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***Reinventing Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Contemporary Critical Perspectives.***

Edited by James D. Kirylo. Pp 260. London: Bloomsbury Academic. 2020. £70 (hbk), £22.99 (pbk), £20.69 (ebk). ISBN 9781350117181 (hbk), ISBN 9781350117174 (pbk), ISBN 9781350117204 (ebk).

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This is an edited collection bringing together a total of thirty-three different contributors from varying disciplines to consider the contemporary relevance of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The blurb on the back tells us that the book "showcases the multitude of ways in which Freire's most celebrated work is being reinvented by contemporary educators, activists, teachers, and researchers." This, then, is a book full of promise. It presents twenty short chapters—from a welcome mix of old hands (Peter Roberts, Peter McLaren) and younger doctoral students—bookended by a Foreword from Ira Shor and an Afterword from Antonia Darder. Endorsements from Henry Giroux and Peter Mayo place a heavy emphasis on the word "reinvention," and this indeed is where the appeal of the book lies—the *critical reinvention* of Freire's seminal text for contemporary conditions and realities.

One of the key problems with the Freire industry is the tendency towards hagiography. Sadly, in spite of the promise of a critical reinvention, this is what we get here. The tone is set by the editor's introduction, which offers an uncritical celebration of Freire's timeless hand stretching across all disciplines and reaching out to tackle injustices wherever they be in the world. The chapters that follow then present a series of unproblematised renderings of Freirean concepts—conscientization, critical consciousness, teachers as transformative intellectuals, liberating praxis, etc.—and a succession of claims as to how the authors as teachers have raised critical consciousness through their liberating praxis in various ways. Across the 260 pages of the book, "critical perspectives" are hard to find, as are "reinventions" of Freirean pedagogy for "contemporary" material and ideological conditions. A better title for the book might have been *Reiterating Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

This is not to deny the value of the book. I will be adding it to the reading list for my first year undergraduate Sociology of Education module. Students have much to gain from it. The chapters are short, the language simple and accessible, and the book offers an excellent introduction to the theory and practice of Freirean education. Read alongside the original, the book showcases how core ideas from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* are still being enacted (largely uncritically) today. There are some very good chapters too. For example, Gregory Bruno's reflections on the practical and ethical difficulties involved in enacting critical pedagogy in prison education (Chapter 4) and Patricia Virella and Jenny Weiner's fascinating study of the way in which Freirean discourse has been recuperated and harnessed in the service of neoliberal educational reforms in Puerto Rico (Chapter 13). Antonia Darder's Afterword also provides a good summary overview of her "pedagogy of love."

The contributions cover a lot of ground, offering perspectives from different settings (early childhood education, high schools, community education, teacher training, higher education) and theorisations of Freire in relation to, for example, DuBois, de Beauvoir and Martin Luther King. The contributors, however, are drawn primarily from the Global North (twenty-five are from the US). This imbalance is reflected, I think, in the way the book treats an aspect of Freire that I have always found troubling—his concept of "humanisation" and the linking of his pedagogy to our (supposed) ontological vocation to become more fully human. References in the book abound to "humanizing pedagogy" (17), "becoming humanized" (21), "humanizing the world through education" (105), realising "full humanity" (130, 191), humanizing ourselves through praxis (138-9), the search for humanization (228),

“humanizing paradigm” (241), etc. For the most part, the humanizing mission of critical pedagogy is taken for granted and what it might mean to become “fully human,” or why there exists an ontological vocation to become such, is left unexplained. This is a prime example of the book *re-stating* Freirean principles and maxims rather than critically reinventing them.

To be fair, this is not true of all contributions. The chapters on digital software (Chapter 6) and teacher mindfulness (Chapter 8) offer something different and there are welcome engagements from critical race theory (Chapter 5) and queer theory (Chapter 18). There are two important chapters also (Chapters 14 and 15) which approach Freire’s understanding of the non-human from indigenous and posthumanist perspectives. What unites all chapters in the book, however, is the uncritical manner in which Freire is treated. The chapter on critical race theory, for example, nowhere mentions the tense and fraught relationship between CRT and critical pedagogy and proceeds as if the two align harmoniously without issue or friction. Similarly, the chapters in which Freire’s understanding of humanization and the non-human could have been engaged with robustly end up seeking to accommodate him into perspectives (posthumanism and indigenous readings of the world) in which he uncomfortably sits.

This is a valuable book nonetheless. Over the course of a series of short snappy chapters readers witness a range of critical pedagogues reflecting on their own practice, telling us how they understand the formation of critical consciousness and their role as transformative educators. The book is often highly engaging and will be of interest and relevance to students of radical education, critical pedagogy, the sociology of education and education studies more generally. However, its title is misleading. If the book had been called *Enacting Pedagogy of the Oppressed Today: The Continued Relevance of Freire’s Ideas*, it would have better captured the general thrust.