

## A Contextualized Social Transformation and Universalism: A Quest for a Mutual Humanization

Hiroko Fukazawa

Faculty of Education  
University of Alberta  
[hirokoa@ualberta.ca](mailto:hirokoa@ualberta.ca)

### Abstract

Freire (1998, 2005) claimed that the current definition of humanity has been manipulated and objectified in the manner which advances the dominant group's perspective and interests. Drawing mainly upon his claim, it is explained in this article that the current state of social inequality and environmental degradation derives from the definition of humanity; therefore, it is necessary to refine the definition to solve these problems. In restoring a true humanity of everyone, Freire valued contextual differences as an essential feature of human knowledge and denied the existence of a universal human nature; however, the belief in the existence of a universal human nature may provide the incentive necessary for mutual agreement on what is meant by a truly human society.

### Introduction

As a graduate student of educational policy studies in Western Canada, my primary work has focused on deepening my understanding on how the current state of social inequality and environmental degradation is related to educational systems, and how those very systems can be transformed in a manner that assists humans in solving the fundamental causes of the issues. In this article, it is explained that the current meaning of being human has been defined as a "strictly materialistic concept of existence" (Freire, 2005, p. 58) which advances the dominant group's perspective and interests. Education plays the integral role of instilling this specific definition into people's minds. This definition has been one of the primary causes of social inequality and environmental degradation and, therefore, in order to amend these problems, it is necessary to refine the definition itself. Mere fulfillment of and development under the current definition of human can result in further perpetuation of problems that derive from the current definition.

Freire's (1998, 2005) theory of a contextualized education and social transformation, which would result from a contextualized education, is drawn upon to explore a possible method of transforming our society toward one which is established upon a more universally harmonious

definition of humanity. In attempt to amend social inequality, Freire valued contextual differences as an essential feature of human knowledge and denied the existence of a universal human nature; however, I infer that this may result in segregating social groups and communities from each other. The belief in the existence of a universal human nature may provide the incentive necessary for mutual agreement on what is meant by a truly human society.

## Definitions

### *Education's Roles of Socialization*

In the mid 1900's, a radical perspective of education as a form of socialization, in which education is viewed as a function to reproduce social patterns necessary to maintain the capitalistic form of economic life, was developed and discussed among a number of critical theorists. For example, Bowles and Gintis (1976) claimed that our economic life constitutes a complex and relatively stable pattern of power and property relationships. These relationships are not maintained automatically, but rather, they are maintained and reproduced by functions of educational organization. Bowles and Gintis asserted that the central function of education is the reproduction of "the social relationships which are necessary to the capitalist profits and the stability of the capitalist division of labor" (p. 126). This includes the reproduction of the dominant patterns of power and privilege and of "the distribution of ownership of productive resources" (p. 126). As education continuously inculcates the characteristics for being competent participants in the economy, the patterns of dominance and subordination are reproduced, and therefore, social inequality is further perpetuated into society. Bowles and Gintis (2002) revisited this perspective in view of more recent research on schooling and inequality and maintained their position that there is a substantial relationship between schooling and the "high level of intergenerational persistence of economic status" (p. 2). A similar view was addressed by critical theorists such as Bourdieu (1990) and Brown (2001).

It is acknowledged that this radical theory of education as a means to reproduce the capitalistic form of economic life is simply one of many perspectives of education and there is criticism that this kind of analysis oversimplifies the complexity of social and cultural life. For example, Giroux (1989) stated that cultural issues are irreducible to class analysis because cultural consciousness, experience and the subjective side of human relations does actually have power to battle against the dominant force of social and class formation, and to produce their own experience and history. He also argued that "radical educators have theorized primarily *about* schools as agencies of dominations, and as such, they have seldom concerned themselves with the possibility of constructing new, alternative approaches to school organization, curricula, and classroom social relations" (Giroux, 1989, p. 130).

It appears, however, that the connection between education and economic life is undeniable, and therefore, we cannot overlook the claim that at least part of the function of education is the socialization which perpetuates and reinforces homogeneity by inculcating the essential similarities a society demands (Durkheim, 1977). The essential similarities that the current society demands are the characteristics necessary to be a competent participant in the capitalistic form of economy.

In the following section, Freire's (1998, 2005) perspective of social inequality is presented to discuss an actual impact of social reproduction. Freire claimed that the current definition of being human is manipulated and objectified in the manner which advances the dominant group's interests and perspectives; therefore, problems of social inequality can no longer be solved by mere technical improvements of school organization and systems. The definition of human itself needs to be refined in order to enable what Giroux (1989) referred to as "culture and power" (p. 125) to battle against the dominant force and to produce their own experience and history.

### *Impact of the Definition of Humanity*

Freire (2005) claimed that in the existential reality of the oppressed and the oppressors alike, the definition of a human has been defined as a "strictly materialistic concept of existence" (p. 58). This definition works to identify oppressors who 'have' as humans, and oppressed who 'do not have' as lesser-humans. By modifying the definition of human in this way, an ethical, political and social norm of our society has been formulated in the manner which protects and promotes the humanity of the oppressors. In addition, our political and social systems work to justify the pursuit of fulfilling their materialistic desires unrestrainedly in the name of protecting and promoting humanity. Freire (2005) claimed that consequently, our entire existential reality has been modified and objectified to justify the oppressors' material success at the expense of the oppressed because the definition of being human has been manipulated.

The dominant system of education which Freire (2005) referred to as "the banking concept of education" (p. 72) plays an integral role in perpetuating the manipulated definition of humanity. The banking concept of education suggests that teaching is about filling a student's mind with the pre-determined values and empirical facts of reality, which are often disconnected from a student's existential experience. From Freire's view, this banking approach to teaching works to further serve the interests of the oppressors in that, education rewards students for the passive acceptance of the given knowledge instead of developing the critical consciousness of the world. According to Freire, "the more completely they [*students*] accept the passive role imposed upon them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (p. 73). This kind of education "serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their 'humanitarianism' to preserve a profitable situation" (p. 73) because the oppressors themselves are incapable of understanding the true meaning of humanization.

Freire's (2005) theory indicates that the problem of social inequality derives from the definition of humanity itself; therefore, no matter how we struggle to improve our social and educational systems, as long as the systems work within the parameters of that manipulated definition of humanity, the problems of social inequality can never be solved or, moreover, can be further perpetuated. To solve social inequality, it is necessary to refine the definition of humanity itself. This is underscored by Freire's advocacy that the true restoration of humanity needs to stem from a new vision - a vision that transforms our society into a truly human one, rather than the simple fulfillment of, and the development under, the dominant society's definition of humanity.

In addition, there is a correlation between the materialistic definition of humanity and the environmental degradation being observed around the world. O'Sullivan (2001) claimed that

“the modernist educational venture in all its forms, is incredibly deficient in the understanding of human-earth relationships” (p. 43). He further elaborated that “since formal conventional educational institutions are tailored to the needs of the consumer industrial society, it should not be surprising that our society’s present direction aligns itself with programmes and procedures that ignore and inhibit human-earth relationships” (p. 43). He claimed that the current forms of education promote the perspective of the earth as “the global competitive marketplace” (p. 44) and, in return, ignore the human-earth relationships in which the earth is viewed as every living thing’s natural habitat. O’Sullivan advocated that in this critical time of human history in which we face uncertainties in terms of the environmental survival, “the fundamental educational task of our times is to make the choice for a sustainable global planetary habitat of interdependent life forms over and against the global competitive market-place” (p. 45).

An examination of the relevant literature underscores that we do exist within the confines of a particular definition of a universal human nature in which human is seen to be a competitive participant in economic life, who focuses primarily on the improvement of the materialistic quality of human life. Thus, in order to amend the problems of social inequality and environmental degradation, it is urgently needed that we examine the validity of the current definition of humanity and transform it toward one which no longer causes such problems.

In the following sections Freire’s (1998, 2005) theory of a contextualized social transformation is drawn upon to explore a possible method of transforming our society toward one which is established upon a more universally agreed upon definition of humanity. It is also explained that the belief in the existence of a universal human nature may be necessary in order to make a contextualized social transformation truly meaningful.

## Discussion

### *Contextualized Social Transformation*

Freire (2005) asserted that humans cannot conceive objectivity. For Freire, reality is socially and historically constructed through the human experience in various social and historical contexts; therefore, we can't separate the objectivity from the subjectivity in what we know. As Freire proposed, “the separation of objectivity from subjectivity, the denial of the latter when analyzing reality or acting upon it, is objectivism” (p. 50). From this perspective, he advocated a contextualized education which aims to restore the contextual differences of localities as the essential feature of human knowledge. As a result of such an education, Freire hoped to enable a social transformation by relying on every individual’s ability to think critically and imagine beyond the parameters of the current manipulated reality, and to think and act toward the realization of a “mutual humanization” (2005, p. 75).

Freire (2005) referred to his theory as an “objective transformation of reality” (p. 50). He proposed the ongoing processes of transforming reality through “the praxis” (p. 51) in which each individual critically reflects upon the objectivity of reality in constant “dialectical relationships” (p. 51) with others, tests its validity through action, reflects upon the objectivity with another dialectical relationship and tests it again by further action. People need to engage in

the ongoing process of the transformation of objectivity with a clear understanding that an objective reality does not come into existence by chance or fate, but rather, we actually transform it by acting upon it. In addition, education needs to be transformed from the banking method of depositing pre-determined knowledge into a student's mind to teaching methods which develop their ability to reflect critically upon the world they live in and direct them to progress toward a greater coherence.

For Freire (1998, 2005), an objective reality is not an ultimate fact which is discoverable by people, but instead, is only attainable through a conscious and educated consensus among individuals engaged in the ongoing processes of praxis. He referred to this process as “the quest for mutual humanization” (2005, p. 75). In this view, an objective knowledge is seen as having the greatest potential for effecting consensus among the subjectivities of every possible individual from every possible contextual difference.

In his theory, Freire (1998, 2005) presented a constructivist view of knowledge, which rejects the objective validity of the dominant definition of human and gives authenticity to local knowledge. If there is no conceivable objective knowledge, any perspective that is claimed to be objective is objectified; therefore, Freire tried to build an objective reality by integrating all different local perspectives into one perspective. They are, in a sense, assimilated into one perspective, but it is not achieved through the dominant power but rather by consensus. The perspective into which they are integrated is not the dominant perspective but a new perspective which is constructed through everyone's effort of achieving a mutual humanization. Moreover, the new perspective continuously transforms as people continue to search for a more universally agreed upon reality. This helps retard the infestation of any specific perspectives being disguised as objective.

In order to make a contextualized social transformation possible, however, there are some critical questions that need to be answered. If there is neither a conceivable objective knowledge nor a universal human nature, what standards can people use to judge the validity of a perspective to be generally applicable? Is it possible to come to an agreement without having a commonly shared norm such as what is right and wrong, which people can use as the parameter to analyze and appraise the validity of a perspective? In the following section, Freire's (1998) notion of “right thinking” (p. 41) is discussed to explain that relying solely on individual knowledge for ethical judgment has a risk of falling into relativism. The belief in the existence of a universal human nature may be necessary in order to provide the incentive for a mutual humanization.

### *The Existence of a Universal Human Nature*

Freire (1998) described his perspective of knowledge as a “presence” (p. 25) as opposed to it being *a priori*. By identifying his notion as a presence, he illustrated that human knowledge, especially our ability to think toward “a universal human ethic” (p. 25), is not attained through an innate, universal intuition possessed equally by all humans. Rather, he maintained that what a human knows is socially and historically constructed through the human experience of various social and historical contexts. Therefore, “right thinking” (p. 41) derives from authentic thinking about reality in which an individual lives. It consists of “a total experience that is simultaneously

directive, political, ideological, Gnostic, pedagogical, aesthetic, and ethical” (p. 31) and includes all human inclinations and emotions deriving from personal experiences by which individuals interpret the reality surrounding their life. This is Freire’s notion of objective knowledge of the local reality in which an individual lives.

In his notion of right thinking, Freire (1998) manifested his strong insistence that humans are not a cog of society, but each of them is ethical, political and pedagogical living individuality and, therefore, right thinking inevitably varies depending on their personal experience. However, relying only on individual knowledge for ethical judgment has a risk of falling into relativism. As Siegel (1987) explained about the problem of relativism, each one of us is a measure of what is and of what is not; therefore, no one thinks falsely, and given that “the final arbiter of truth and knowledge is the individual” (p. 4), a theory of relativism “denies the existence of any standard or criterion higher than the individual by which claims to truth and knowledge can be adjusted” (p. 4). Therefore, as Siegel further explained, “if knowledge is relative, the task of judging claims to knowledge is pointless” (p. 4) because no one is entitled to verify whether another person thinks is true or false.

There appears to be the problem of relativism in Freire’s (1998, 2005) theory. If knowledge is relative, there is no need for any local reality including the current dominant reality to conform to others. As long as local people agree that their reality conforms to their truth about the lived experience, it is a valid reality. Outsiders can passively accept an individual’s lived truth about their reality, but they do not have the authentic knowledge to act upon it. How, then, can people feel a need and possibility to integrate their respective realities into one reality? Without the existence of a higher knowledge by which everyone’s knowledge can be validated and adjusted, the effort we invest in a contextualized social transformation may result in segregating localities and individuals from each other, instead of achieving the most encompassing consensus among the subjectivities of every possible contextual difference.

It is acknowledged that Freire’s (1998, 2005) advocacy was to create the higher knowledge by debating among, trying out and reflecting upon the right thinking of every individual. Until people finally come to an agreement on what the higher knowledge is, people engage in critical discussion toward the agreement without sharing common standards or principles which are perceived to be higher than individual knowledge. Is this possible? Is a critical discussion possible without having its consequence tested against or proved by commonly acknowledged standards?

Popper (1997) claimed that a critical discussion among people who do not share a common framework of basic ethical and intellectual assumptions may be difficult, but “if common goodwill and a lot of effort are put into it, then very far-reaching understanding is possible” (p. 34). Popper explained that without sharing common premises or higher knowledge to judge values, a rational and fruitful discussion is possible by testing a perspective under discussion to find out “whether its *logical consequences* are all acceptable, or whether it has, perhaps, some undesirable consequences” (p. 60). However, Popper indicated that even though higher premises are not always necessary, there are some prerequisite attitudes or common goodwill, which may be preconditions for a critical discussion, such as “a wish to get to, or near to, the truth, and a

willingness to share problems or to understand the aims and the problems of somebody else” (p. 35).

In terms of making a contextualized social transformation possible, giving serious consideration upon how people can acquire these attitudes is as important as contemplating how people should perceive knowledge. Taking Popper’s (1997) claim into consideration, Freire’s (1998) suggestion that people engage in a critical discussion without sharing some kind of common knowledge may be possible; however, without a desire to get to “the truth” instead of a truth, or a willingness to share problems and to understand the problems of someone else, a critical discussion toward the integration of each individual’s right thinking cannot happen. These necessary attitudes for a critical discussion demonstrate that merely giving authenticity to local knowledge is insufficient to commence a contextualized social transformation. People need to believe that problems that derive from the current definition of human are universal and, therefore, true resolution occurs only by sharing and understanding problems of each other. In addition, if we are to refine the current definition of humanity through a mutual agreement it requires sufficient incentive to pursue a universal definition of humanity which secures every individual’s authentic knowledge of their lived experience. In the next section, a situation is presented to illustrate that the provision of a viable possibility for the pursuit of a universal humanity may be necessary in order to encourage people to possess the prerequisite attitudes to commence a critical discussion toward a mutual humanization.

### *Transformation Possibilities*

Kirkness (1999) described that after the long endeavor of Canadian aboriginal peoples to improve access and quality of education for their peoples, “the policy of *Indian Control of Indian Education*” (p.18), which recognizes parental responsibility for and local control of aboriginal education, was given official recognition by the Minister of Indian Affairs in 1973. Since then, aboriginal peoples have struggled to re-establish their own authentic education system.

The primary objective of the reestablishment of an independent education is to restore their authentic knowledge so that aboriginal peoples can be integrated into the rest of the world through their own understanding of the values and cultures of others as opposed to being assimilated by the dominant power. However, despite that aboriginal peoples have a clear vision of what their authentic education should be, “there is little evidence of real curriculum change” (p. 25). Kirkness observed that “we continue to teach our languages for only a few minutes a day in our schools knowing that this approach is ineffective” (p. 26). She also explained that “we say that our education must respect our values and customs, yet we encourage competition rather than cooperation, the individual over the group, saving instead of sharing” (p. 26). Kirkness’ description indicates that even though aboriginal peoples are now able to claim the authenticity of their own education legitimately, aboriginal peoples themselves are not fully empowered to learn their own language and worldviews as their primary knowledge. Battiste (2000) expressed a similar concern. Since the National Indian Brotherhood sought to take control of Indian education, there have been innovations, but these reforms have not gone far enough. Battiste stated that “the existing curriculum has given Aboriginal people new knowledge to help them participate in Canadian society, but it has not empowered Aboriginal identity by promoting an understanding of Aboriginal worldviews, languages, and knowledge” (p. 192). The restoration

and the maintenance of aboriginal knowledge and language have been supported for the purpose of enabling aboriginal students to become competent participants in the mainstream society. On the other hand, most public schools do not have coherent plans about how teachers and students can learn about aboriginal thought and apply it in current educational processes.

One of the fundamental problems that obstruct the establishment of aboriginal peoples' authentic education appears to lie within the challenge where aboriginal peoples try to integrate an authentic aboriginal knowledge into the mainstream society without assimilation. As Kirkness (1999) expressed, the dominant society's approach to integration has rather been "a process of assimilation where Indians are being absorbed into the non-Indian society" (p. 16). Battiste (2000) also claimed that the current educational system is "a form of cognitive imperialism" (p. 193) which projects European knowledge and worldviews as universal, normative and ideal. Because of this "false assumption" (p. 193), the mainstream government and educators overlook the importance of integration and, instead, marginalizes or excludes aboriginal cultures, voices, and ways of knowing. Without initiating discussion about how both societies can be transformed into a more mutually agreed upon one, it seems there is no venue for aboriginal peoples to contribute their authentic knowledge and worldviews to. Options available for aboriginal peoples are to either be segregated from the rest of the world or be assimilated into the dominant reality. This presents difficulties for aboriginal peoples to keep their spirits up and to fully embrace learning their own knowledge and worldviews.

It is also observed in both articles that as soon as aboriginal peoples determine one of the primary goals of their education to be the increase of the employment rate of their peoples in the dominant economic system, the restoration of their authentic knowledge becomes even more difficult. Kirkness (1999) indicated that one of the objectives of re-establishing the authentic education is to have their children enjoy education in an environment where "their self-esteem and self-confidence is evident" (p. 28) because such education decreases the drop-out rate and thus, increases the employment rate of aboriginal students. In the current situation, however, there appears to be no clear connection between learning their knowledge and being employed by the dominant economic system. In order to be employed and become successful in the economic system, aboriginal students need to be competent in the dominant language, knowledge and worldviews. In this sense, their authentic education seems to stand in contrast to the dominant education system which systematically socializes students by inculcating the necessary skills and characteristics to be competitive participants in economy. If aboriginal peoples do not see how learning their languages or values can help them obtain a good job, it may be difficult for them to feel a need to learn it. Being hired may make it even harder to maintain their own worldviews, such as the belief in sharing and cooperating or respecting "Mother Earth" (Kirkness, 1999, p. 27), in the dominant system where fulfilling an individual's materialistic desires is promoted in the name of humanization and a person's success is measured primarily by their accumulation of material wealth.

However, transforming aboriginal peoples' authentic education into what would essentially be nothing more than an alternative training ground for producing competitive participants for the economy is not the answer that solves aboriginal peoples' difficulties, nor is it the answer that solves social inequality and environmental degradation in the world. We must not forget Freire's (2005) warning that the current existential reality has been dehumanizing all of us because the

definition of being human has been manipulated and objectified. Merely the fulfillment of and development under the current definition of human can result in further perpetuating problems that derive from the definition. Instead, a true restoration of humanity must stem from a new definition of human in which everyone's critical thinking about reality is integrated into one in an attempt to transform the world into more universally human one. If so, both the dominant society and aboriginal society need to begin sharing and understanding problems of each other and transforming the collective society toward one which no longer causes those problems.

Battiste (2000) stated that western education is "sorely in need of what Aboriginal knowledge has to offer. We are witnessing throughout the world the weaknesses in knowledge based on science and technology. It is costing us our air, our earth; our very lives are at stake" (p. 201). Kirkness (1999) also addressed that in the aboriginal philosophy of education, an individual's success is measured by "how much service they have rendered to their people in relationship of one to another, in humility, in sharing, in cooperating, in relationship to nature – the land, the animals..." (p. 15). This seems to be the kind of philosophy which the dominant culture could benefit from in terms of amending social inequality and environmental degradation. In fact, a number of environmental activists and educators, such as LaDuke (1999), McGaa (2005) and O'Sullivan (2001), suggested learning aboriginal spiritualities and philosophy to promote a sustainable interdependent lifestyle between humans and the earth. Likewise, there must be more knowledge and values of the dominant society that can be beneficial to the mutual transformation of society.

As it is observed in the problems which underlie Canadian aboriginal peoples' authentic education, it's quite possible that simply authenticating local knowledge may be an insufficient catalyst for commencing a critical discussion toward a mutual humanization. While it may help many people to acknowledge and respect realities other than their own, or at the very least, not detract from their existence, it provides little in the way of reasoning or incentive for actual integration. In order for the collective societies of the world to truly desire the truth that secures a truth of everyone and every living thing on the earth, we need to believe that such a concept is possible. If a universal meaning of humanity can be established only through the mutual agreement, we need to possess a willingness to understand and share the problems of others. If there is any merit to these claims, denying the existence of a universal human nature may undermine the possibility of transforming our society into a truly universally human one.

### *Educational Implications*

Freire's (1998, 2005) notion of an open-ended objective reality created through the mutual agreement of everyone is unique and has valuable implications for education. It is unrealistic to suggest that education should immediately abandon the current function of socialization and begin facilitating a contextualized transformation; however, education can at least use the concept of building a mutually agreed upon society to encourage students to keep thinking toward a better answer to the ideal definition of humanity, instead of rigidly committing themselves to a particular ideology and its standards.

Educational change needs to begin in the classrooms by offering students a small amount of time each day to discuss and exchange perspectives toward the realization of a mutually agreed upon

definition of humanity. Palmer's (2000) advocacy of "community in classroom" (p. 204) supports this idea of an every-day discussion in classrooms. Palmer stated that knowing and learning are communal acts which "require a continual cycle of discussion, disagreement, and consensus over what has been seen and what it all means" (p. 205). He suggested that this communal way of knowing should be the essence of the classroom.

In order to engage in a continual cycle of discussion toward a mutual agreement, students need to be aware that there is no absolute answer that will stem from this discussion, but instead, that it should continue until they someday conceive an ideal definition of humanity that is agreeable to everyone. Students also need to be aware that this is not a talk about their dreams and fantasy; rather this time is their opportunity for critical reflection of the society they currently inhabit; therefore, it may be helpful if students are directed to think about what kind of problems or issues they have in their society and what a society which no longer causes such problems or issues would look like. Furthermore, Palmer (2000) cautioned that students in North America have been taught to look at reality through "objectivist lenses" (p. 201) and to report on a world that is not the one in which they live, but empirical facts and a fragmented view of the world which are taught at school. These students tend to believe that "they can take pieces of the world and carve out for themselves a niche of private sanity..." (p. 201) without feeling responsible for actual consequences their experimental manipulation may produce. In order to avoid falling into such an "objectivist's fantasy" (p. 201), Palmer encouraged students to understand issues in their community with careful consideration upon relatedness not only to themselves but to people in other communities, to the environment and to the world.

Finally, as Freire suggested (1998, 2005), one of the primary objectives of a contextualized education is to imagine beyond the current manipulated reality and to keep thinking toward a new perspective. For this reason, students do not necessarily benefit from an ability to win debates because it can lead them to become even more steadfast in their beliefs and knowledge they possess in that given moment. Lipman (2003) provided insightful thoughts about classroom communities in this respect. Lipman explained that when students participate in a critical discussion, this should not be an opportunity to convince their adversary; instead, they should hope either that they might learn from their opponent that their views are wrong and so gain a new and better grasp of reality, or that the arguments of their adversary may help them to improve and strengthen their views. As Lipman suggested, a critical discussion should continue moving forward, similar to when we walk. As such "when you walk, you never have both feet solidly on the ground at the same time. Each step forward makes possible a further step forward; in a dialogue, each argument evokes a counterargument that pushes itself beyond the other and pushes the other beyond itself" (p. 87). By encouraging such a discussion in classrooms, students are supported and guided in seeing beyond what they know and what they believe, and continue discovering a new knowledge by exchanging their perspectives with peoples from a variety of different social, historical and geographical contexts.

## Conclusion

With the examination of Freire's (1998, 2005) views and other related literature, my conclusion is that a root factor that has led to the manipulation and objectification of the current reality is not

the belief that there is a universal human nature. Rather, that since it has been arbitrarily defined, humans have essentially abandoned all efforts of constructing a universally human society and instead, are simply fulfilling themselves and advancing society only as far as the manipulated definition of humanity allows. If so, the belief in the existence of a universal human nature is necessary in order to resume the challenge of pursuing a society which brings to fruition the true meaning of a human which serves equally to everyone. If, as Freire (1998, 2005) suggested, an objective reality can come about only by the integration of every individual's right thinking, the only solution is to keep refining the definition of a human, perhaps forever, or until we can achieve a definition which is agreed by all people in the world. Until the achievement of such a definition, there shouldn't be an absolute definition of a universal human. This may sound unrealistic for people who are used to seeing the world through objectivist lenses; however, as Palmer (2000) stated, the capacity to tolerate ambiguity is the capacity for critical thought which enables people to discover another way of seeing and being in the world.

Education can and should look at altering the current method of socialization and assist people to develop the ability to engage in critical dialogue. These abilities should be complimented by a willingness to understand different perspectives, a readiness to share the burdens of others, modesty in relation to our own knowledge and a desire to pursue the truth that can secure values of everyone and everything in the world including non-living life and the environment. If educational systems choose to accept the challenge of social transformation pedagogies, there is sufficient reason to hope that our society will gradually be transformed by future generations toward a more universally human society.

## References

- Battiste, M. (2000). Maintaining Aboriginal identity, language and culture in modern society. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture* (R. Nice, Trans.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). Education and personal development: The long shadow of work. In *Schooling in capitalist America* (pp. 125-148). New York: Basic Books.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (2002). Schooling in capitalist America revisited. *Sociology of Education*, 75(1), 1-18.
- Brown, P., & Lauder, H. (2001). *Capitalism and social progress: The future of society in a globaleconomy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Durkheim, E. (1977). *The evolution of educational thought: Lectures on the formation and development of secondary education in France* (P. Collins, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom* (P. Clarke, Trans.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York: Continuum.
- Giroux, H. A. (1989). Schooling as a form of cultural politics: Toward a pedagogy of and for difference. In H. A. Giroux, & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Critical pedagogy, the state and cultural struggle*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kirkness, V. (1999). Aboriginal education in Canada: A retrospective and a prospective. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 39(1), 14-30.
- LaDuke, W. (1999). *All our relations: native struggles for land and life*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McGaa, E. (2005). *Natures way: Native wisdom for living in balance with the earth*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- O'Sullivan, E. (2001). *Transformative learning: Educational vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: Zed Books.
- Palmer, P. J. (2000). Community, conflict, and ways of knowing: Ways to deepen our educational agenda. In D. Dezure (Ed.), *Learning from change: Landmarks in teaching and learning in higher education from Change Magazine 1969-1999*. Virginia: Stylus Publishing.
- Popper, K. (1997). *The myth of the framework: In defense of science and rationality* (M. A. Notturmo, Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Siegel, S. (1987). *Relativism refuted: A critique of contemporary epistemological relativism*. Holland: D. Reidel Publishing.