsequential. Silliman’s response to “What is the engine that drives structural racism so relentlessly?” is what he refers to as an intuition: “The evil of modern society isn’t that it creates racism but that it creates conditions in which people who don’t suffer from injustice seem incapable of caring very much about people who do” (2003, p. 311).

There are several reasons why our empathetic imagination fails us. Most significantly, says Silliman, is the rationalism of the Enlightenment—“social atomism, mechanized production and exploitation of resources, consumerism, the limiting of relationships to voluntary associations, and the constraining of passion to the desires of ownership, which externalizes and limits imagination to what are reductively called the ‘rational’ and the ‘objective’ (that is objects

that may be bought, owned, and consumed)” (2003, p. 311). Silliman concludes that our failure to rid ourselves of racialization is not only due to supremacist ideologies or personal vices, “but something more like a systematic failure to value and cultivate affective imagination, specifically the sort for effective empathy”. “Revolutionary” is the only word Silliman feels accurately describes a deep transformation of this failure,” (p. 312).

In their article titled “Empathy and Antiracist Feminist Coalition Politics” (<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/psundar/home>), Maggie Caygill and Pavitra Sundar begin their introduction by stating their rejection of empathy as a tool for building coalitions between white women and women of color. Empathy, they claim, results in a similar hierarchy to that which we begin our efforts for transformation. They explain that “Empathy (alone) cannot foster horizontal comradeship because it is, like sympathy, based on vertical, hierarchical power relations.” Rather than empathy there must be a “conscious disavowal of white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy.” White women subscribe to oppressive ideologies that must be critiqued in terms of how we benefit from them, and this should lead to outrage and action. But the outrage and action must come from all progressives, not only those who are advantaged because of them, for we are all at a disadvantage by ideologies such as racism, sexism, and homophobia.

Interestingly, Caygill and Sundar refer to a commentary on Arundhati Roy’s distinction between concern and empathy. For Roy, concern is “distant, disengaged.” Empathy, to the contrary, “incites one to action.” It leads to passion, to incandescent anger, to wild indignation.” But Roy’s empathy is accompanied by intellectual understanding, recognizing the kind of personal anger that those of privilege feel when recognizing the situations of the poor and displaced. As Cunningham (2004) was quoted above, in order for empathy to be effective, it needs to be accompanied by the facts. And Audre Lourde writes that anger, when loaded with

information and energy, is the appropriate response to injustice. Throughout the article, Caygill and Sundar argue that intellectual understanding accompanied by guilt—rather than the passion of anger—is counterproductive, whereas anger and outrage can be meaningful and productive responses to oppression.

Zeus Yiamouyiannis (1998), in his study of the research literature on self-esteem, describes two main competing conceptions: “dominance” or self-directed, and “empathetic” or other-directed (p. 13). Both conceptions treat the outside world as an extension of the ego in order to subsume it. Both “dominance” and “empathetic” models retain a form of domination because they fail “to make accurate distinctions between their own conceptions and those of others” (p. 11). One can think one is being “caring” when the person being cared for does not want the caring; hence caring becomes dominance.

The “dominance” conception of self-esteem is flawed by the fact that power is exercised and not just possessed. In the “empathetic” conception, there is a lack of equality similar to that which feminists find in the mother-child relationship as a basis for caring, in that it fails to “preserve the integrity of the ‘other’ as a contributor, and its unidirectional or non-reciprocal enaction (as roles are divided between one caring and ‘one cared for’”) (1998, p. 111). In the realm of education, Yiamouyiannis offers as an alternative to these two conceptions what he calls “the power of genuine relationship” (p. 64). This would involve a commitment to conversation in which both the needs of the children and the needs of the teacher are equally important. Self-esteem becomes a way of “understanding ourselves” (p. 65).

He further argues that neither the multicultural curriculum of the dominant nor that of the marginalized in public schools “seems to grapple with the importance of actively preparing students to change values, priorities, rules, and structural inequities instead of merely accepting

them” (1998, p. 54). Perhaps this is because we think children are not developed enough to deal with such issues. But, if children are not encouraged to learn “the values of tolerance, equality, considering other’s views, individual initiative and communal participation, if they are not encouraged to converse with and exercise those values from the start and from themselves (p. 54).”

How then are they to learn self-determination and agency? In addressing “moral or character” education, Yiamouyiannis (1998) argues that “getting children to direct their attention solely to others, for all the benefits of something like ‘caring,’ just happens to predispose children to embrace obedience and neglect their own autonomy” (p. 88). This creates an opportunity for adult manipulation rather than authentic virtue on the part of the child.

In contrast to this authoritative role of the adult, Freire and Shor (1987) speak of dialogue and of authentic conversation, which requires betweenness and mutual responsibility. For Freire (1970), dialogue occurs between teacher-student and student-teacher. The teacher is no longer the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with students. The students, in turn, by being taught, also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all may grow. In this process arguments based on “authority” are no longer valid. In order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it (67). The teacher has an openness and humility, reflecting the knowledge that they don’t know. The teacher is always re-learning in conversation with the students, the conversation always having the characteristic of developing critical comprehension in the selves of teachers and students.

Yiamouyiannis (1998) concludes with a critique of “self-help” literature, “blindly advising searchers to find salvation through themselves” (p. 231). Independence predominates in our society, rather than either going “outward” (as with character education) or “inward” (as with

self-esteem education). With so much research directed at self-help, the question becomes: “How can I gain the tools to live authentically for myself *and* with others?” (p. 232). The response is: by creating the tools with others in conversation. This “interpersonal self-esteem” (p. 232) is grounded in the philosophical necessity of interpersonality, for making the self apparent to itself; that is, self-understanding. This is followed up by a more concrete normative move toward “recognizing and affirming the value of distinct others in mutuality and delighting in conversational possibilities for more fully seeing and experiencing value for myself” (p. 232). This requires a decentering of the self, insofar as “authority lies between people” (Yiamouyiannis, 1998, p. 232)—a power exercised, not possessed, as Foucault would say. It involves a positive connection with the “other,” relating effectively while feeling oneself to be both powerful and valuable in that relating.

Beginning with the early 20th century, history textbooks were closely connected with politics in the United States. Early textbook writers were concerned with morals, values and character development. They were also a product of the political situation in this country, Muzzey’s books teaching intolerance for immigrants, Rugg’s teaching tolerance but later vilified as influencing our young people to be Communists. It is interesting that our history textbooks view of the affluent in our society. One thing that was striking was the differing attitudes of affluent and low-income students insofar as the marginalized in one study were shown to have a critique of their historical circumstances while the privileged for the most part did not. Another issue was how affluent students in privileged schools tended to have less regard for the less fortunate. While the affluent students in the same study who attended mixed schools were able to recognize that inequality was very prevalent in their schools.

Conclusions

This study attempts to look at the high school history textbook used, for the most part, by elite high school students in order to consider ways to address questions of social consciousness within the elite that can potentially move them toward an empathic awareness of the “the other”. It seeks to provide a history of textbooks which identifies the hidden curriculum present in the way American history is taught in terms of white privilege, social justice in the pedagogy of history, and various interpretations of compassion, which are rarely present in the texts.

The aim of this study is to problematize privilege in the context of public education, rather than the usual problematizing of those who are marginalized. In this sense the study challenges the deficit model, in an effort toward making important distinctions between successful students and privileged students. In *The Racing of Capability and Culpability in Desegregated Schools: Discourses of Merit and Responsibility* (2004), April Burns offers us one of the first analysis of whether the failure of privileged students to challenge practices that support racial or ethnic and economic stratification “constitutes a failure of virtue or is actually an indication of how well they have interpreted and taken on the performance demands imposed on them” (p. 373).

For all the writing and theorizing on critical consciousness, it is simply not expected from, nor asked of, those individuals contexts and positions of (relative) privilege. Instead, much social justice work has historically focused on “raising” disadvantaged group members consciousness, or otherwise ridding the oppressed of their “false consciousness.” Despite an explosion of research in critical White studies and antiracist scholarship, little has been written on the potential of Whites (or other dominant groups) to effectively engage in socially conscious action (Burns, 2004, p. 376).

Most critical literature tends to focus on how the elite manage to avoid any responsibility for challenging racial and economic oppression. This work is an effort to show how the privileged are capable of recognizing a moral imperative to their privileged position. As Burns

(2004) discovered in her research, privileged youth can be “anxiously aware of their privilege and actively negotiate” (p. 390) toward social equity. As for teachers, being supportive and caring toward all students, must also include teachers’ own acknowledgment of evidence and even outrage about those opportunities made available across racial and economic spaces, rather than those “academic opportunities that are consistently made differentially available by race” (p. 390).

Burns (2004) quotes two students, one a suburban honors student and the other a Latina Honors student who address the issue of merit and responsibility:

It’s like America. I like to think we are where we are because we worked hard and we worked...*that the work is relative to where you are in the social status, whatever.* But there is also this sinking feeling that you are where you come from and that no matter what the country’s standards are, you still have your background as the dominating force of who you are.

--Myra, White suburban honors student

I think a White student gets a head start whereas someone else started back there and if you run fast enough, you can catch up. If you don’t or don’t know how, you stay there, even if the white kid isn’t motivated, I still feel, that the whole school experience... It’s different. I thought maybe I’m being paranoid because I thought I’m just ultrasensitive to this but I don’t think so. So many other people notice it. Even *White* people that I know.

--Angela, Latina honors student

Compassion on the part of the privileged seems to be often connected to their exposure to those who struggle in our society for recognition. Recognition, then, of the humanity of “the other” is essential in the development of compassion. While some scholars consider compassion for those who experience discrimination based on race and ethnicity to be another form of hierarchy in our society, and that white supremacy and capitalist patriarchy are the root of the problem, my opinion is that without compassion on the part of the affluent, we cannot rid ourselves of this American “dis-ease.” From another perspective, Arundhati Roy considers that compassion can lead to passion, anger and serious indignation. Cornel West (Berkeley Lecture,

November, 2001) insists that in order to deal with all the social problems in our culture, problems ignored by the affluent, we must deal first with white supremacy. Zeus Yiamouyiannis (1998) views caring as possible dominance, especially if the one being cared for does not want the caring. Yet, people like Nel Noddings, Maxine Greene, and Paulo Freire have a different conception of compassion: It is essential between teacher and student in order for learning to take place, the kind of learning that leads to social activism. In my opinion, these issues are all interrelated, and we will not bring about change until the privileged exercise their capacity to be compassionate human beings.

It is important to emphasize that the teacher in the classroom, whatever materials are used, is the important catalyst to encouraging students, in this case privileged students, to look beyond the world they live in. As Michelle Fine says, privileged students are capable of experiencing distress when they recognize, are challenged to recognize, their status and how their position in society deprives others from experiencing their freedom, which is their birthright.

It has been shown in this study, currently used history textbooks, especially when they stand alone as material for a history course, are beyond inadequate. Everything is presented as facts, graphs, pictures, “little boxes with little information,” that do not need interpretation. Questions are asked of students in the textbook. For example, in the Chapter on the “Cotton Kingdom” (Boyer, 2003, p. 263), students are asked to define to cotton gin, antebellum, yeoman farmers, and to identify Eli Whitney, Tredegar Iron Works, and William Ellison. These questions are supplemented by other issues, like the difference between Southern planters and yeoman and poor white farmers. I cannot insist enough about how the pages of these textbooks really present an information overload for students. Furthermore, as has been already pointed

out, they are published in a style that makes learning about people other than white Europeans stand out as the “good guys” who could not help destroying other cultures. It had to be done in order to form the America that was promised to white people, or so they say. These books do nothing to discourage racialization in the United States, since in order for the states to function well for white people, minorities such as Native Americans, as well as Chicanos and African-Americans, had to be exploited and/or rejected as having no part in American “democracy.”

This perspective on white privilege is something privileged students must learn in their high school history classes, so that they go out into the world with a depth of knowledge about inequities in our society. It is something that teachers must have a thorough knowledge of so that they can pass it on to their students. It is information that history teachers **MUST** express in order for students to experience it as a truth that both formed our society and continues to do so, in a much less overt form but in a hidden covert form that is just as devastating to those who are the target of such discrimination. The qualities of schools and teachers depends on this knowledge, for without an understanding on the part of the privileged, which includes those politicians who carry out this discrimination, it cannot be a knowledge which reverses, interrupts and confronts inequality. The history of teaching United States history is a confusing and inaccurate set of circumstances. It is in going beyond these circumstances to an understanding of their purposes in any given historical period (since the 19th century) in all its genuine discrimination and support of white supremacy that the privileged in our society can recognize their responsibility, their complicitness, in maintaining their status at the expense of others.

Teachers must teach this history to privileged students so that they recognize that the history they study is about European figures and events in the early formation of this country, and that it leaves out the history of millions of people who are not white. This, I have tried to

argue, is a pathway to equality, a quality that white privileged people are capable of comprehending. They not only are capable of comprehending, but given the challenge that racialization presents to them, to process this reality and make serious efforts to unlearn.

As earlier stated in the analysis of three history textbooks, they are totally lacking in their regard to any mention of compassion as they describe at length the ugliest and most cruel actions of the American government.

Textbooks and Curricular Activities for the Privileged

Recommendations

In offering recommendations for future research and inquiry into teaching U.S. history using critical pedagogy, there are many things to consider, involving privilege, teaching history, and compassion

Teachers, teaching, and compassion. Teachers from the dominant class (90%) must submit themselves to a kind of scrutiny, a scrutiny that goes beyond the stereotypes they have of themselves, in order to experience compassion for their students. In the words of Eastern masters, teachers need to reach a mode of “interbeing.” This mode of consciousness is a non-egocentric experience of transcending the preoccupation of the self. It is what Paulo Freire means, or is at least very close to it, by conscientization. If we consider that the affluent are capable of, when, as Michelle Fine says, they are *challenged*, then we can hope that our unjust society can change with their involvement. I agree with Evan Thompson (2001) that this would involve a kind of meditation on the equality of self and other. This must be a part of teacher training/certification and annual professional (self)-development seminars. This is absolutely essential. As Silliman was quoted earlier as saying is worth repeating: “The evil of modern

society isn't that it creates racism but that it creates conditions in which people who don't suffer from injustice seem incapable of caring very much about people who do" (2003, p. 311). In the research of Fine and Burns (2004), the conclusion that they came to was that the privileged ARE capable, under conditions where they are *challenged*.

Problematizing privilege. We need to have more research that focuses on problematizing privilege. We need to help privileged students have a better understanding of why they do or do not understand the inequities of their situation. We need to understand, as April Burns says, whether they are deficient in virtue or if they are performing to the demands that have been imposed on them during their lifetime in a society which racializes and stereotypes human beings. From there, if we teach history with a compassion that is clearly communicated, we can find ways to bring them to a state of outrage and then compassion. By teaching United States history as it really happened, students will see that white men have held the power for centuries and that power has created subordination in minority groups. This they need to understand.

A language of compassion. There is need for more literature on compassion in teaching United States history. If compassion is the greatest of human virtues, as the Dalai Llama says (Lecture, 2008, Indianapolis, Indiana), then our humanity makes us capable of compassion. In teaching privileged students in high schools about compassion we need texts and civic activities that provoke this feeling and lead to a desire for social justice. While learning about social justice can evoke compassion, students need a language with which to discuss compassion, a language that becomes prevalent in society and will articulate clearly what needs to happen to make our society a true participatory democracy.

Empowering the privileged toward social justice. It is essential that privileged students be taught about how to question and challenge domination, as well as the beliefs and practices that dominate our society. Teaching critical pedagogy would empower students by developing in them a critical consciousness. This method of teaching questions all of the surface phenomena in order to come to a deeper understanding and search for root causes of domination in all its forms. It also includes relationships between teacher and student, eliminating the authoritarian model of the teacher (the one who knows) and the passive acceptance of information on the part of the student (the one who does not know). It is a process that is continually present, a process of unlearning, learning and relearning. It also teaches students to be critically literate, as Freire says, that is, to understand the world in a way that sees through the assumptions and myths. Critical pedagogy is usually used as a method of teaching the disenfranchised, giving them agency to transform their lives and the world. In this case, it would be a way of stimulating the dominant class, the privileged students, giving them the interest and agency to critique their own positionality, and from there to discover that they have the power to recognize the inequities in our society and to take responsibility to do their part to interrupt the systematic marginalizing of others. Examining United States history would give these students the language they need to speak the words to liberate themselves and the marginalized.

Textbooks that include a balance of all groups. Textbooks like Howard Zinn's (2003) *A People's History of the United States* and James Lowen's (1995) *Lies My Teacher Told Me* would help teachers to focus on the connection among historical events. Eric Foner's recent (2006) *Give Me Liberty: An American History*, is another choice although it was written for undergraduate students. The theme in Foner's book is the idea of freedom, and how it has gone through several permutations since the United States was first founded. Finally, a recently

published article (2010) by Richard Sawyer and Armondo Laguardia, entitled “Reimagining the Past/Changing the Present: Teachers Adapting History Curriculum for Cultural Encounters,” is a study about the relationship between teachers’ attitudes toward history and the students’ who are left without an understanding of the past that connects with the future. Teachers are encouraged to teach U.S. history through cultural encounters and nontraditional historical narratives, creating an atmosphere of the inclusion of the various cultures in our society. This gives all students a voice, and privileged students are given the opportunity to learn about other ethnicities which discourages the focus on the self and opens minds to the positive elements of difference.

Content of history textbooks. Textbooks must be written so that there is a focus on the history of subjugated groups, and the reality of their suffering at the hands of white men. At this point, this is almost entirely missing from history textbooks. “The white man” may be mentioned but there is no emphasis of any kind on how this group of Europeans destroyed the very soul of the disenfranchised. Texts must also include the controversy about voting rights for African-Americans, and how these rights have been taken from them in various ways and continue to do so. In other words, laws that have been passed to protect minorities have often not been enforced, or have been re-interpreted, so that the laws on the books to protect minorities have not eliminated racism.

How do we free ourselves from the Negative Consequences of President Bush’s No Child Left Behind?

When President Reagan delivered his speech on “A Nation at Risk,” which blamed America for its own problems, he stated, “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might we have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves” (NCEE, 2).

Reagan's perspective was taken by President George W. Bush as impetus for No Child Left Behind, modeled off the "Texas Miracle," where American students would be pushed to perform, raise expectations and raise requirements for students to achieve more. The problem was that we were comparing American students in our public schools to students in other countries who had already gone through a rigorous application and testing process in order to get into their high schools. So the statistics were skewed to begin with. No Child Left Behind made it so schools were held accountable when they failed to meet the criteria presented by the federal government. A large component of this bill was the documentation of Average Yearly Progress. A large component of this is determined based on standardized tests that every public school must administer to each student. These tests have produced a plethora of problems for students, teachers, and administrators, along with narrowing the curriculum significantly (see Meier, et. al., 2004).

President Obama's Race to the Top

President Obama's new plan, Race to the Top addresses the issues with No Child Left Behind and attempts to set up a system that allows Fine Arts programs to thrive in schools again. The beneficial difference of Race to the Top as opposed to NCLB is that President Obama began this reform program by promising \$4.3 billion to be given to the Department of Education. This money is going to be awarded to the first few states that most aggressively embrace the proposed reform effort. Over the summer of 2009, President Obama would not qualify for the money based on the programs and state laws that they had in place. This motivated California, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Tennessee to change their laws regarding education in order to be considered for funding in the future.

The negative side to this financial stimulus package is that once Obama gives out all of the money he has allocated for Race to the Top, unions will have a reason to regain power. Race to the Top is garnering criticism from the Teacher's Union given that Obama wants to make teachers responsible for student's performance. Whether or not a teacher is part of the union, President Obama's plan states that they may be fired if their students do not do well. This takes away much of the Teacher's Union power to claim secure jobs for any jobs that are part of the Union. When funding runs out, the Teacher's Union will be able to grab hold of the program again and take the reins.

Race to the Top will also mean that the students' performance will be a factor in whether or not a teacher keeps his/her job, and what their salary will be. Obama is not planning on implementing a program that imitates NCLB, which forces educators to teach their students a very rigid curriculum in order to keep their teaching positions and keep the schools from shutting down, he is looking for another way to assess teachers' performance. This would mean not constantly "teaching to the test." Therefore, to reform the problems of NCLB, Obama's initial plan is to improve the assessments used to track student progress and improve student learning in a more individualized way. This will allow the teachers to look at their students as separate entities rather than one test-taking body.

This early in the game, it is difficult to tell how much more effective Obama's plan will be than No Child Left Behind. Both of them seem to put Fine Arts, History, and other subjects on the back burner (Beveridge, 2010).

An Example of Efforts by Privileged Students to Confront Injustice in a School Setting

Michelle Fine (1991), in *Framing Dropouts: Notes on the Politics of an Urban Public School*, has pointed to how the academic success of the privileged is often what allows some students the space and security to make social change efforts. April Burns (2004) describes a suburban school where several white privileged students made an attempt to expose social injustice to the other students in their school. She describes one young woman, Leah, a white senior and how she describes witnessing injustice at her school and how this led her to want to take social action.

Burns: “If there is something going on in your school that you don’t like, whose responsibility is it to change that?”

Leah: “I think if you’re someone who witnesses something, then it becomes your responsibility. And I think once it’s, once any issue is brought to the attention of, you know, an authority figure who actually can do something, then it’s their responsibility to at least address it, like as opposed to the response I got, like, “Oh, you’re so smart! Or, “Why don’t you join the debate team?” (p. 388).

Leah described her involvement in social action groups and how they showed her that she has options and developed her capacity for critical thinking. These groups gave Leah a sense of community and allowed her to risk expressing her progressive beliefs and engage in riskier relationships built upon her capacity for critique.

At one time Leah did speak out by writing a letter to the principal expressing her opposition to how the school handled the events of 9/11. The only response she got from the school was to acknowledge her merits (You’re so smart!). This is an illustration that shows how “even when privileged students speak out and make their minority opinions known, their privilege is not at risk. Leah expressed how the “sense of entitlement” of privileged students actually “bolstered” their involvement in social activist activities.

She and several other students wanted to organize a speak-out and public education at her school on discrimination in the forms that they recognized it, but they got no support from the administration, and it was two years before they were actually able to have the event. This points to what is referred to as the “subtractive power” (Valenzuela, 1999) of schools who resist social change. It is also an example of the way privilege functions by creating gaps in social responsibility, by minimizing the efforts of privileged students who do want to fight for change.

As another student involved in the process of creating this event expressed, the efforts of a few privileged students and teachers will not be enough to create change.

There are teachers here that are really good teachers and they will sit here and tell you that there are real problems in the school. But at the same time, they can't do stuff alone, you know. And the same thing for us, we can't do things alone, or I can't do things alone. You know, it's going to take people getting together and the school” (Burns, 2004, 389).

The above example shows how schools can work against, can resist, privileged students when they want to participate in social action. Freire's participatory democracy is clearly not present. Teachers and schools need to empower these students to act when they see their responsibility. For this to happen, the school must engage in more than academics and recognize the efforts for social action in their students for what they are: a desire to transform existing conditions and the willingness to struggle against authority when necessary. This scenario is an example of how privileged students can get stifled by schools, isolated with their own, primarily administrative, concerns, students become discouraged from pursuing their visions.

This is also an example of what Abram De Swann (2004) referred to as the lack of capacity for the privileged to organize for social equality. Elites, when concerned with social justice, tend to have different ideas as to how this can be accomplished. They come into conflict with each other and little gets done. The privileged in this following example, compassionate

students and lack of compassion on the part of the administration of the school, could not come together in solidarity to create a movement within the school to strive for social justice.

One could say that only in our ethics are we free. We look around and see that compassion receives small reward in this world. Lying, cheating, manipulation, and aggression usually accrue greater earthly wealth and power. But unethical action is always at the service of fear or greed. To choose honesty, generosity and compassion as the basis for one's actions cannot be "reasonable" in such a world. There is little worldly reward and therefore no reason to do so. Therefore, the choice for honesty, generosity and compassion must come from a place of freedom. This study is grounded in the assumption that the elite, given the freedom to understand their own history, which makes them question their positionality, have the capacity to contribute to an equitable society.

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