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ARTICLE

Rethinking Social Justice Issues Within an Eco-Justice Conceptual and Moral Framework

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As the social justice issues of class, race, and gender have been the dominant concern of many educational studies faculty over the last decades, it is now time to ask whether the recent evidence of global warming, changes in the chemistry of the world's oceans, and the increasing shortage of potable water should lead to developing a new strategy for ameliorating these longstanding sources of injustice and poverty. Given the amount of time devoted to discussing class, race, and gender issues, as well as the number of books that focus on these issues, little has actually been achieved in effecting the systemic changes required for marginalized social groups to participate on more equal terms in the public arenas of politics, economics, and educational opportunities. Corporations in the United States continue to shape governmental policies that deepen the economic plight of marginalized groups who live at the bottom of the wage scale, while raising the cost of drugs and medical care beyond what they can afford. Overall, the democratic process itself has become degraded by corporate and other special interests to the point where millions of people continue to be mired in poverty and hopelessness.

The recent acceleration of economic globalization and the deepening of the ecological crises that are now impacting people's daily lives suggest that a radical rethinking of how to address social justice issues is needed. The growing awareness of these global developments, which includes the near total collapse of the free market system, a weakened labor movement and rapid rise in unemployment, the decline in the size of the middle class, and a need to change the ecological impact of all citizens (even that of the poor who have not been educated about how to live less environmentally destructive lives), means that the old assumptions about achieving a more socially just society have to be re-examined.

Social justice thinking has largely been framed in terms of middle-class assumptions about individualism, progress, a world of unlimited exploitable natural resources, and education as a source of individual empowerment. The ultimate goal of achieving greater social justice for marginalized groups has been to enable them to participate on equal terms in the areas of work, politics, and the culture of consumerism. The guiding priorities of ecojustice-based educational reforms are, on the other hand, both more global in terms of analysis and accountability, and more local in terms of educational strategies that reverse the process of deskilling that is part of the destruction of community systems of mutual support that began with the rise of the techno-scientific based industrial culture. These priorities can be summarized as eliminating environmental racism, resisting the forces that are colonizing Third World cultures and exploiting their natural resources, revitalizing the local cultural and environmental commons that are sites of resistance to the expansion of the industrial/consumer dependent lifestyle, adopting a lifestyle that does not degrade the prospects of future generations, and developing an ecological consciousness that respects the right of natural systems to renew themselves.

Basing daily life on ecojustice criteria means taking account of the impact of the consumer dependent lifestyle that is being promoted in our public schools and universities by asking whether it is largely responsible for the economic and cultural colonization of Third World societies, as well as the environmental racism that exposes minority groups to the toxic chemicals that the industrial/consumer-oriented culture relies upon. Ecojustice thinking also brings into focus the need to consider the existing community-centered alternatives to the deskilled individual lifestyle that is increasingly dependent upon consumerism—even as the sources of employment become more uncertain because of outsourcing to low-wage regions of the world, and the drive to increase profits by replacing workers

with computer-driven machines. As the life-sustaining ecosystems become more degraded, there is also the question of whether the current industrial/consumer-oriented lifestyle that is taken-for-granted by many educational advocates of social justice is undermining the prospects of future generations. Other concerns of ecojustice thinking include the need to undertake educational reforms that address our responsibility for leaving future generations with sustainable ecosystems, which also means recognizing the right of non-human forms of life to reproduce themselves in sustainable ways.

While the environment is being degraded to the point where the scarcity of protein, water, and energy is driving up prices, thus further impoverishing the already poor, the advertising industry is spending billions of dollars a year in order to perpetuate the public's addiction to consuming the latest fashions, technologies, and forms of entertainment. Public awareness of the environmental changes that scientists are warning about is further obfuscated by the big-box stores and shopping malls that stock their shelves with a super abundance of consumer products—thus further perpetuating the illusion of plenitude. Glitz, easy credit and an indifference to the dangers of going deep into debt are just part of the culture that now dominates the majority of the people's lives—that is, those who have not lost their well paying jobs, health and retirement benefits, and are now reduced to a minimum-wage lifestyle. The poor and marginalized-- ranging from single mothers, urban minority youth, migrant farm workers, and a wide range of people whose skin color and lack of educational background disqualify them from other than menial forms of labor in industrial food outlets and other low-paying service-industry jobs, are too focused on meeting the most basic needs of food and shelter to be aware that there are community-centered alternatives to the industrial/consumer lifestyle they have been excluded from participating in. As Barbara Ehrenreich pointed out in a recent interview with Bill Moyers (2007), the poor live so close to the edge that going without pay for the couple of weeks it takes to find a more high-paying job is unthinkable. In effect, poverty restricts even this most basic option that the middle class can take for granted.

The central priorities of ecojustice advocates do not have their roots in abstract theory. Rather, the traditions of intergenerational knowledge and patterns of mutual support that enable people to live in ways where market forces do not dominate everyday life have been around since the beginning of human history. They are still present in every community across North America and in other parts of the world. Historically, these traditions were known as the commons; that is, what is freely shared by the members of the community, which also includes local decision-making. The norms that governed the cultural and environmental commons were passed along orally and differed from culture to culture. The Romans were the first to establish a written record of the commons, which they identified as the local streams, woods, fields, animals, and so forth. The cultural commons, which include the intergenerational knowledge and skills necessary for gathering, preparing, and sharing food, the medicinal properties of plants and where to find them, narratives of courage and of hubris, the rules that governed community members who violated local norms of justice, the sharing of technological skills and craft knowledge, the mythologies and prejudices that regulated who had privileged positions in the community, and so forth, have only recently been identified as part of the commons. The cultural commons also include the voluntary associations that are sources of mutual support within the community, as well as groups that come to together to promote agendas that range from providing safe bicycle lanes within the community to supporting the peace efforts of national politicians and providing aid to people in other parts of the world that have experienced a natural disaster. Unfortunately, the intergenerational sources of empowerment and community self-sufficiency are now being threatened by the market-liberal traditions of private property, anomic individualism, the expansion of the industrial approach to production and consumption, the growing hegemony of the capitalist ethos, and the rise of corporate power.

While the causes of the economic crisis that is spreading around the world are systemic as well as a function of human greed, it is important to note that the main focus of the media, politicians, and

public is on regaining the jobs that will enable people to return to their previous consumer-dependent lifestyles. That is, there is little discussion of community-centered alternatives that are here being referred to as the cultural commons—and thus little discussion of how the political economy of the local cultural commons can become part of the basis for meeting the daily needs for food, housing, medical care, education. If attention were to be given to the lifestyles of people who are more fully engaged in their local cultural commons it would become clearer that they rely less upon a money economy and thus are less exposed to the exploitive forces that are inherent in the industrial governed market place. The voluntary simplicity movement has demonstrated that the political economy of the cultural and environmental commons leads to a different understanding of wealth—on that takes account of skills, mutual support systems, and community well-being. Yet, it is important to recognize that there is still a need for meaningful forms of work that contribute to a living wage. The combination of local decision-making, which is a key feature of many local cultural commons, and the spread of such developments as micro-banks and the pooling of local resources for housing projects and other community infrastructure needs, are also evidence of the need to combine thinking about local self-sufficiency and ecological sustainability.

The relationships between the local cultural commons found in every community today and the industrial/consumer culture have not been mutually supportive. Indeed, the people who promote the expansion of the industrial/consumer-dependent lifestyle, and thus the accumulation of capital, view the largely non-monetized cultural commons as potential markets to be exploited. Their goal is to replace intergenerational skills and patterns of mutual support with new technologies that must be privately owned and with expert systems that represent as sources of backwardness the traditional values and forms of knowledge--such as civil liberties, patterns of returning labor, mentoring, and knowledge of how to live lightly on the land, that have been the strength of many cultural commons. At the time the environmental commons in rural England were being transformed during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, the process of limiting free access and use on a none monetized basis, as well as overturning of local decision-making, was referred to as “enclosure”. That is, the enclosure of the environmental commons involved the introduction of private ownership and integration into a money economy, which often led to decision making being transferred to distant owners—and later to corporations that made increasing profits the primary criterion for exploiting the natural environment.

Now that we can recognize the cultural beliefs and practices, which now include cyberspace, as part of the cultural commons that enable community members to be less dependent upon a money economy, it is possible to recognize the many ways in which different aspects of the local cultural commons are being enclosed by today’s market forces—as well as by ideologies, technologies, prejudices, and silences. Public schools and universities continue to be complicit in reinforcing the cultural assumptions that further undermine the viability of the cultural commons even as environmental scientists are working to conserve what remains of the environmental commons. Many social- justice-oriented faculty continue to reinforce many of the same cultural assumptions that gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the industrial/consumer-dependent lifestyle even as they criticize the exploitive nature of capitalism. These shared assumptions include the idea of the autonomous individual, the progressive nature of change, an anthropocentric view of human/nature relationships, and the drive to impose these assumptions on other cultures under the rubric of “development”, as well as the same silences about the local community sources of self-sufficiency and mutual support (Sachs,1992).

While the diversity of the world’s cultural commons currently represents sites of resistance to economic globalization, it is important to avoid romanticizing the cultural commons. In many cultures, including the local communities across North America, the cultural commons also include narratives and traditions that perpetuate different forms of discrimination and economic exploitation. That is, the

stoning to death of the woman who seeks to marry outside of her tribe, the market liberal ideology that equates social progress with an economy that makes survival of the fittest the ultimate test of individual success, and the various forms of racial, class, and gender prejudices also have their roots in the traditions of some cultural commons. Ironically, these non-monetized traditional beliefs and practices (which have dire economic and social consequences for those who are the subjects of discrimination) were and still are generally sustained in communities which may also possess networks of mutual support that reduce reliance on consumerism—and that have a smaller ecological footprint.

The local cultural commons should not be regenerated and supported just because they represent alternatives to the industrial/consumer-oriented culture that is being globalized--and that put at further risk the possibility of achieving a sustainable future. Rather, the different traditions of the cultural commons need to be examined in terms of whether they support traditions of civil liberties, as well as moral reciprocity in the treatment of all members of the community as deserving the right to an equal opportunity to develop their personal talents and to make their contributions to regenerating the life-supporting cultural commons. Challenging the traditions of the cultural commons that are sources of exploitation and marginalization should also be part of a more global and ecologically informed ecojustice pedagogy.

As pointed out in C. A. Bowers' online *Handbook for Faculty Workshops on How to Introduce Cultural Commons and Ecojustice Issues Into Their Courses* (2007), the unique characteristics of the cultural and environmental commons require a radically different approach than the current emphasis on making individual emancipation, promoting the students' construction of their own knowledge, and making higher test scores the primary foci of educational reform. There are a number of unique characteristics of the cultural commons that an ecojustice pedagogy needs to take into account. The first is that most of the traditions that members of a community participate in on a daily basis are taken-for-granted, such as the tradition of English speakers using the subject-verb-object pattern of oral and written communication, assuming they are innocent until proven guilty before a jury of peers, and using language as a conduit in a sender/receiver process of communication—to cite just a few of the taken-for-granted patterns of daily life. The taken-for-granted status of most aspects of the local cultural commons is important for several reasons. In being part of tacit, contextual, and largely taken-for-granted experience, they are mostly excluded from the curriculum of public schools and universities. In being excluded from the curriculum at all levels of the formal education process, and in being largely taken-for-granted by members of the community who are at the same time being constantly indoctrinated with the message that change is essential to progress, the loss (that is, enclosure) of different traditions of the cultural commons go unnoticed—except for the people who are consciously carrying forward one of the traditions of the cultural commons, such as weaving, protecting civil liberties, utilizing craft knowledge and skill, participating in local theater, and so forth.

The taken-for-granted nature of the individual's embodied experience of the cultural commons, which may include racist and gender forms of discrimination, is just one of the characteristics of daily experience that require a different approach to teaching and learning than is found in current approaches that are based on many of the same cultural assumptions (or what I have referred to elsewhere as root metaphors) that underlie the industrial/consumer-oriented culture that is overshooting the life-sustaining capacity of natural systems. The emphasis on explicit forms of knowledge, which is reinforced by reliance on print-based knowledge, testing, and supposedly objective knowledge, marginalizes the importance of helping students recognize the differences between their experiences in the cultural commons and in the market/consumer-oriented culture.

Another bias in current approaches to education that can be traced back to Plato's argument that *pure thinking* leads to universal truths that are more reliable than thinking grounded in embodied/culturally-influenced experiences. The Western theorists who followed in this tradition of assuming that abstract

words are a more accurate source of knowledge also were unaware of the nature and ecological importance of their local cultural commons. Indeed, they held in contempt the forms of face-to-face, intergenerationally shared knowledge and skill, and relegated them to low-status knowledge. This tradition is still evident in the thinking of current educational reformers who assume that words such as individualism, democracy, tradition (which reproduces the Enlightenment assumptions of being a source of backwardness and special privileges), intelligence, and progress have universal meanings. These educational reformers continue to ignore how the analogs that frame the meaning of these metaphors carry forward the misconceptions of earlier thinkers (P. Freire, 1974; H. Giroux, 1988; D. Gruenewald, 2008). This pattern of thinking further marginalizes an awareness of the embodied experiences in the different community traditions that are being referred to here as part of the cultural commons. One of the consequences of the silences about the nature and complexity of the cultural commons, as well as the constant reminder that traditions are impediments to progress, which are being reinforced in most areas of the public school and university curriculum, is that students enter adulthood without an awareness of the different economic and ideological forces that are enclosing what remains of the cultural commons. For most of them, the industrial/consumer culture is the arena in which they will personally succeed or fail—and the outcome of their individual quests remain disconnected in their thinking from the rapid rate of degradation of the world's ecosystems.

There is now a major body of writing that addresses both the various ways in which public schools reproduce the culture's traditions of class and other forms of discrimination, as well as the reforms that need to be undertaken in order to achieve a more equitable society. Criticism of prejudicial language, silences in the curriculum, preconceptions about the potential (or lack thereof) of already marginalized students, tracking and other systemic forms of discrimination, have been the mainstays of educational foundations and educational studies courses for the past several decades. While there have been some social justice gains, particularly in the areas of race and gender, there remains much to be done—especially since the changes resulting from economic globalization and the global warming will have the greatest impact on minority groups whose economic gains have been, at best, both minimal and fragile. Critiques of the beliefs and values that have kept people of color, women, and other people restricted by other class barriers have actually been critiques of the reactionary traditions found within some cultural commons. Unfortunately, the theories that framed these critiques were not informed about the complex nature of the cultural commons. Indeed, the phrase *cultural commons* has not been used (D. Gruenewald & G. Smith, 2008). The main consequence of this lack of understanding is that the aspects of the cultural commons that hold out the prospect of finding community-centered alternatives to the negative impact of the industrial culture have not been part of the well intended efforts to use the schools to eliminate the sources of poverty and injustice.

The use of a sociological interpretative framework seemed ideally suited to bringing into focus economic, political, and educational inequities. Unfortunately, it has led to ignoring the questions that would have arisen if a more anthropologically informed interpretative framework had been relied upon. Awareness of a deep understanding of cultural differences could easily have brought into question how notions of individual freedom and equality could be reconciled with the importance that has been given in recent years to avoiding cultural colonization. For example, the Western ideal of individual freedom and the diversity of non-Western cultures do not easily fit together. Another limitation of the sociological interpretative framework is that it keeps the focus of analysis and recommendations for reform on human-to-human relationships, with the human-to-nature relationships being ignored. The evidence for this claim can easily be substantiated by reading educational writers who have most influenced how the analysis of class, race, and gender has been framed—writers such as Samuel Bowles, Herb Gintis, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren. Recently Bowles and Gintis have been writing about the commons, and McLaren has now turned attention to explaining how Marxism can guide educational reforms that address issues of sustainability (P. McLaren, 2005). The key point is that today's educational discourse on class, race, and gender continues to

ignore, with only a few exceptions, the implications of the ecological crises for the very social groups they want to emancipate.

The use of the cultural commons as the conceptual framework for analyzing the various forms of discrimination, as well as for guiding educational reforms, has several advantages that a sociological framework lacks. To reiterate, the cultural commons represent all of the forms of knowledge, values, practices, and relationships that have been handed down over generations that have been the basis of individual and community self-sufficiency—and that have enabled members of the community to be less dependent upon a money economy. While the previous discussion of the reactionary and, in some cases, horrific practices of some of the world's cultural commons needs be kept in mind, there are other characteristics of self-sufficiency that existed prior to what Karl Polanyi called the *Great Transformation*, when the emergence of the industrial system of production led to the enclosure of the environmental commons (Polanyi, 2002). In *Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution* (1995), Kirkpatrick Sale summed up how the survival and global expansion of the industrial system of production and consumption depended upon the enclosure of the cultural commons. As he put it,

All that “community” implies—self-sufficiency, mutual aid, morality in the market place, stubborn tradition, regulation by custom, organic knowledge instead of mechanistic science—had to be steadily and systematically disrupted and displaced. All the practices that kept the individual from being a consumer had to be done away with so that the cogs and wheels of an unfettered machine called the ‘economy’ could operate with interference, influenced merely by invisible hands and inevitable balances.” (p. 38)

Sale does not refer to the community traditions of self-sufficiency as the cultural commons, but he accurately makes the point that the industrial/consumer-dependent culture requires the destruction of the different forms of intergenerational knowledge, skills and mutually supportive relationships that enabled people to live less money and thus less consumer-dependent lives. In effect, he is describing how the success of the industrial system of production and consumption required the destruction of the local cultural and environmental commons. What is ironic is that the kind of individual required by the industrial/consumer-dependent culture is the autonomous individual being promoted by many of today's educational reformers. It is also important to note that the lack of intergenerational knowledge that reduces dependence upon consumerism contributes to an important aspect of poverty that is seldom discussed—even though it leads to the forms of poverty that threaten the individual's health and leads to other forms of insecurity.

Unlike the limited conceptual possibilities of a sociological interpretative framework and vocabulary, the cultural commons is the phrase that encompasses the traditions of community that are nested in larger social and ecological systems. These traditions, as mentioned earlier, range from local approaches to growing and preparing food as alternatives to an industrialized system that is so damaging to ecosystems and to intergenerational approaches to healing that differ from the highly monetized and industrial approaches of today's medicine (which are increasingly becoming dependent upon patenting indigenous knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants) (V. Shiva, 1996). Depending upon the local community and cultural traditions, the intergenerational knowledge also includes the creative arts passed on through mentoring that differ from the star system of commercialized music and visual arts, as well as narratives of the labor, feminist, and civil rights movements rather than the mind-numbing television sit-coms that serve to hook viewers to the multi-billion advertising industry. The traditions of civil rights that go back to the Magna Carta of 1215 are also part of the cultural commons. Unfortunately, they are now being enclosed by the growing alliance between market-liberal-dominated governments, corporations, universities, and the military establishment. A more fine-grained analysis of the differences between the cultural commons and the

industrial/consumer-dependent culture that is now being globalized would involve a discussion of the differences between community mentors and university-trained experts who have an ego and economic investment in imposing theory-based solutions on people's lives, between face-to-face and computer-mediated communication, between community traditions of reciprocity where work is returned and work that has to be paid for, between developing personal interests and skills and being a consumer of other people's talents, as well as between the embodied experiences of being in the natural environment and the disembodied experience of sitting in front of a computer screen with its often violent simulation games that deaden the capacity for empathy and moral responsibility.

There are two other characteristics of the cultural commons that have special significance. The first is that they exist in every community and can be fully recognized only by an in-depth description of the cultural patterns that unconsciously influence the embodied experience of preparing and sharing a meal, playing a game, telling a story, writing poetry, marching in an anti-war demonstration, protesting experimentations and other forms of animal exploitation, working with others in renewing habitats, and so forth. The cultural commons are largely taken-for-granted and thus unrecognized aspects of daily life—and can best be brought to attention through actual participation and ethnographic/phenomenological descriptions rather than through abstract theory and print-based descriptions. The second characteristic that needs to be reiterated, especially in light of the rate of global warming, is that what the industrial culture had to destroy, as Sale put it, are the intergenerational traditions that have smaller adverse impacts on the ecological systems.

Most aspects of the cultural commons in Western countries rely to some degree on what has to be purchased. However, even this small degree of dependence makes a great deal of difference in terms of meeting the criteria of eco-justice. By being more intergenerationally connected, a revitalized cultural commons *reduces* the need for a system of production that has to dispose of vast amounts of toxic wastes (usually in the neighborhoods of the poor and marginalized). It also reduces the need to exploit the resources of Third World cultures and to integrate them into a global market system. As these cultures are able to regenerate their own cultural commons they are able to resist more effectively the West's efforts to colonize them in the name of development, democracy, and modernization—god-words that are based on Western assumptions about individualism, progress, and the messianic drive to impose a consumer-dependent lifestyle on other cultures. The lifestyle that is more oriented toward cultural commons skills and activities of mutual support, and less on consumerism that degrades the environment and thus the prospects of future generations, meets yet another concern of eco-justice advocates. In possessing the skills and participating in the community systems of mutual support, the individual is more likely to resist the market-oriented ideology that equates the exploitation of species and habitats with progress. This characteristic of the cultural commons meets the last criteria of recognizing that natural systems have a right to reproduce themselves as part of the layered nesting of interdependent ecosystems—and not to be reduced to an economic resource.

This list of the ecologically sustainable and morally coherent characteristics of the cultural commons brings out what is missing in most of the educational discourse on how to eliminate discrimination in the areas of class, race, and gender. It also brings into focus the viable alternatives for addressing the estimated one billion lives that exist on one dollar a day, and are mired in the culture of poverty marked by a lack of food security and adequate housing. As global warming accelerates in the next few decades, as the world's oceans become less reliable sources of protein, and as droughts and severe weather systems contribute to mass migrations of people, the lives of the poor will become more desperate as they expand in number. The double bind of relying upon sources of energy to keep the industrial system expanding (thus accelerating the rate of global warming) will intensify the willingness of corporations to outsource production facilities not only to low-wage regions but also to regions that still have easily accessed sources of energy. As the ecological crisis deepens, and the seemingly unrelenting drive to continue expanding profits in an increasingly stressed world becomes

more difficult, it will be the people who continue to occupy the bottom rung of the economic/political/educational hierarchy who will continue to suffer the most.

The irony is that the ancient pathway of human development that still exists in rural and urban communities, and that represents an essential part of a post-industrial alternative, continues to be ignored—even by the few educational theorists who are beginning to recognize the ecological crisis. What now has to be avoided is the endless repetition that there is an ecological crisis and that capitalism is primarily responsible. Thoughtful people already understand the connections between the two phenomena. Instead, advocates of social justice need to explore the pedagogical and curricular implications of how to introduce students, including the already marginalized students, to the life-enhancing possibilities that exist in the cultural commons of their local communities—and that are part of the cultural commons of the dominant culture that protects the rights of various minority cultures. There is a direct connection between the enclosure of the traditions of civil liberties that are the basis of democracy and the growing dominance of corporations, market liberal politicians, religious fundamentalists, and the military establishment that views its mission as protecting the global interests of market liberals. There is also a connection in America between the number of marginalized groups who suffer the most deaths and catastrophic injuries from military actions that result from the logic of economic globalization. Knowledge of how to protest against the various forms of economic and political oppression is also part of the cultural commons—which includes the narratives of past protest movements, strategies that have proved most successful, and even songs and the iconography associated with past peace movements. The current drive to install total surveillance systems of a country's citizens as a defense against terrorism further undermines their civil liberties, and will be used by police to identify the leaders of movements protesting various forms of social injustice—including environmental activists.

Pedagogical and Curricular Implications

The future prospects of the poor and marginalized are inextricably tied to the future prospects of the cultural and environmental commons. With the outsourcing of work, automation that reduces the need for workers, and downsizing in order to improve corporate profits, the prospects of upward mobility that have been the hallmarks of past generations, though unevenly realized, are being rapidly diminished. Given this reality, placing greater emphasis on educational reforms that help to regenerate the cultural commons should not be interpreted as meaning that all students, regardless of social class and racial background, should not acquire the knowledge that will enable them to find meaningful work that supports a basic standard of living. Just as most aspects of the cultural commons require some degree of dependence upon the industrial system of production and consumption, public schools and universities need to ensure that the students at the bottom of economic and social pyramid have the opportunity to learn what is required for careers and employment that are non-exploitive. At the same time, changes need to be introduced at all levels of the educational system that will enable students to learn about the community-centered alternatives that contribute to the transition to a post-industrial future—namely, the cultural commons. In discussing the unique characteristics of a pedagogy and curriculum that introduce students to the ecological and community-sustaining importance of the cultural commons, it is important to keep in mind that we are in a transition phase of cultural development. Thus, the following discussion of pedagogical and curriculum reforms must also be viewed in this light.

If we consider the basic tension between the industrial/consumer-oriented culture and the characteristics of the cultural commons that strengthen mutual support, develop skills and personal talents, and ensure moral reciprocity among all members of the community, it becomes clear what the role of the classroom teacher/professor should be. Instead of promoting the high status forms of knowledge and values that contribute to the further expansion of the industrial/consumer-oriented

culture, the role of the classroom teacher and university professor should be that of a mediator who helps students become aware of the fundamental differences between participation in the cultural commons and the culture of industrial production and consumption. Being a mediator requires an understanding of what students are most likely to take-for-granted as they move daily between participation in the two sub-cultures. The pedagogical task is to encourage students to name what would otherwise be taken for granted. Naming taken-for-granted patterns of thinking and behavior, as we learned from both the feminist and civil rights movements, is the first step to making them explicit, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Like the mediator in labor disputes, the teacher's mediator role precludes giving students the answers about which aspects of the cultural commons and the industrial/consumer-oriented culture need to be rejected or renewed. The techno-scientific basis of the industrial culture has made many important contributions to improving the quality of human life, and now has the potential to help reduce our carbon footprint. Thus, the task of being a mediator should not be reduced to that of an ideologue, one who has pre-conceived answers, and who enforces the silence about what her/his ideology cannot explain. Similarly, ideology should not guide how the students are to think about their embodied experiences within the cultural and environmental commons.

The initial step in teaching and learning that fits the model of a mediator is to encourage students to describe their embodied/culturally-influenced experiences as they move between the two sub-cultures. There are specific questions that students need to be reminded to ask: Does the experience in a cultural commons activity contribute to the development of personal skills and the discovery of talents? Does it contribute to a sense of community self-sufficiency and mutual support? Does it require exploiting others who are less advantaged? What is its impact on natural systems? Does it contribute to an awareness of what needs to be intergenerationally renewed and of the need to be able to mentor others? Does it lead to different forms of empowerment, such as the ability to exercise communicative competence in resisting further forms of enclosure of skills and patterns of mutual support that result in an increased dependency upon a money economy? What is its ecological footprint? These same questions need to be explored by students as they participate in various aspects of the industrial/consumer-oriented culture.

In examining the experiences between preparing and sharing a meal with others and eating in a fast food outlet; between face-to-face communication and reading; between gardening and being dependent upon industrially prepared food; between participating in one of the creative arts and being a consumer of commercially promoted artistic performances; between developing skills associated with a craft that extends one's talents and purchasing what has been industrially produced (increasingly in a low-wage region of the world), the differences will quickly become apparent. And this awareness of differences, if framed in light of the ecological crisis and the changes resulting from economic globalization, is essential to the recovery of local democracy that has been one of the hallmarks of the diverse cultural commons that have not been based on ideologies and mythologies that have privileged the few over the many.

Another responsibility of the teacher/professor's mediating role is to ensure that students become aware of the narratives that provide an account of various social-justice movements, starting with the earliest beginnings of the traditions of civil liberties in the West--such as habeas corpus, the right to a fair trial by a jury of peers, separation of powers, and an independent judiciary. The narratives that provide an understanding of the labor movements that struggled to achieve safe working conditions, a living wage, and the right of workers to organize politically, should also be part of the curriculum. The feminist movement as well as the civil rights movements also should be part of a commons-oriented curriculum. Again the tensions between the cultural commons and the industrial/consumer-oriented culture that are now being globalized, and that are major contributors to the ecological crises, will inevitably come out—and be a major focus of class discussions.

The ecological crisis, as well as the increasing number of the world's population that is moving from a subsistence existence into one of dire poverty, make it particularly important that the teacher/professor introduce students to the history of different ways in which the cultural commons are being enclosed. The following questions will bring into focus different forms of enclosure: How did the Western philosophers' reliance on unacknowledged culturally influenced interpretative frameworks (which can also be understood as root metaphors that frame the historically layered process of analogic thinking) contribute to the enclosure of the cultural commons? How has the rise of Western science contributed to the enclosure of local knowledge of healing, agricultural practices, reliance on local materials, and so forth? What role have various religions played in strengthening the cultural commons and, on the other hand, in representing the exploitation of the commons by market forces as carrying out God's plan for those who are to be saved? What were the intellectual influences that marginalized the importance of the workers' skills, their control of the tempo of work and use of technologies? What are the current techno-scientific and market forces that are threatening such things as the diversity of seeds, and local knowledge of how to adapt agricultural practices to the characteristics of local soils and weather patterns?

In addition to introducing, particularly as the students move into the upper grades and onto the university, the various histories of different forms of enclosure, the role of being a mediator also requires that students be introduced to how different cultures have sustained their cultural and environmental commons while at the same time ensuring that their local markets did not dominate the patterns and values of everyday life (W. Sachs, 1992; W. Sachs, 1993). Knowledge of the intergenerational traditions of other cultural approaches to the cultural and environmental commons will enable students to gain a better perspective on whether the current myth that equates the Western scientific-technological and market driven approaches to creating greater dependence on what is industrially produced and consumed should be the basis of development in other cultures. There is a need to enable a large percentage of the world's population that is mired in poverty to obtain a decent standard of living and to enable them to experience more than a life of drudgery and stunted development. The critical question is whether the further enclosure of the diversity of the world's cultural commons will achieve this end.

To this point, the discussion of the teacher/professor's role as a mediator between the students embodied/culturally-nested experiences in the local cultural commons and in the workplace and shopping malls of the industrial culture has been general in nature. It is now necessary to address how to engage students from a variety of backgrounds that make them especially vulnerable to the prejudices currently perpetuated by the educational system's emphasis on the high-status knowledge that perpetuates poverty and deepens the ecological crisis. As mentioned earlier, every culture has its distinct intergenerational traditions of preferred foods, approaches to the creative arts, healing practices, ways of understanding moral reciprocity, craft knowledge, narratives of past achievements and leaders, mentors in various arts and crafts, understanding of what constitutes social justice, and so forth. For example, in the largely Hispanic community in San Francisco one will find that many of the walls of buildings that previously were used to advertise cigarettes and liquor have been reclaimed as part of the cultural commons. Giant murals now depict past struggles, important cultural leaders, and visions of what the future should hold for Hispanic communities. The same reclaiming of this part of the cultural commons can be found in Detroit and other major cities. Other examples of the cultural commons can be seen in the community gardens where traditional foods are grown, in the local poets, artists, writers, and musicians who are willing mentors of the community's youth. There are elders and people who take responsibility for keeping alive the oral history of the group, just as there are living traditions of how assist the especially vulnerable to the problems of extreme poverty, old age, and hopelessness. The nature of these cultural commons varies from community to community, from ethnic group to ethnic group. As the cultural commons of these ethnic and marginalized groups are nested in the cultural commons of the larger society, with its traditions of civil liberties, of achieving legal

redress of discriminatory practices, and of effecting changes through an admittedly flawed democratic process, it is important that these traditions also be recognized as essential aspects of what marginalized students should claim as their cultural commons.

The starting point in a commons-oriented curriculum is to have students conduct a survey of their local cultural commons, as well as the aspects of the larger cultural commons that they have a right (in spite of past exclusions) to participate in. The survey should involve learning who the elders and mentors are, who the keepers of the community memory are, what forms of cultural commons activities exist—such as playing chess, painting, writing poetry, musical performances, gardening, working with wood and metal, volunteerism, and political action groups. In a word, the survey should cover the activities and relationships within the community that are less reliant upon a money economy—and that lead to the development of skills and interests that contribute to a less damaging ecological footprint.

After the survey has been undertaken, the process of learning to make explicit the differences between their embodied/culturally nested experiences with different activities within the cultural commons and in the world of industrial work and consumerism can begin. This process of learning to recognize differences that otherwise are taken-for-granted as the students move between the two sub-cultures, and to name them, provides the linguistic and conceptual basis for the communicative competence necessary for resisting further forms of enclosure by market and scientific/technological forces. Resistance may take the form of overcoming the silences about the nature and importance of the local cultural commons being perpetuated by public schools and universities. It also may take the form of resisting the false promises of developers who want to attract the large commercial enterprises that will eliminate the small shop keepers and service providers, as well as the open physical spaces that enable members of the community to connect with the natural world, to have community gardens and places for children and others to play and to escape the pressures of the media and the temptations of the shopping malls. Communicative competence is also necessary to giving voice to what aspects of the techno-scientific/industrial culture need to be abandoned as ecologically unsustainable—and which aspects can make a contribution to improving the lives of people while still having a smaller ecological footprint.

One of the failures of the educational theorists who have been writing about the need for educational reforms that address the seemingly intractable problems of class, race, and gender discrimination is that they have continued to use the metaphors of *individualism*, *progress*, *emancipation*, *intelligence*, *tradition*, and so forth, that carry forward the analogs formed in the distant past by theorists who ignored cultural differences, the nature and importance of the cultural and environmental commons, and the existence of ecological limits. In effect, the arguments for addressing the issues of race, class, and gender have been based on a metaphorical language that has been frozen over time, and that continues to put out of focus the intergenerational relationships and knowledge that provide alternatives to the form of individualism that is dependent upon consumerism to meet daily needs. Reliance upon the metaphorical language that gave conceptual legitimacy to the rise and current globalization of an industrial/consumer dependent lifestyle can also be understood as yet another unrecognized example of how language continues to colonize the present by past ways of understanding (Bowers, 2008).

Learning to participate in what remains of the local cultural commons, and in developing new skills and non-monetized relationships will have the effect of expanding how intelligence is understood—from that of an individual attribute that is subjectively centered to understanding that intelligence is communal, intergenerational, and enhanced through participation with others, and with the environment. As the communal and intergenerational nature of intelligence may be the source of prejudices and environmentally destructive lifestyles, it is important for teachers/professors help students recognize the forms of intelligence that are destructive of human possibilities, as well as the

ways of thinking that are informed by today's understanding of social and ecojustice. This has been part of the curriculum that addresses various forms of discriminatory relationships and patterns of thinking. Too often this process of clarification has, at the same time, reinforced the idea that critical thinking is the expression of individual autonomy. Making the students' culturally influenced embodied experiences in the local cultural and environmental commons an integral part of the curriculum will help to reconstitute how individualism is understood—from that of being autonomous and essentially alone to recognizing that one of the unique characteristics of life is being in relationships that constantly lead to a redefinition of self that reflect changes in the social and environmental context. *Tradition*, which still carries forward the reductionist thinking of the Enlightenment writers, will also cease to be an abstraction that misrepresents the complexity of daily experience in both the cultural commons and in the industrial/consumer oriented culture. Instead of thinking that change always is a progressive force, the embodied experiences within the cultural commons will lead to a more complex and critically informed understanding of which traditions need to be carried forward and renewed, and which traditions need to be rejected as environmentally destructive and as sources of injustice.

One of the metaphors that is in special need of being associated with new analogs is *environment*, which is now understood either as the background within which human experience takes place or as an exploitable resource. If the teacher/professor explains, and has students test out in terms of their own embodied experiences, how different environments can be understood as ecologies—and that ecologies include both the interactions and interdependencies within natural systems as well as within cultures (and the interdependencies between culture and nature) students are more likely to be aware of the different ways in which their activities impact the sustainable characteristics of natural systems. Students still rooted in the beliefs of their indigenous heritage already possess this awareness, but students who have been uprooted from their cultural traditions, which may not have been ecologically centered in the first place, will need to develop this awareness. And this awareness will be essential to slowing the rate of environmental degradation that will impact them the hardest in coming years.

The challenge now is for the proponents of educational reforms that address the issues of class, race, and gender to recognize that an approach to achieving social justice for the millions of marginalized students cannot be based on the same deep cultural assumptions that created the industrial/consumer-oriented culture that is largely responsible for the injustices that continue to stunt the potential of students. This challenge will be particularly difficult to address as few of today's proponents of educational reform have given attention to how language helps to organize their patterns of thinking in ways that reproduce the silences and cultural assumptions of past theorists who contributed to today's double-bind patterns of thinking. The problem is that the double-bind thinking of these self-proclaimed social justice theorists continues to equate progress with achieving greater equality of opportunity for marginalized groups to live a middle class consumer dependent lifestyle--while the world is moving closer to the ecological tipping point scientists are warning about.

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