Resistance and Education:
An Exploration of Anti-Colonial Struggles and Implications for Critical, Reflexive Pedagogy

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Abstract

On the basis of knowledge and learning as social and subjective in nature, this paper explores contemporary notions of identity and discourse to inform an argument on how sites of formal education can confine students in oppressive subject positions but also potentially allow students to exert agency in the constructions and performances of their own identity. This paper argues that if education is to incite self-empowerment and social change, discursive understandings of identity formation and socialization must be reconciled with pedagogical conceptions of agency and social justice. To this end, postcolonial arguments on resistance and criticality are drawn upon to posit that identity is important in struggles against oppression, and as such is a central concern for critical pedagogy.

> *Identity processes matter precisely because they are second only to force as the means by which power is effected in oppressive and exploitative systems.*
>
> Cynthia Cockburn (1998, p. 10)

> *To bring the indigenous identity back to life will require a transformation and shift from the politics of pity that defines our present relationship with the Settlers to a politics framed not on posture of victimhood but on an ethic of courage. It will require an awakening of indigenous intelligence, a reorientation of mentality, and a reconstruction of the Onkwehonwe movement so that it is capable of achieving the objective of freeing indigenous peoples from the grip of imperialism.*
>
> Taiaiake Alfred (2005, p.144)

Identity is important. Perhaps nowhere has this been more apparent than in the history of colonialism, and perhaps nowhere has identity and power interacted so intensely and overtly than in the struggles of resistance against it. As the attempt to extinguish indigenous cultures through the Canadian residential school policy demonstrates, few sites play a more important role in the construction and destruction of identities than those of formal education (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Alfred, 2005). In this essay, the discussions of colonization that have emerged from the field of postcolonial studies will be drawn upon in order to examine how formal education can confine students into repressive subject positions (Giroux, 1992) and thereby limit, shape, or deny their possible expressions of identity (Alfred, 2005; Grande, 2004; Said, 1993). Insofar as colonialism provides a site by which to examine the limits placed on identity, anti-colonial struggles provide an opportunity to examine the capacity of individuals, as agents, to invoke identity and transcend imposed subject positions. This phenomenon will be drawn upon to explore how agency might be thought of in formal approaches to Western education. The main assumption is founded on the argument that the realization of colonialism as well as the success of anti-colonial struggles was in part due to both restrictive and re-assertive processes of identity formation (Alfred, 2005; Fanon, 1968; Hall, 1990; Said, 1993). It is premised that these processes can inform an approach to critical pedagogy with an emphasis on student self-creation and social justice in the Western context. This approach follows Bhabha's (1994) assertion "that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking" (p. 246).

Lave and Wenger (1991) stated that "learning involves the whole person ... it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person ... [and it] involves the construction of identities" (p. 53). However, the notion that identities are implicated in processes of learning raises some concerns. By privileging certain ways of being, acting, feeling, and thinking, formal education recognizes those students who most easily identify with these expectations as full participants while recognizing those who do not as peripheral or non-participants (Gee, 2008; LeCourt, 2004). The question that emerges, and which will be explored in this essay, is that if identities are *learned* how might education allow students to construct alternative identities outside of dominant formulations; and how might such a process enable social change?

<div align="center">Theoretical Approach</div>

Several theories are drawn upon to explore the relationship between learning, identity, and power. Broadly, these theories include critical pedagogy, poststructuralist approaches to both identity and discourse, social theories of learning, and a postcolonial approach to agency. While poststructuralist theory allows power to be emphasized as it operates through discursive practices, postcolonial theory enables the possibilities of agency and social change to be imagined. Socialization theories of learning are drawn upon in order to establish the connection between education, identity, and discourse. Together, these theories inform an approach to pedagogy with a focus on both individual identities and social change.

Critical Pedagogy

Pedagogy, McLaren and Giroux (1995) explained, involves a process where meaning is negotiated and where the self and others are represented "within discursive practices and power/knowledge relations" (p. 34). A critical approach to pedagogy attempts to make these discursive practices and power/knowledge relations clear, not only as they are enacted in the classroom, but as they are carried out in any particular society to preserve unequal distributions of social and material capital (McLaren, 1995). However, McLaren and Giroux also noted that the primary focus on critique has resulted in a situation where "critical pedagogy has failed to articulate a vision for self-empowerment and social transformation" (p. 34). The failure perhaps results from a view, often held in critical approaches to pedagogy, of individual human nature as emerging from an essential core self wherein resides one's capacity to act freely and exert agency (Miedema & Wardekker, 1999). Miedema and Wardekker explained that such essentialist approaches to pedagogy have the tendency of depoliticizing identity formation and thereby detaching social conditions from the agentic individual. In order to articulate a pedagogy for both self-empowerment *and* social transformation, learning must be understood as a process by which identities are formed within social structures. However, critical pedagogy must, nevertheless, continue to approach learning as essential to enacting agency in attempts to transform social structures with which one might identify.

Discourse

Discourses, Zipin (1998) defined, are "rule-bound sign system that infuse everyday activities, and that differentiate people in relation to cultural norms that constitute self-regulatory ways of knowing" (p. 316). This definition of discourse elucidates its importance for education: Schooling is not only an institutional site where discourses are produced and transmitted, but in doing so, it is a site that teaches students certain ways of knowing and self-regulation. By teaching discourses, schools teach cultural practices, forms of communication, and ways of thinking; they are, therefore, transfer points of power (Gee, 2008; Luke, 1998).

In an overview of critical discourse analysis Luke (1998) wrote, "One of the shared tenets of poststructuralist feminist and postcolonial theory is the need to generate a public and intellectual 'space' for the critique of dominant discourses and for the speaking and writing of the 'unsaid', 'subaltern' voices" (p. 53). By subaltern, Luke referred to those who were silenced, ignored, and/or marginalized by the dominant discourses in a particular society. Poststructuralist and postcolonial theory on discourse, therefore, generate a series of important questions for the field of pedagogy. For instance, how do dominant discourses, whether promulgated within schools or in particular societies, silence and shape identities? How does the speaking and writing of the subaltern critique dominant discourses and enable the enactment of agency? Finally, how might such a critique of discourse be extended into the classroom?

Identity

The poststructuralist argument that "identity is constituted within, not outside of discourse, [and is] produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" (Hall, 1996, p. 4), is useful in establishing the interrelatedness of learning, identity formation, and agency in sites of formal education. Identity can be thought of as what one is capable of doing, consciously or unconsciously, in order to be recognized in a social setting; or, as suggested by Butler (2004), as a performance. While individuals may perform multiple, context specific identities, identities are not mutually exclusive. Rather, identities interrelate and new hybrid identities can be created (Bhabha, 1994; Giroux, 1992). As performances, identities are located within socially situated, yet contested "regimes of representation" (Hall, 1990, p. 225). Regimes of representation, Hall explains, are contained within discursive formations, and consequently within power/knowledge relations. Furthermore, they are both internal and external to one's identity in that they allow individuals to make themselves recognizable and to be recognized within communities. The theory of identity, therefore, is powerful as it provides, as suggested by Wegner (1998), "a pivot between the social and the individual, so that each can be talked about in terms of the other" (p. 145).

Learning

The relationship between identity formation and education is best underscored by a view of learning as a social activity which occurs within communities or social groupings. From one perspective, learning as a social activity can be understood as a process of acquiring, incorporating, and putting to use certain social practices that are privileged in a particular community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). By doing so individuals take on certain roles and develop particular identities (Wenger, 1998). Considering its emphasis on interaction and participation, the community view of learning extends but also deviates from a subject-centered Freirean approach to pedagogy. Freire (1970/2002) argued that dialogical interactions in the classroom are important allowing individual students to actively contribute to "naming the world" (p. 88). That is, to exert agency in order to speak, describe, and critique the world as they see it. As opposed to acculturation into a community, Friere's dialogical approach places a primacy on the particular contributions of individual students in knowledge production. While both perspectives offer important insights, each is limited. The emphasis on community minimizes the circulation of power that limits certain expressions of identity while favouring others (Barton & Tusting, 2005). However, the Freirian subject-centered approach deemphasizes the importance of socialization in processes of learning and enacting agency (Gee, 2008). In order to advance a cohesive approach to pedagogy, a social theory of education with a focus on identity formation must attempt to reconcile the importance of socialization with the necessity of social critique.

Agency

In an attempt to bridge the community approach to learning with the subject-centered approach and a pedagogy for self-empowerment with a pedagogy for social transformation, a conception of agency in education needs to be articulated. As is sometimes done in child-centered and progressive approaches to pedagogy, agency should be understood without abandoning the importance of socialization within discourses to identity formation (Miedema & Wardekker, 1999; Walkerdine, 1990). On the other hand, in emphasizing the importance of socialization and discourse in processes of learning and identity formation, the phenomenon of resistance, challenge, and choice must not be lost to a discursive determinism where agency cannot be conceptualized (Zipin, 1998). There is a need, therefore, to attempt to view agency within the limits of discourse and identity and determine how formal education might enable or deny its exercise. The following section attempts to put forward a notion of agency by examining the connection between identity formation and discourse in colonialism and anti-colonial struggles.

Postcolonial Perspectives

Colonialism, Identity, and the Struggle for Transformation

The history of colonialism provides an opportunity to examine how identities were formed and resisted under overtly hegemonic conditions. It allows the role of colonial and cultural discourses to be explored as they were drawn upon in acts of repression and moments of rebellion. Colonial discourses have frequently acted to position the

colonized in subordinate and often violent subject positions (Luke, 2008; Said, 1993).). Fanon (1968) explained that this violence:

> …which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the system of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. (p. 40)

The passage reveals that colonization does not simply perpetuate violence by destroying native identity. Rather this subjectification, described by Hall (1990) as an "inner expropriation of cultural identity [that] cripples and deforms" (p. 226), in turn, precipitates, at times, violent struggles against colonization. Subjectification is never finalized or totalizing; the possibility of resistance always exists (Hall, 1990; Luke, 2008). The indeterminacy of subjectification, therefore, presents an opportunity for imagination and struggle to emerge.

Colonialism and Subjugation

While the discourses of racial superiority produced and legitimized violence throughout the colonized world (Bhabha, 1994), particular social structures allowed imperial discourses to be dispersed and transmitted. Colonial governments and Western religions are examples of these structures. However, perhaps it was the establishing and privileging of Western knowledge in systems of colonial education that most effectively and insidiously repressed local forms of representation and knowledge production. In this respect, colonial education might have had the most detrimental consequences for indigenous identity.

As Smith (1999) explained, colonial schooling "imposed Western authority over all aspects of indigenous knowledges, languages and cultures" (p. 64). Colonial education acted as a mechanism for establishing the discourses that present the West as superior and the indigenous world as inferior (Grande, 2004; Said, 1993). This is effectively done, Smith indicated, by re-appropriating and re-presenting the indigenous world back to indigenous populations. The imposition of Western authority gives context to Grande's claim that "from the time of invasion to the present day, the church and the state have acted as coconspirators in the theft of Native America, robbing indigenous people of their right to be indigenous" (p. 11). By universalizing and legitimizing certain knowledges, colonial systems of education limited or marginalized cultural regimes of representation.

Resistance and Identity

Inasmuch as colonialism provides an opportunity to examine how oppressive subject positions are made available through colonial discourses, the struggle against colonialism demonstrates how dominant structures can be subverted, new discourses articulated, and new subject positions created. Writing on the topic of resistance, Said (1993) explained the "restoration of community, [the] assertion of identity, [and the] emergence of new cultural practices … as a mobilized political force instigated and then advanced the struggle against Western domination everywhere in the non-European world" (p. 218). Similarly, Hall (1990) wrote, "cultural identity played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world" (p. 223). These arguments raise two key questions: How are identities asserted? And how do asserted identities struggle against and resist authoritative discourses?

If cultural identities played crucial roles in anti-colonial movements, then re-asserted identities might be understood as *agentic* attempts to transcend the subject positions produced by oppressive discourses. Further, the appeal to culture in anti-colonial resistance indicates that these identities do not emerge independently but result from a re-centering of marginalized discourses. Hall (1990) explained this point by stating that the reifications of culture that occur through the creation and dispersal of visual images, texts, and language become "resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which experience [of the colonized] has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of ... representation" (p. 225).

Agentic assertions of identities can be understood as representations of the self outside the dominant representations embedded in authoritative discursive formations. However, these assertions of identity are, nevertheless, predicated on an attachment to some other alternative discourse. Fanon (1968), writing as a colonized subject, explained that

the appeal to indigenous religion and cultural representations, "integrates me in the traditions and the history of my district or of my tribe, and at the same time it reassures me, it gives me status, as it were an identification paper" (p. 55). Agentic assertions of identity are instances where individuals actively draw upon insurgent, self-chosen, cultural discourses in order to make themselves recognizable in communities where these alternative discourses have salience.

It is important to note, however, that these identities are not attempts to reclaim an essential pre-colonial way of being. They are new identities that have emerged as a result of both the struggle against colonialism and the appeal to cultural history. Hall (1996) explained:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from", so much as "what we might become", how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (p. 4)

As a product of the struggle to become, reasserted identities are not independent of the colonial relationship. Similarly, the insurgent discourses that allow for agentic assertions of identity do not exist in isolation of the dominant discursive formations. Insurgent discourses are a result, as Bhabha (1994) argued, of a "contestation of the given symbols of authority that shift the terrains of antagonism" (p. 277). Although these discourses appeal to pre-colonial discourses, they emerge as a result of the *discrepancy* between cultural and imperial discourses. As opposed to a pre-colonial essential identity, what comes out of this antagonistic struggle for identity within discrepant discourses is a hybridized, new identity. Contesting and resisting oppression results from challenging the terms, images, and language by which viable, just lives are identified and lived (Butler, 2004; Rorty, 1989). Processes of decolonization and of re-identification involve rearticulating and reimagining the discourses of imperialism (Bhabha, 1994).

Summary

The previous discussion on power, identity, and resistance in colonial relationships raises four important points which may be relevant to the field of education.

1. Identities are never completely finalized. One`s multiple identities exist in a state of perpetual production (Hall, 1990) and are characterized "by degrees of volatility and unpredictability" (Luke, 2008, p. 2). This state of volatility allows for struggle and resistance to emerge.

2. Authority over knowledge is oppressive. By asserting what is right and universal, colonialism produces subjectivities that are restrictive and potentially bring about psychological, social, and material violence (Fanon, 1968; Luke, 2008).

3. Although struggle is always possible, agentic identity formation requires an alternative regime of representation. Resistance does not simply manifest independently. It is predicated on a location (a discourse) from where a struggle can be asserted.

4. Finally, social change involves alternative, reimagined discourses to produce self-empowering identities and social change.

Implications for Education

In what follows, the question of how the colonial experience might inform approaches to Western education will be examined. As sites of knowledge production, how do schools circulate dominant discourses and constrain or delegitimize identities? How might what Said (1993) described as "discrepant experiences" (p. 31), and the cultural discourses that inform and describe these experiences, be drawn upon in a pedagogical approach that incites criticality, agentic identity formation, and social change? These questions will be explored in an attempt to articulate a critical approach to pedagogy with an emphasis on identity formation, agency, and social change. First, a postcolonial framework is drawn upon to further develop the relationship between agency and identity as it pertains

to learning. Next, this relationship is explored from an educational standpoint centered on anti-colonialism followed by a suggestion for reflexive critical pedagogy.

Postcolonial Analysis and Education

The power of postcolonial analysis lies in its ability to elucidate oppressive relations that occur in certain insider/outsider (colonizer/colonized) relationships (Giroux, 1992; LeCourt, 2004). Applying a postcolonial analysis to formal education allows power to be examined as insider/outsider relationships are created in processes of knowledge production. The insider/outsider binary took on a crude but concrete form in the history of colonialism, drawing distinctions along clearly identifiable lines. The specific Western knowledges and practices of the colonizers, deemed universal and dispersed through various structures, created and entrenched the insider/outsider distinction, one resulting in physical, psychological, and material violence (Alfred, 2005; Fanon, 1968). In technologically advanced societies, insider/outsider subject positions take on multiple forms and power operates through authorized yet culturally situated knowledges and practices to draw various lines of distinction (Alfred, 2005; Foucault, 1980; Gee, 2008). The role of postcolonial analysis is to identify the practices that create and preserve these insider/outsider subject positions.

Since the rise of poststructural critique, knowledge has increasingly been understood as inextricable from social life as opposed to a collection of universal truths (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). It is thought of as existing in and governed by socially situated discourses that create subject positions and regulate social relationships (Luke, 1998). Schooling, as a site of knowledge production, is also a site of learning discursive practices (Foucault, 1983). Education is significant in that its expressed goal is the transmission of knowledge, values, and behaviours; its role in society is to circulate discourses that are to be taken as true. Although not as overt, violent, or destructive as colonial oppression, Western schools, like the colonial structures that transmitted imperial discourses, can be analysed in terms of their ability to establish legitimate or illegitimate, insider or outsider ways of thinking, being, acting, and feeling. Luke (1998) explained that whether individuals are recognized as insiders or as marginal to a discourse, the teaching and privileging of discourses "potentially [has] both productive and negative material, bodily and spatial consequences for human subjects and communities" (p. 50). For this reason, education was productive in the colonial project and it is for this reason that education remains a significant site of cultural reproduction today (Gee, 2008; Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 1995).

Decolonizing Education, Education for Decolonization

If we maintain that "discourses are not transparent nor neutral means for describing or analyzing the social and biological world" (Luke, 1998, p. 51) while, at the same time, we argue that discourses act to "hail us into place" (Hall, 1996, p. 6), then formal education should no longer merely transmit discourses. Insofar as colonial relations can be abstracted as aggressive, hegemonic acts that legitimatize and enshrine certain discourses, decolonization can be understood as those processes which challenge dominant discourses. Said (1993) explained decolonization as "a very complex battle over the course of different political destinies, different histories and geographies, and it is replete with works of the imagination, scholarship and counter-scholarship" (p. 219). The connection that Said draws between decolonization and acts of scholarship is informative for a critical approach to pedagogy. If scholarship can be understood as involving both learning and expressing what one has learned, by allowing students to engage in imaginative acts of scholarship formal education can play an important role in challenging dominant, hegemonic discourses.

Education, it follows, needs to be re-envisioned as a site where knowledge is analysed *as a socially situated discourse* with both productive and restrictive effects on society, and subsequently, as a site where students are allowed to re-imagine and re-articulate the discourses within which they identify. Yet, how might an approach to critical pedagogy teach science, language, or behaviour discourses for example, as discourses? How might engaging in such an approach allow students and teachers identify the ideologies that run through these discourses, and examine the relationship of these discourses to the functioning of their society? As well, what are the implications of such a process for the construction and performance of identity? A reflexive critical pedagogy attempts to resolve these questions by allowing students to engage in transformative processes of deconstructing discourses, and redefining and reoccupying subject positions. A process, as Hall (1990) and Said (1993) have argued, similar to what has so often been carried out in anti-colonial movements.

Reflexive Critical Pedagogy

To address postcolonial insights within an anti-colonial framework for education, a reflexive critical pedagogy as a learning approach is suggested. This pedagogical strategy is developed from the four points that emerged from the discussion on colonialism, identity, and resistance. These points emphasized the centrality of discourse in processes of identity formation and, in turn, the importance of identity in acts of social change. A reflexive critical pedagogy must pay specific attention to how identities of resistance and/or subjugation are forged within the fields of power/knowledge contained in discourses.

The first point indicated that identities are never completely finalized. Anti-colonial struggles, it was argued, emerged due to the incompleteness of indigenous subjectification within colonial discourses. A transformative, critical pedagogy therefore draws from the notion that a student's multiple identities exist in states of perpetual production and that discrepancies and conflicts exist between these identities (Gee, 2008; Giroux, 1992). Subject positions, therefore, are always open to being contested and resisted; identities can always be reasserted and remade. While some students' cultural or "primary" (Hall, 1996) identities might allow them to comfortably operate and identify within a particular school or societal discourse, other students' primary identities will not. These discrepancies provide an entry point to analyze and deconstruct how knowledge, and thus power, operates within certain discursive practices (Gee, 2008; Giroux, 1993; LeCourt, 2004). A pedagogy that begins with students, their identities, and their conflicts, presents an opening for students to reflect upon and challenge how they have come to occupy their subject positions. What identities are students being compelled to acquire in schools or in the workplace? How do these identities differ and conflict with those they perform at home or in larger cultural networks? Rather than beginning with abstract, universal notions of social justice, criticality emerges from attempts to exert agency in personal identity formation.

The second point indicated that the practice of legitimizing, authorizing, and universalizing cultural knowledge contained in discourses creates potentially oppressive subject positions. From an anti-colonial approach to pedagogy, learning knowledges and practices must be understood as learning culturally situated discourses. A reflexive critical pedagogy involves examining how discourses function in school and society, the connection between them, and the productive and negative consequences of the subject positions they create. Furthermore, beginning with the knowledges and practices that are exchanged in school might provide an entry point into examining larger societal discourses. For example, what are the consequences of learning school discourses on students' home identities? What are the consequences for society and for students' own lives of privileging science and technology over other forms of human interaction and ways of knowing? Central to this critical approach, it follows, is the recognition that knowledge is not a collection of universal truths, but located in discourses with implicit values, ideologies, societal functions, and implications for students' own identities. In taking such an approach it follows that teaching and learning a discourse intrinsically involves its analysis.

The third point addressed how agentic identity formation requires an alternative regime of representation. Furthermore, it was argued that resistance and reassertion of identity were predicated on alternative discourses. Agency in the classroom as well as agency in any particular social grouping must be conceived of within and between discourses (LeCourt, 2004). However, analyzing the productive and restrictive effects of discourse necessitates the signs and practices associated with other, diverse discourses (Gee, 2008). As Gee furthered, "diversity", therefore, "is not an 'add on' but a cognitive necessity if we wish to develop meta-awareness and overt reflective insight on the part of learners" (p. 173). Rigid practices of teaching situated discourses as universal knowledges, 'colonizes' students; it precludes critical analysis and potentially marginalizes non-dominant students in dominant cultural norms (Gee, 2008; LeCourt, 2004). From this perspective diversity cannot be taught using particular teaching practices. Rather, diversity and criticality enter into the classroom as students are permitted to bring their home, cultural, gendered, or class discourse practices in order to make meaning of what they are being taught at school and to make meaning of their world in general.

Finally, and coinciding with the fourth point concerning the importance of alternative, reimagined discourses for social change, asserting one's identity and attempting to bring about social change involves disrupting the languages, symbols, and other modes and practices of representation through which power operates. It is enabled by, as Luke (1998) wrote, "the speaking and writing" (p. 53) of those on the margins. Social change and agentic identity formation demands that space be made to challenge the entrenched borders of what is deemed to be legitimate knowledge and practices of inquiry. It also requires students be permitted to engage in imaginative acts of

scholarship that draw from different, at times delegitimized or marginalized discourses, to rewrite and re-describe what is acceptable and valuable. It does not follow, however, that false discourses are replaced with true discourses. No discourse or particular knowledge is authoritative in its own right. Education must encourage students to draw upon multiple alternative discourses, not on the presumption of revealing truth, but on the recognition that they are contingent approaches to understanding the world. Discourses, then, are to be judged based on their *ideology.* What are the productive or negative consequences of a rewritten discourse? How does a rewritten discourse create a "less cruel" (Rorty, 1989) or more morally justifiable (Gee, 2008) world?

Importantly, such an approach revisits the question of how learning, critique, and the assertion of identity, as opposed to simply discourse acquisition, might be assessed. From a reflexive critical pedagogy approach, expressions of learning should not be valued on how they conform to dominant discourses. Instead, expressions of learning and acts of scholarship should demonstrate the boundary of what is known and what is unknown, pushing the limits of students' imagination. In this way, when individuals demonstrate the boundaries of their knowledge they are not positioned, but are positioning themselves. As students share their representations with their teachers or their peers, whether through writing or speaking, these boundaries interact, new discourses are imagined, and new identities are asserted.

Conclusion

A reflexive critical approach to pedagogy makes clear that identities are at stake in both learning and social change. As demonstrated in the history of colonialism and as replicated to a certain extent in systems of formal education, dominant discourses "enable and delimit fields of knowledge and inquiry, and they govern what can be said, thought and done with those fields" (Luke, 1998, p. 51). Central to social change is examining how identities are allowed to be performed while asking: What are the ideologies that inform these performances? What are the social consequences of the discourses within which these identities are performed? In creating space for the analysis of multiple discourses and placing emphasis on imaginative, agentic assertions of identity, a reflexive critical pedagogy would encourage students to recognize how dominant and dominating discourses are transmitted through society. A reflexive critical pedagogy, therefore, would allow students to challenge dominant discourses and their practices, and to draw upon their own cultural discourses in order to "rearticulate … the 'sign' [and discourses] in which cultural identities may be inscribed" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 246). This approach to Western schooling is an attempt, as Said (1993) imagined, to create "a more integrative view of human community (p. 216) ... [and] a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world" (p. 230).

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