As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, we need critical pedagogy more than ever. We find the world adrift in economic, cultural, and political uncertainty brought about by Western culture’s unrelenting adherence to and proselytizing of neoliberal and neoconservative politics and policies. The threatening triangulation of neoliberalism, conservatism, and nationalism has significantly intensified austerity politics, weakened gender equality, hollowed public education, created economic alienation, and harshened immigration policies. Conservative consciousness and rhetoric have capitalized on crises and disasters, from Katrina to Brexit, where economic insecurity and decline are fused with immigration, racism, and nationalism, instead of neoliberal economics. Such policies have been magnified and intensified with the assault of dis-information in the current post-truth era. This hegemonic onslaught serves to completely undermine the public sphere, and at the same time alienate and disenfranchise the economically powerless. As this book goes to press, the conservative government in Brazil has tragically sought to erode Paulo Freire’s teaching and philosophies and moved to erase the Brazil’s Patron

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of Education from curriculum and schools, going so far as to threaten teachers who continue to refer to his teachings.

Given the contemporary political shifts in many nations, critical pedagogy garners increasing pertinence in the face of the hastening erosion of the public sphere and the destruction of democracy. This 2nd edition provides comprehensive and updated analyses of issues related to the struggles against the forces of neoliberalism’s imperial-induced privatization, in society generally and in education specifically. These chapters situate critical pedagogy’s relevance today and offer not only critiques but also practical applications, suggestions, and strategies on how neoliberal attacks can be collectively resisted, challenged, and eradicated especially by those of us teaching in schools and universities. For example, in this volume, Henry Giroux presciently unpacks how neoliberalism has normalized a ‘neo-fascism’ in this post-truth era; he writes that neo-fascists have tapped into the growing collective suffering and anxieties of millions of Americans…to redirect their anger and despair through a culture of fear and a discourse of dehumanization by turning critical ideas to ashes by disseminating a toxic mix of racialized categories, ignorance, and a militarized spirit of white nationalism (p. 1).

Critical Pedagogy in Uncertain Times: Hope and Possibilities, 2nd edition, reflects Paulo Freire’s prophetic words that ring even truer today: There is no change without dreams, just as there are no dreams without hope… The understanding of history as possibility rather than determinism… would be unintelligible without dreams, just as a deterministic view feels incompatible with them and therefore negates them (Freire 1970, 1992, p. 92). The contributors to this volume argue that neoliberal politics, and their resultant policies, are directly linked and fueled by the exclusionary nationalism, sexism, and racism of the emerging right-wing populism (Giroux 2019; Keskinen 2012; Macrine 2016; Edling and Macrine 2020). They posit that critical pedagogy continues to be relevant and needed to provide a critical framework for the identification and active responses to neoliberalism predatory schemes of crises, errant politics, and resultant policies. At the same time, these scholars offer hope through the development of critical pedagogical possibilities for the renewal of democratic ideals by providing insights, understandings, and hope for the future.

This volume coincides with the recent 50th anniversary of the publication of Paulo Freire’s landmark publication, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
English, and marks the 100th birthday of the Maestro. With over 1 million copies sold in numerous languages on 6 continents, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has emerged as one of the foundations of critical pedagogy and an enduring influence on progressive educators worldwide. Freire’s vision of democratic education was not simply about the teaching and learning of content; rather, it implied that participation in a democracy involves the transformative right to education and the processes of learning for all who participate or hold stake in the operations of schooling. The notion of ‘education for the greater good’ understands that democratic public schooling is a seedbed for new knowledge and culture leading to new selves, new societies, and a new humanity that is more humane. This radical dream of a democratic public education stands in stark contrast to current neoliberal trends in school reform that seek to privatize schools, standardize and script curriculum and pedagogy, and otherwise deskill and disenfranchise teachers and students. According to Paulo Freire, the infiltration of private monied interests in public education was and is highly suspicious because ‘Neoliberal doctrine seeks to limit education to technological practice’ (Freire 1992, p. 4). In the language of neoliberalism, social inequalities such as poverty, homelessness, and unemployment are normalized, inevitable, and even necessary. He added that under neoliberal rule the, ‘opportunities for change become invisible, and our role in fostering change becomes absent’ (Freire 1992, p. 4). Public education is thereby stripped of its transformative potential.

**Critical Pedagogy Origins**

In the late 1980s, I was as a graduate student studying to be a school psychologist at Temple University in Philadelphia, coincidently where Giroux’s early books were published. There, I was first introduced to public intellectual, Henry Giroux’s books *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (1981) and *Theory and Resistance* (1983). As a result, I became politically ‘woke’ through my readings of Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire.

Later in 1994, when I was an Assistant Professor at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Henry Giroux, one of the founders of critical pedagogy, came to give a lecture. His talk was so uplifting and enlightening that we all experienced what being a ‘critical pedagogue’ means and could mean, but more, what it holds for us as individuals, educators, and scholars and especially within all social, historical, and democratic contexts. Needless to say, it was revolutionary, as Giroux called upon us to
work to protect both democracy and education for the greater good. He then traced the origins of critical pedagogy, adding that his first reading of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* gave him a new language to understand the conflicts and challenges that he was faced as a high school teacher and later as an assistant professor. He noted that Paulo’s work marked a moment of his own transformation. As a result, Giroux became dedicated not just to Paulo’s work but to reworking and redefining what ‘critical pedagogy’ meant from its early beginnings in the 1970s. Actually, it was shortly after the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that Paulo Freire contacted Henry Giroux about one of his articles that Paulo had reviewed in *Interchange*. Within a short time, Henry and Paulo began a life-long collaboration on the emergence of Critical Pedagogy, not only co-editing critical education series at Greenwood, but they also wrote a number of introductions together for specific books in the series.

It was during this same time in the late seventies that Henry Giroux reported that he began to fashion a unique approach to theories of schooling by incorporating the works of the Frankfurt School, Paulo’s work, radical social theory, along with selected works of John Dewey, George Counts, and others to construct the foundation for the critical pedagogy we have today. It is worth quoting at length Giroux’s (2009) thinking about the origins of critical pedagogy:

> I attempted to theorize critical pedagogy through the lens of critical theory. So, there was an attempt to link Paulo’s work with European intellectual work. It was also an attempt to move beyond; even then, what I thought was a reductionist, economist model at work in Critical Theory, and in some versions of critical educational theory. I also thought there was a kind of a radical, existential, biographical work emerging that I thought was very important but I thought was limited by virtue of its refusal to link the personal to the public in a way that exemplified the personal not as a kind of emancipatory moment in itself, but one that also needed to be translated. So, we had to understand how private issues translate into public issues. (Giroux 2009, p. 15)

Given that, there has been a history of conflating Critical Theory and critical pedagogy. Critical theory, for clarity, is mainly associated with the Frankfurt School’s Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, established in 1923. While critical theory is actually a derivative source for critical pedagogy, critical theory is rooted in the works of Hegel’s and Kant’s critical philosophy, as well as the writings of Marx
and Engels. Interestingly, the British Fabian Socialists (in the 1800s) were also credited with contributing to the development of critical theory (McKernan 2013, pp. 417–418). Their efforts critiqued the social policies aimed at solving the economic and social ills in nineteenth-century England and by rejecting ‘direct confrontation and violent revolution’. So, critical pedagogy did not inherit the Frankfurt School ‘as is’; rather, it grew out of a collaboration between Giroux and emerged from ‘Paulo Freire’s work in poverty stricken northeastern Brazil in the 1960s. Critical Pedagogy amalgamated liberation theological ethics and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in Germany with the progressive impulses in education’ (Kincheloe 2007, p. 12). Finally, in the evolution of critical pedagogy, Giroux (1983) contended that the logic of technocratic rationality “suppresses the critical function of historical consciousness” by denying the possibility “of human action grounded in historical insight and committed to emancipation in all spheres of human activity.” He added that “traditional and liberal discourses treat the intersection of culture, power, and knowledge in fashioning a view of teaching and learning.” Further, he argued that in critical pedagogy, it is necessary to develop a critical discourse that embraces pedagogy as a form of cultural politics (p. 41).

Another prominent figure in critical pedagogy is Peter McLaren, whose first book, Life in Schools, brought him to the attention of Henry and Paulo. Peter’s contribution to critical pedagogy over the years has been crucial as he has worked to link critical pedagogy with Revolutionary Pedagogy and Marxist theories of a class-based critique. Antonia Darder has called McLaren the ‘Poet Laureate of the Educational Left’ for his ‘words that flame’ and his highly imaginative use of language and the eloquence of his rhetorical style. Peter McLaren continues to spread the words of Paulo and the essence of critical pedagogy through his international work. McLaren (2006) states that:

Critical Pedagogy resonates with the sensibility of the Hebrew symbol of tikkun, which means to heal, repair, and transform the world, all the rest is commentary. It provides historical, cultural, political, and ethical direction for those in education who still dare to hope. Irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed, critical pedagogy is as revolutionary as the earlier view of the authors of the Declaration of Independence: Since history is fundamentally open to change, liberation is an authentic goal, and a radically different world can be brought into being. (p. 160)
It is from these humble beginnings along with Henry’s introduction of Paulo Freire to Donaldo Macedo, who became Paulo’s interpreter and translator to this day, that critical pedagogy took hold. The first-generation Freirean scholars such as Henry Giroux, Antonia Darder, Donald Macedo, Peter McLaren, Joe Kincheloe, Michael Apple, Jean Anyon, Maxine Greene, Paula Allman, Stanley Aronowitz, bell hooks, Ira Shor, Shirley R. Steinberg, and many others have all contributed to its enrichment and its continued relevance today.

Included in the first edition (2009), was a translated unpublished transcript of Paulo Freire’s 1985 lecture on Amílcar Cabral, entitled Amílcar Cabral: Pedagogue of the Revolution. This piece demonstrated the freshness of Paulo’s work, and offered insights that reverberate as much today as they did on its initial presentation. Here, Freire traces work of Amílcar Cabral, who is not well known in the United States, but it is important for all critical pedagogues to read. Prominent critical pedagogue and Freirean scholar, Donaldo Macedo (2006) wrote that Paulo Freire admired Cabral, stating that, ‘Amílcar Cabral was a thinker who put his thought into practice. He was a thinker whom I read over and over again and always got new perspectives from’ (p. 6). This chapter by Paulo Freire is an invaluable contribution and gives an interesting insight into the Meastro’s influence; as a result, I included it in this 2nd edition.

Finally, this new volume brings together a unique group of prominent critical pedagogy scholars including Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire, Antonia Darder, Maxine Greene, Peter McLaren, Kenneth Saltman, Joe Kincheloe, Donaldo Macedo, Shirley R. Steinberg as well as a number of emerging critical pedagogues who move beyond critique to show how and why critical frameworks of democratically informed education and activism must become the core of our mission. As a result, these authors contribute to our understanding of why democratic forms of education and various elements of a critical pedagogy are vital not only to education and students but also to our economy, the public sphere, our democratic institutions and future leadership. The writers come from differing but allied traditions within critical pedagogy including Freirean, Feminist, Anti-Imperialist, Anti-colonialist, and Marxist. From these different vantage points, this book shows how neoliberal policies have transformed the external dynamics of education from a public good to a private enterprise and how this change has corrupted the integrity of teaching and learning. Giroux (2006) summarizes this crisis:
“First and foremost is the concerted attempt by right-wing extremists and corporate interests to strip the professorate of any authority, render critical pedagogy as merely an instrumental task, eliminate tenure as a protection for teacher authority and remove critical reasons from any vestige of civic courage, engaged citizenship and social responsibility.” True knowledge and critical inquiry have been quashed in favor of blind obedience to the false idols of consumerism, imperialism, and greed. (p. 6)

These prophetic words are emblematic of the current assault on and erasure of Paulo Freire’s legacy in Brazil. The present conservative government in Brazil poses tremendous challenges to professors, teachers, students, and academic institutions by outlawing the fundamental tenets of critical pedagogy and learning environments that are both critically empowering and sustainable. Today, critical pedagogy remains a source of hope and possibility for educators and activists engaged in struggles against oppression in their classrooms and the world at large. The time has come for teachers, educators, and activists to embrace critical pedagogy with a renewed interest and sense of urgency. While critical pedagogy comes under increasing attacks by reactionary ideologies and ideologues (i.e., Brazil), its message only becomes more urgent and important in these troubled, dangerous, and uncertain times.

**CHAPTER ROADMAP**

**Part I: Uncertain Times: Exploring the Costs of Neoliberalism**

Part I of this book both provides foundational knowledge of critical pedagogy and examines the draconian disenfranchisement as a result of neoliberalism’s assault on democracy. It opens with this chapter—Introduction, which introduces the reader to critical pedagogy with explications of how critical pedagogy can challenge neoliberalism as it undermines democracy and reshapes education. Finally, the introductory chapter provides a roadmap to the contributors’ chapters.

In Chapter 2, *The Ghost of Fascism and in the Post-truth Era*, Henry A. Giroux discusses how the architects and managers of extreme capitalism have used the crisis of economic inequality and its ‘manifestly brutal and exploitative arrangements’ to sow social divisions and resurrect the discourse of racial cleansing and white supremacy. Giroux shows how neoliberalism is actually a set of values, ideologies, and practices that are actively recreating America today—for the worse. He forewarns and forecasts the
looming and insidious plot of neo-fascism especially in our post-truth era. Of course, CNN, the presidential elections, and the never-ending war in Iraq have proven that the political and economic reality of democracy in the United States has changed. He calls on academics to act and provide an indispensable service to society by reframing the purpose of education from ‘job training’ to ‘critical thinking and action.’ In addition, he argues that neoliberalism and fascism conjoin and advance in a comfortable and mutually compatible projects and movements that connect the exploitative values and cruel austerity policies of casino capitalism with fascist ideals.

In *Critical Pedagogy in Difficult Times*, Chapter 3, Peter Mayo explores the signposts for alternative approaches to education and cultural work by drawing on critical pedagogy (Giroux 2011) inspired by Paulo Freire and others. He explicates how critical pedagogy has taken on a variety of approaches with one common element is that they underscores the political basis of education. He adds that education is not a neutral enterprise and heuristically can be regarded as serving to ‘domesticate’ and strengthen the status quo and therefore keeps in place much of the frequently perceived ills, economic, social, and environmental.

Chapter 4 entitled *Conscientização* by Antonia Darder examines Paulo Freire’s concept of conscientização and points to an understanding of critical awareness and the formation of social consciousness as both a historical phenomenon and a human social process connected to our communal capacities to become authors and social actors of our destinies. Darder describes how for Freire conscientização doesn’t occur automatically or naturally, nor should it be understood as an evolving linear phenomenon. Instead, she delineates how Freire spoke of it as an emancipatory consciousness that arises through an organic process of human engagement, which requires critical pedagogical interactions that nurture the dialectical relationship of human beings with the world. Finally, she adds that conscientização entails a grounded appreciation for the dialectical tension that must be retained, between the empowerment of the individual and the democratic well-being of the larger communal sphere.

Kenneth J. Saltman contributed Chapter 5, entitled: *Critical Pedagogy Against the Privatization of Culture and Politics: “Privilege-Checking,” “Virtue-Signaling,” and “Safe Spaces.”* In this chapter, Saltman critically examines how material and symbolic precarity and insecurity are fueling subjective states of despair and anxiety, and an educational and intellectual crisis depriving subjects of the intellectual and linguistic means to
interpret and comprehend the broader forces and structures producing precarity. He argues that symbolic power and social privilege are largely unused in scholarly academic discourse. Saltman also questions the minefield of identity on campus is that identity, at least gender and sexual identity, is openly recognized as a social construct and performance, and is subject to revision and questioning. He asks: What is it that makes such fragility of self out of subjects who have no foundational essence to trouble? Why has emotional comfort and protection from unsettling thought become sacrosanct in public culture? Why has cultural politics become so personalized?

The late Maxine Greene, a scholar and friend, graciously contributed *Teaching as Possibility: A Light in Dark Times* to my original book in 2009; it is Chapter 6 in this second edition. Professor Greene was a social activist and pioneer for women in the fields of educational philosophy, cultural studies, and critical pedagogy. When Professor Greene passed away on May 29, 2014, she was described as “perhaps the most iconic and influential living figure, a pioneer for women in the field of educational philosophy.” Professor Greene’s chapter discusses how, in the Freirean tradition, the illumination of hope can exist even during the darkest of times, similar in the view to Hannah Arendt. This flicker of possibility is ultimately what inspires the imagination to create alternative realities. According to Greene, teachers are in a unique position to realize these untold possibilities by challenging the status quo, which currently deforms and devolves education into simple techno-rational job training.

In Chapter 7, called *Critical Pedagogies of Neoliberalism*, Sheila L. Macrine revisits and evolves her original concept of *Pedagogies of Neoliberalism* (2016) with a new iteration called *Critical Pedagogies of Neoliberalism*. This new model helps to develop a critical framework to identify and to disrupt neoliberalism’s hidden, and not so hidden, hegemonic social and political practices and policies by adding educational components and advancing a critical and activist response. The creation of *Critical Pedagogies of Neoliberalism* can help to identify these threats by naming some of neoliberalism’s most effective weapons.

**Part II: Critical Pedagogy: A Practical Source of Hope and Possibility**

Working from the view that education informs the political, the second section of this book explores the relevance of critical pedagogy and its role in challenging neoliberalism, conservatism, and the current pursuit
of nationalism. In doing so, the contributors in this section clarify critical pedagogy’s pertinence today in countering neoliberalism’s hidden and barbaric actions. These chapters describe how critical pedagogy is our best chance to protect the future of democracy, education, and the public sphere. Ultimately, critical pedagogy can bring awareness of the dangers of a neoliberal society run amok. At the same time, critical pedagogy can help to reinstate both ‘education as a public good’ and educators as ‘public intellectuals’ charged with developing a ‘critically informed citizenry’ capable of sustaining democracy and transforming society and the human condition.

The first chapter in this section, Chapter 8, is entitled The Attacks on the Legacy of Paulo Freire in Brazil: Why He Still Disturb so Many? written by Inny Accioly. She speaks to Brazil’s current conservative government that has worked to erode and to erase Paulo Freire’s ideas and philosophy from schools and curriculum. Ironically, we just celebrated the 50th anniversary of Pedagogy of the Oppressed and that Paulo Freire was named Brazil’s ‘Patron of Education’ due to his successful and revolutionary work to create a literate citizenry. Here, Accioly traces Freire’s rise, his oppression, his vindication, and the present incongruous moves to eliminate his legacy in Brazil from the schools, curriculum, and outlaw teachers and educators from teaching his works.

Then, Chapter 9, Critical Pedagogy, Dialogue and Tolerance: A Learning to Disagree Framework, was written by a group of up-and-coming critical pedagogues, María Carolina Nieto Ángel, Mônica Maciel Vahl, and Bernadette Farrell. These authors describe themselves as migrant women living, researching, and teaching in New Zealand. They illustrate their conceptualization of a new critical framework for learning to ‘disagree’. Collectively arguing that emancipatory consciousness only unfolds through critical praxis, dialogue, and disagreement. As a result, this group presents not a ‘prescription’ but a ‘possibility’ for the development of such critical consciousness in their Creative Tension of Learning to Disagree Framework.

This is followed by Chapter 10 entitled, South African Freedom Fighter: Amilcar Cabral: Pedagogue of the Revolution Paulo Freire, written by Paulo Freire and translated by Sheila L. Macrine, Fernando Naiditch, and João Paraskeva. It is a transcription of a lecture that Paulo Freire (1921–1997) gave on November 8, 1985, at the School of Education at the University of Brasilia (UNB) and it was originally recorded, transcribed, and
organized in Portuguese by Professor Venício Arthur Lima. This lecture by the Freire, affectionally referred to as the ‘Maestro,’ had never been published in English. It was made available for publication for the 1st edition of this book (2009) through the generosity of the late Paulo Freire’s wife and friend, Professor Nita Freire, for which I am eternally grateful. This is such an important chapter that I felt it necessary to include it in this new edition. In addition, we would like to extend a special thanks to Alex Oliveira for his technical assistance with this translation.

Noah De Lissovoy closes this section with Chapter 11 entitled, Toward a Critical Pedagogy of the Global, by discussing a need for critical pedagogy to shift toward globality. He writes that movement toward a global organization of social life means the frequent interruption of local narratives and expectations as well as the experience of powerlessness in the face of apparently vast historical forces. He argues that critical pedagogy alone is insufficient in this conjuncture; what is needed is a critical pedagogy of the global.

Part III: Figures in Critical Pedagogy

This next section features interviews with a few prominent Critical Pedagogues. The first is Chapter 12, which features a 2008 transcript of An Interview with Henry A. Giroux and Joe L. Kincheloe was edited by Shirley R. Steinberg. Professor Steinberg was kind enough to allow this interview to be published in this second edition to share both Henry Giroux and Joe Kincheloe’s notions on critical pedagogy. In this piece, Public Intellectual Henry Giroux describes his early work on critical pedagogy. Being a cognitive psychologist and a feminist critical pedagogue, The Postformal Reader: Cognition and Education (Kincheloe, et al. 1999) was a very influential early book for me to help bridge the gap between my training in educational psychology and critical pedagogy.

Chapter 13, Critical Revolutionary Pedagogy’s Relevance Today, presents a narrative by Peter McLaren. Here, he introduces the main issues within educational postmodernism and explains his turn toward a Marxist-humanist trajectory, and addresses contemporary challenges to Marx’s dialectical thought. McLaren then analyzes how globalization impacts schooling and students. Next, Chapter 14 features an interview with Ira Shor that appeared in the first edition. Finally, I am eternally grateful to Gustavo E. Fischman for his insightful Afterword in Chapter 15.
When the first edition of this volume was published in 2009, Barack Obama had just become President. The idea of an African American president was at once inspiring and hopeful. In fact, Obama’s election platform was based on the concept of hope and for nurturing urban youth. Yet as we lived through his presidency, we found that ‘that hope’ was deferred (Duncan-Andrade 2009, p. 11). A decade later, we are in even more precarious times in this post-democratic and post-truth world with President Trump who was just acquitted of impeachment. Now that we are in the face the Covid-19 virus, precarity is imminent for all. This 2nd edition, being published ten years after the original, maintains that we must be ever-vigilant against the draconian disenfranchisements of neoliberalism at work in society. Secondly, in the spirit of critical pedagogy, it reminds us that we must work to keep Paulo Freire’s legacy of hope alive and to continue to struggle against oppression of any kind with a goal toward self-actualization and humanization. As Paulo Freire (1970) in his seminal work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, surmised: Any system which deliberately tries to discourage critical consciousness is guilty of oppressive violence. Any school which does not foster students’ capacity for critical inquiry is guilty of violent oppression (p. 74).

Needless to say, this second edition has allowed me to revisit my own critical passions and critical hopes, and more importantly, to share the salient voices of a unique group of ‘first-generation’ Critical Pedagogues, along with an exciting international group of up-and-coming Critical Pedagogues. This experience has been a labor of love as we work to claim, reclaim, and elucidate critical pedagogy’s relevance in today’s world.

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