Adult Education Quarterly

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BOOK REVIEWS

FROM THE EDITORS: GUARDING AGAINST OUR OWN ENTOMBMENT

We begin with just a few words, as this issue is quite full and diverse. The title of the column is lifted quite wantonly from the opening article by Stephen Brookfield. Brookfield has embarked on an explicatory journey that we quite endorse. In this piece, he asks us to look beyond the celebrated but not well understood Habermas to Mezirow connection that links the Frankfurt School and critical theory with adult education. In that linkage, critical theory is seen as the progenitor of a critical theory of adult learning. Whereas Mezirow's work on transformational learning is more familiar and popular with adult educators in the United States, Michael Welton and a few others have worked more assiduously to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships between Habermas's notions of communication and his concerns about the colonization of the lifeworld. What Brookfield does in this article is to reach further into the Frankfurt tradition, specifically into the work of Max Horkheimer, to "reposition ideology critique as a learning process crucial to the realization of adulthood." Brookfield concludes with what we wish to emphasize: We must remain on guard against our own entombment by remaining ever vigilant against what Brookfield refers to as the "ossification" of our own ideologies. Richard Bernstein, noted philosopher of science, has asked at what point does incessant critique crush life out and thus dis-enable us to act, a point well taken. Even with that worry expressed, we note that adult education is in little danger, for as eager as we sometimes are to consider new ideas, we typically do so uncritically. Thus, we urge our colleagues to continue developing not only a critical theory of adult learning but one of adult education as well.

If the 1960s through the 1980s might be termed the *age of andragogy*, then from the 1980s on we might term this the *age of critique*, although not exclusively or even extensively within the Frankfurt tradition. Even so, it is our sense that adult education research has become more critical, at least in terms of asking about omissions and assumptions. A case in point is the E. Paulette Isaac, Talmadge Guy, and Tom Valentine piece that asks classical adult education questions about participation and motivation, but asks them in such a way that does not presume what others have termed the *generic adult learner*. Using well-developed research procedures, the investigators show that although there is continuity between what we already know about adult motivations and African American participation, there are also significant differences when motivation questions are asked about African American

adults participating in church-based adult education programs. Likewise, we infer from Barbara J. Daley's report that we need to be more critical of the presumed relationship between knowledge acquisition in continuing professional education and what makes knowledge meaningful in actual practice. Although we continue to be dismayed by our field's inattention to the long-standing theoretical, empirical, and practical insights of the "reflective practice" tradition, perhaps Daley's piece will remind some of us of the importance of thinking critically about the relationship of knowledge and practice.

If memory serves, critical book review essays were inaugurated under the Merriam and Cervero editorship at the University of Georgia. Over the past dozen years, several of these essays have taken prominent places in our cannon. Here, we present two reviews. First, the essay by Esther Prins focuses on literacy work with women in Latin America. In it, she asks some very important questions about the relationships between literacy, empowerment, and social change. Second, while attending this year's AERC conference, we were struck by the high level of collegial complaint: Everyone we talked with seemed to be struggling to fulfill their many university obligations. More than water cooler or restroom moaning, it seemed to us there was a bit of repression in the air. In case anyone is missing it, higher education has corporatized, as Pierre Walter points out in his essay review. If you are working harder and getting less done, consider the remarkably similar analyses presented in these books from both the left and the center about what critical theorists would call the commodification of higher education or what neo-liberalists would call privitization.

Goodbye and hello. a quick note of thanks and a new welcome. Shannon Hayes has served as editorial associate since we began our editorship. She had the unenviable task of managing the transfer of *AEQ* from Michigan State and setting up the processing system for reviewing manuscripts at Cornell. As we have noted before, this nearly invisible position is central to the production of *AEQ*. Shannon has worked with vigor, diligence, and most important, good humor—and she has even managed to teach us a few things along the way. As she finishes her graduate work this summer, we offer our warmest thanks and best wishes for her new endeavors. Richard Kiley will assume the editorial associate's duties beginning with the next issue. Also a graduate student in adult education, Richard brings a deep but critical sense of the intellectual traditions informing our contemporary research and debates. He also has a good sense of humor, a prerequisite for this job. We look forward to working with him.

As always, we close by urging readers to contact both article authors and us with comments. We very much wish to see the journal as a place of interchange as well as presentation. In that regard, our editorial comments are meant to indicate significance, provoke thought, and perhaps even create controversy. So let us know.

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Repositioning Ideology Critique in a Critical Theory of Adult Learning

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Contemporary adult educational readings of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, as interpreted via Habermas, risk sliding into an exclusive engagement with the pragmatic dimensions of his thought to the exclusion of its Marxist underpinnings and its concern with ideology critique. Building on Max Horkheimer's recently republished essay on "Traditional and Critical Theory," this article attempts to reposition ideology critique as a learning process crucial to the realization of adulthood. It discusses critical theory as a response to Marx and argues that a critical theory of adult learning should focus on how adults learn to recognize and challenge ideological domination and manipulation. Such learning is necessary if adults are to counteract the continuous reproduction of blatantly unequal structures and create more inclusive democratic arrangements. The article concludes with a warning for critical theory to be on guard against its own ossification and entombment by engaging with the pragmatist spirit.

In terms of intellectual traditions that have had a significant impact on adult education research and theorizing in the past two decades, it is critical theory (particularly that associated with the Frankfurt School) that is arguably the most influential. Critical theory, as diverted via Habermas, undergirds important aspects of the transformative learning theory of Mezirow (1991), particularly his highly influential formulation 20 years ago of a critical theory of adult learning and education (1981). Mezirow's explication of communicative and emancipatory domains of learning at first challenged, then overturned, the andragogical emphasis of the time. It inspired numerous commentaries, refutations, and empirical studies and gave the contemporary field of adult education a theoretical dimension it had sorely lacked. Recently, the more politicized work of Welton (1995) has interpreted Habermas's more current work for a theory of learning and consistently drawn attention to the Marxist influences in his thought. Indeed, Habermas, somewhat in the manner of Cornel West (1989), moves back and forth between neo-Marxist and pragmatic perspectives. In Shalin's (1992) words, Habermas's theory of communicative action is

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"an attempt to invigorate critical theory by merging the Continental and Anglo-Saxon traditions and bringing the pragmatist perspective to bear on the project of emancipation through reason" (p. 244).

Habermas and West have both been criticized for their blending of neo-Marxism and pragmatism, although I believe that their position of critical pragmatism is defensible. In adult education, however, it is easy to focus on the pragmatist elements of Habermas's thought—particularly the much invoked concept of the ideal speech situation—and interpret these in ways that ignore the Marxist underpinnings, and hence the political power, of his critique. Expressions of support for the ideal speech situation as a model for democratic discussion, or exhortations to engage in dialogue across differences without linking this to radical political change, are easy to make and not that far from the Great Books "living room learning" experiments of the liberal adult education tradition. In this discourse, it is liberalism, not socialism, that frames the analysis of what democracy looks like.

In this article, I wish to refocus a critical theory of adult learning on the politicized notion of criticality—particularly on how adults learn to engage in ideology critique—that is at the heart of the Frankfurt School tradition. In a sense, this is putting the "critical" back into critical thinking and reflection. I propose doing this in three ways: by briefly positioning critical theory as a response to Marx, by returning to an early adumbration of critical theory (that of Max Horkheimer) that focuses on abolishing the exchange economy of capitalism, and by making some preliminary observations on how a critical theory of adult learning might reframe itself as ideology critique.

POSITIONING CRITICAL THEORY
AS A RESPONSE TO MARX

Marx is the towering intellectual figure—simultaneously foundation and fulcrum—for the writers who fall into the category of what most people now call *critical theory*. As such, any adult educator interested in how adults learn critical consciousness needs to engage his ideas. Many of the critical tradition's most important analytical categories—false consciousness, commodification, alienation, praxis, emancipation—are derived from Marx's interpretations of enlightenment thought and his dialogue with Hegel. Major figures in the Frankfurt School of critical theory such as Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, and Habermas drew particularly on the "early" Marx's critique of the alienation and diminution of humanity produced by capitalism. Habermas's (1987) work, which has been so influential on Mezirow's (1991) development of transformative adult learning theory, is in many ways a talking back to Marx. Yet, although Marx's ideas undergird much transformative learning theory, he is rarely mentioned in American adult education. Perhaps, this is because some American adult educators are fearful of being branded as subversive, communistic, overtly political, or concerned only with sectional class interests if they invoke his name. In other countries, adult educators are

more ready to engage with him (Allman, 2000; Mayo, 1998; Welton, 1995). Welton (1995) in particular argued that "the consequences of forgetting Marx for the construction of a critical theory of adult learning are enormous, inevitably binding us to an individualistic model of learning" (p. 19).

It seems that American adult education suffers from the "knee-jerk 'marxophobia'" (McLaren, 1997, p. 172) that prevents practitioners and theorists from drawing, however critically or circumspectly, on his work. Marxophobia holds that even to mention Marx is to engage in un-American behavior and, by implication, to support the genocide and repression exhibited by totalitarian communist regimes throughout history. Despite repeated attempts by the Frankfurt School theorists to dissociate Marxist analysis from the rigidity of state socialism, popular opinion equates Marx with repression, standardization, bureaucratization, and denial of creativity or liberty. That one of the most consistent elements in critical theory is the denunciation of the distortions of Marx's ideas that allowed atrocities to be committed in his name is conveniently ignored. It is also forgotten that important figures in the tradition unequivocally condemned the totalitarianism, secret police, and thought control manifest in the Soviet Union and Communist China. Fromm, for example, was stinging in his criticism of the manner in which rigidly totalitarian states perverted ideals of socialism, thereby preventing the noncommunist world from considering the links between democracy and socialism. To Fromm (1976), "Socialism is incompatible with a bureaucratic, thing-centered, consumption-oriented social system, that is incompatible with the materialism and cerebralization that characterize the Soviet, like the capitalist, system" (p. 157). So in the critical theory tradition, it is perfectly possible to find a Marxist analysis useful without in any way endorsing the Gulag or Chinese cultural revolution.

If critical theory can be understood as a critical engagement with Marx, then a critical theory of adult learning must begin by acknowledging the centrality of Marxist concepts. This is not the stretch it might first appear. As an example, think of the criticisms made by many continuing educators to the effect that accelerated learning programs for adult learners are used as cash cows to prop up institutions faced by sagging enrollments of traditional aged students. By processing as many adult students as quickly as possible through such programs, these institutions are commodifying learning and education and selling these as products in the exchange economy. Commodification—the process by which a human quality or relationship becomes regarded as a product, good, or commodity to be bought and sold on the open market—is a Marxist notion, connected to his other ideas of fetishization and exchange value. This is the key concept used by Shumar (1997) in his book *College for Sale*, the subtitle of which is *A Critique of the Commodification of Higher Education*. So a criticism that many mainstream American adult educators would feel very comfortable making can quite quickly be linked to Marxist analysis.

As well as providing critical theory with many of its central concepts, Marx also influenced its forms of discourse. His alternation between polemic and scientism, between philosophizing about the need to create the conditions under which people

can realize their creativity and humanity and demonstrating the supposedly immutable laws of history focused on the predictable crises of capitalism, has framed the style in which much subsequent critical theory is written. His grounding of social and political analysis in the realization of an explicit social ideal has also meant that critical theory after Marx springs from a normative vision of the good society. In his often quoted 11th thesis on Feuerbach in which he argued that the point of philosophy was to change the world (not just interpret it), Marx underpinned the intent of critical theory to act as a catalyst for revolutionary social change. Such activism is central to those parts of the field that draw on community development or social action traditions in their conceptualization of adult education practice (say Highlander) or research (the participatory research movement).

So Exactly What Is Critical About Critical Theory?

How does a critical theory, particularly a critical theory of adult learning, differ from other kinds of theories? This is the key question addressed by Horkheimer (1995) (director of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany—the Frankfurt School, as it became known) in his classic 1937 essay on "Traditional and Critical Theory." Reissued in 1995, the essay's analysis remains pertinent. Although Horkheimer acknowledges that critical theory contains elements of what he calls traditional (i.e., positivist) theory, there are important differences.

The first of these is that critical theory is firmly grounded in a particular political analysis. Hence, Horkheimer (1995) stated, "Critical theory does not have one doctrinal substance today, another tomorrow" (p. 234). This is because its primary unit of analysis—the conflicting relationship between social classes within an economy based on the exchange of commodities—remains stable, at least until society has been radically transformed. A "single existential judgment" (p. 227) is at the heart of critical theory: The commodity exchange economy comprising capitalism will inevitably generate a series of tensions created by the desire of some of the people for emancipation and the wish of others to prevent this desire being realized. Horkheimer was pessimistic with regard to the possibility for emancipation, believing that this would finally be suppressed and humanity driven into "a new barbarism" (p. 227). However, his pessimism did not mean that people should fall into quietism or conformism. Instead, he contended that critical theory itself assumed that those who subscribed to it would fight against this creeping barbarism: "Every part of the theory presupposes the critique of the existing order and the struggle against it along the lines determined by the theory itself" (p. 229). So the starting point of Horkheimer's analysis is that the commodity exchange economy that dominates social relations must be reconfigured so that people can realize their humanity and freedom.

In the commodity exchange economy, it is not only products and goods that seem to acquire an apparently innate worth (which is really determined by market

forces). Labor—including the intellectual labor of learning and teaching—also becomes an object thought to have some intrinsic value. Labor is exchanged for money and money for goods, and in the process, labor becomes a thing, a commodity just like the goods for which we exchange money. The exchange value of learning to read in adulthood (how such learning will help the adult become more successful in the job market) overshadows its use value (how it helps the adult develop self-confidence, draw new meanings from life, become open to new perspectives on the world, and develop the capacity to imagine more congenial, humane ways of living together on the planet). Although it is the use value of learning that adult learners and adult educators keep in mind, it is the exchange value that policy makers and purse holders consult when determining whether programs should be funded and how they should be evaluated. A transformative adult learning experience such as going to college and finding one's worldview radically altered becomes converted into a qualification that can be exchanged for higher salary and status.

In the process of commodification, it is not only our labor that is turned into an abstract object. Our relationships too become fetishized, assuming in our eyes "the phantastic form of a relationship between things" (Marx, 1973, p. 72). Hence, in adult education, we talk of the teaching-learning relationship and the development of adult educational procedures or curricula, as if these existed as objects in a world located outside our emotions or being. The role of the adult educator engaged in good practices becomes detached from who we are as people, our histories and experiences. The exchange dynamic of capitalism even invades our emotional lives. We talk of making emotional investments, as if emotions were things we could float on the stock market of significant personal relationships. Attention and tenderness are exchanged for sex, affection for support. Parental concern toward children is exchanged for the promise of being looked after in old age. Habermas (1987) described this invasion of our personal lives by capitalist processes of exchange as the colonization of the lifeworld.

A second distinctive characteristic of critical theory is its concern to provide people with knowledge and understandings intended to free them from oppression. The point of theory is to generate knowledge that will change, not just interpret, the world. In this way, Horkheimer argued, critical theory truly qualifies for that most overused of adjectives, *transformative*. There is no presupposition of theory being distanced from social intervention or political action. On the contrary, the converse is true. Critical theory requires such intervention. It has as its explicit intent to galvanize people into replacing capitalism with truly democratic social arrangements. One important measure of the theory's validity, therefore, is its capacity to inspire action. The knowledge the theory produces can be considered useful to the extent that it helps change the behavior of its unit of analysis (people acting in society). Critical theory's "goal is man's [*sic*] emancipation from slavery" (Horkheimer, 1995, p. 246). The research tradition most strongly identified with adult education— participatory research—is very much an exemplification of this idea. Participatory

researchers make no pretense to detached observation. Their purpose is to help adults research their communities with a view to changing them.

Horkheimer argued that a third crucial difference of critical theory from other kinds is that it breaks down the separation of subject and object, researcher and focus of research, found in traditional theories. The validity of critical theory derives partly from the fact that its subjects—human beings, specifically those diminished by the workings of capitalism—support the philosophical vision of society inherent within the theory. The theory's utility depends partly on people recognizing that it expresses accurately the yearnings they have for a better, more authentic way to live. As Guess (1981) observed, this is clearly not the case with positivist approaches to studying the physical, chemical, and biological world. Traditional scientific theory has no requirement to secure the agreement of its objects of study. Asking atomic particles or types of flora whether they give free assent to the accuracy of the way they are described is nonsensical. An important indicator of the validity of a critical theory of adult learning, therefore, is the extent to which adults believe that the theory captures their hopes and dreams.

That it is normatively grounded is critical theory's fourth defining feature. Not only does the theory criticize current society, it also envisages a fairer, less alienated, more democratic world. The critique undertaken of existing social, political, and economic conditions springs from, and depends on, the form of the alternative society envisioned. Unlike traditional theories that are empirically grounded in an attempt to generate increasingly accurate descriptions of the world as it exists, critical theory tries to generate a specific vision of the world as it might be. It springs from a distinct philosophical vision of what it means to live as a developed person, as a mature adult struggling to realize one's humanity through the creation of a society that is just, fair, and compassionate. The vision of critical theory holds individual identity to be socially and culturally formed. Adult development is viewed as a collective process because one person's humanity cannot be realized at the expense of others' interests. Given critical theory's insistence that opportunities for development do not remain the preserve of the privileged few, the theory inevitably links adult development to the extension of economic democracy.

This brings us to the fifth and final intriguing and distinctive element of critical theory, that verification of the theory is impossible until the social vision it inspires is realized. In other words, we will not know whether critical theory is true or false until the world it envisages is created and we can judge its relative humanity and compassion. Horkheimer (1995) put it this way: "In regard to the essential kind of change at which the critical theory aims, there can be no corresponding concrete perception of it until it actually comes about. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future" (p. 220). Traditional theories can usually be assessed by reference to the world as it is now, or in the near future. Alternatively, the physical world can be manipulated where possible to create conditions under which the predictions of the theory can be tested for accuracy. This is definitely not the case with critical theory. The struggle to create the conditions under which the

vision of critical theory can be realized (and therefore tested) is a long, sometimes violent, often revolutionary struggle.

How does Horkheimer's analysis connect to adult learning? Critical theory is usually not written in terms immediately recognizable to those of us primarily interested in adult learning. Yet, an analysis of adult learning is implicit in its propositions. Welton (1991, 1993, 1995) is perhaps the most forceful expositor of how critical theory threads a theory of adult learning through its analysis. Subsumed within the general desire of critical theory to understand and then challenge the continuous reproduction of social, political, and economic domination is a question at the heart of a critical theory of adult learning: How is it that adults learn to detect, critique, and then challenge ideological manipulation?

IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE AS AN ADULT LEARNING PROCESS

In his analysis of critical theory, Guess (1981) wrote that "the very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology. Their ideology is what prevents the agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests; if they are to free themselves from social repression, the agents must rid themselves of ideological illusion" (pp. 2-3). Clearly then, a critical theory of adult learning must begin by exploring how adults learn to resist ideological manipulation. Yet, the concept of ideology is complex and contested, in McLellan's (1986) judgment, "the most elusive concept in the whole of social science" (p. 1). However, although the term is used in multiple ways, it has a distinctive meaning within the critical tradition. This tradition builds on Marx's view that the relations of production and material conditions of society determine people's consciousness. Ideology "signifies ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 30). Critical theory sees ideology as inherently duplicitous, as a system of false beliefs that justify practices and structures that keep people unknowingly in servitude. Contemporary theorists such as Eagleton (1991) have taken issue with this view, arguing that ideologies are not, by definition, false and that a condition of their gaining continued acceptance is that they contain elements that are broadly seen as true (a point also made by Gramsci). He also unmasks the condescension underlying the ideology as false consciousness position: "To believe that immense numbers of people would live and sometimes die in the name of ideas which were absolutely vacuous and absurd is to take up an unpleasantly demeaning attitude towards ordinary men and women" (p. 12).

Yet, the fact remains that within the critical theory tradition, the predominant understanding of ideology has very distinct connotations of oppression and domination, of its being used to subjugate and hoodwink people into accepting as normal and justifiable a permanent state of inequity. To quote Eagleton (1991) again, "The study of ideology is among other things an inquiry into the ways in which people

may come to invest in their own unhappiness" (p. xiii). Critical theory views ideologies as broadly accepted sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations, and justifications that appear self-evidently true, empirically accurate, personally relevant, and morally desirable to a majority of the populace, but that actually work to maintain an unjust social and political order. Ideology does this by convincing people that existing social arrangements are naturally ordained and obviously work for the good of all. As Marx and Engels (1970) wrote, the ruling class aims "to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society. . . . It has to give its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (p. 66).

Ideologies are hard to detect being embedded in language, social habits, and cultural forms that combine to shape the way we think about the world. They appear as commonsense, as givens, rather than as beliefs that are deliberately skewed to support the interests of a powerful minority. Understanding this process—how ideology works to support the power of a minority—is the central idea in the often quoted sentence from Marx and Engels's (1970) *The German Ideology*: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. . . . The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production" (p. 64). The individuals comprising this ruling class exercise dominion not just over the production and distribution of material goods. They "rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age" (p. 64). In recent years, poststructuralists such as Foucault have clarified how knowledge and power entwine to create regimes of truth: dominant ideas, frameworks of analysis, and forms of discourse that shape how we think about the world.

Strongly influenced by Gramsci's notion of hegemony, the French philosopher Louis Althusser (1971) deepened the understanding of ideology in his influential essay on "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." For Althusser, ideology was a systematic form of thought control that ensured that people at all levels of the economic and social system accepted the system's basic reasonableness. Ideology intentionally obscured the fact that the system was based on certain values that furthered some interests over others. If ever the possibility of alternative values was seriously countenanced, then the system could be challenged. But if the system was accepted as a natural phenomenon needing no explanation or justification (because its essential rightness was so obvious), then the possibility of resistance evaporated.

Althusser (1971) believed that people lived naturally and spontaneously in ideology without realizing that fact. He wrote that "those who are ideological believe themselves by definition outside ideology: one of the effects of ideology is the practical denigration of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says, 'I am ideological.'" (p. 175). In Althusser's view, we can claim in all sincerity to be neutral, objective, and free of ideological distortion when this is really an impossibility. This conviction of their own nonideological nature extends even

to those who "manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'" (p. 133). For ideological domination to endure, "All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the 'professionals of ideology' (Marx) must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously'" (p. 133). To Althusser, it was obvious that ideological managers (including adult educators) would sincerely and strenuously deny the ideological character of their work ("I'm just here to teach basic skills"). Being immersed in ideology prevented them from stepping outside it and perceiving its social functioning.

How can people be so steeped in ideology without being aware of that? Althusser (1971) argued that this was made possible because "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (p. 166) and because "the 'ideas' of a human subject exist in his actions" (p. 168). These actions are then "inserted into practices governed by rituals of dominant ideology" (p. 182). In other words, ideology lives and breathes in our daily decisions, routine behaviors, and small-scale interactions. This takes into the world of Goffman and the framing of everyday rituals and also to Foucault's emphasis on the inscription of disciplinary power in the practices of daily life. Intimate gestures, routinized professional conduct, and conversational conventions all reflect a wider ordering of power relations that is unconsciously confirmed in these practices. As Giddens (1991) argued 20 years after Althusser's essay, "The most subtle forms of ideology are buried in the modes in which concrete, day to day practices are organized" (p. 23). Ideology thus becomes less a clearly identifiable system of ideas and more a participation in actions, social games, and rituals that are themselves ideologically determined. People participate in these practices through what Althusser called *ideological state apparatuses*.

Althusser (1971) posited two types of socialization agencies that ensured the predominance of the ruling ideology: repressive state apparatuses (such as the legal system, police, and armed forces) and ideological state apparatuses (such as the church, mass media, and community associations) of which education is the most important. Ideological state apparatuses (his shorthand for them was ISAs) exist mostly within civil society but ensure that the state reaches into and controls that part of life. His thesis was that "no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the state ideological apparatuses" (p. 146). Education as an ideological state apparatus works to ensure the perpetuation of dominant ideology not so much by teaching values that support that ideology but more by immersing learners in ideologically determined practices. These practices (such as chopping up the curriculum into discrete chunks to be absorbed, measuring learning and the quality of teaching by percentage improvement scores on standardized tests, and moving people in streams and age-based grades through a system at a pace and in a manner over which they have

no control) are perceived as rational and obvious but actually support certain ways of understanding and ordering the world.

By participating in the kinds of practices mentioned above, people learn "know how" "in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'" (Althusser, 1971, p. 133). Educational institutions become analogs of capitalism in which "the relations of production in a capitalist social formation i.e., the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploiters to exploited, are largely reproduced" (p. 156). The rules of good behavior, of morality, and of civic and professional conscience learned in school by students "actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labor and ultimately the rules of order established by class domination" (p. 132). Of course, ideology requires that this learning appear neutral so that education is falsely perceived as purged of, or sidestepping, ideology. Teachers believe that they are imparting values of self-determination to students who are making a free choice to accept or reject these. Neither group can see the ideological web in which it is caught.

In critical theory, understanding and challenging the workings of ideology has been a dominant concern, one often expressed as *ideology critique*. Ideology critique is an activity springing from the Enlightenment conviction that living fully as an adult means acting on the basis of instincts, impulses, and desires that are truly our own, rather than implanted in us. Because capitalism will do its utmost to convince us that we should live in ways that support its workings, we cannot be fully adult unless we attempt to unearth and challenge the ideology that justifies this system. In doing this, we come to see that the inclinations, biases, hunches, and apparently intuitive ways of experiencing reality that we regard as unique to us are socially learned. What we consider to be our idiosyncratic perspectives and dispositions are now realized to be, in Marcuse's (1964) terms, ideologically sedimented. Ideology critique helps us understand how we learn political ideals, morality, and social philosophy within the institutions of civil society such as schools, associations, clubs, family, and friendship networks. It also shows us that the constructs and categories we use to understand our daily experiences are ideologically framed. What Williams (1977) called our "structures of feeling" are seen in ideology critique as socially induced, learned from the cultural group and social class to which we belong. So doing ideology critique involves adults learning to become aware of how ideology lives within them as well as understanding how it buttresses the structures of the outside world that works against them. What strikes us as the normal order of things is suddenly revealed through ideology critique as a constructed reality that protects the interests of the powerful.

One of the most important extensions to the understanding of ideological control, particularly emphasizing this as a process of adult learning, is Gramsci's (1995) analysis of hegemony. Hegemony describes the way that people learn to accept as natural and in their own best interest an unjust social order. In one of Gramsci's most invoked phrases, "Every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship" (p. 157). People learn to embrace as commonsense

wisdom certain beliefs and political conditions that work against their interests and serve those of the powerful. If hegemony works as it should, then there is no need for the state to employ coercive forms of control—heavy policing, curfews, torture, assassination squads—to maintain social order. Instead of people opposing and fighting unjust structures and dominant beliefs, they learn to regard them as preordained, part of the cultural air they breathe. In many ways, hegemony is the conceptual bridge between the Marxist notion of dominant ideology and Habermas's idea of the colonization of the lifeworld by capitalism and technical rationality. It emphasizes how the logic of capitalism, especially the logic of commodification discussed earlier, seeps and soaks itself into all aspects of everyday life—culture, health care, recreation, even intimate relationships.

The subtle tenacity and adaptability of hegemony lies in the fact that it is very difficult to peel away layers of oppression to uncover a small cabal clearly conspiring to keep the majority silent and disenfranchised. If there is any conspiracy at work here, it is the conspiracy of the normal. The ideas and practices of hegemony—the stock opinions, conventional wisdom, and commonsense ways of behaving in particular situations that we take for granted—are part and parcel of everyday life. It is not as if these are being forced on us against our will. The dark irony, the cruelty of hegemony, is that adults take pride in learning and then acting on the beliefs and assumptions that work to enslave them. In learning diligently to live by these assumptions, people become their own jailers. By incorporating the concept of hegemony into the analysis of ideology, Gramsci widens our understanding of how ideology contributes to the maintenance of social control. The emphasis shifts from understanding how the state or sovereign imposes a view of the world on a neutral, skeptical, or resentful populace to understanding how people are willing partners with the ruling group actively colluding in their own oppression. Indeed, getting adults to learn oppression is the central educational task of hegemony.

The concept of hegemony also extends our understanding of power, in some ways anticipating Foucault's (1980) much later work in this area. Foucault argued that in contemporary society power worked in much more subtle ways than previously acknowledged and that it should be understood as a circulation or flow around society rather than as something statically imposed from above. In his view, we have moved from the exercise of sovereign power (power clearly exercised by a recognizable central controlling force) to the exercise of disciplinary power (power exercised on ourselves by ourselves). Because we learn self-discipline, undertake self-surveillance, and exercise self-censorship, there is little need for dominant groups to force ideas or behaviors on us. The parallel here is with hegemony's emphasis on getting people to learn and love their place. Gramsci and Foucault both see adults as colluding in their own servitude, thereby removing the state's need to enforce this.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is chilling stuff. Hegemony is powerful yet adaptable, able to reconfigure itself, skillfully incorporate resistance, and give just enough away to its opponents while remaining more or less intact. Yet, Gramsci

also opened up the possibility of opposition. Indeed, for him, the point of political action was to establish a new hegemony, that of the working class. Just as Foucault believed power was an inescapable and ever present force in human affairs, so Gramsci believed there would always be hegemonic domination. The question to ask was on whose behalf this domination was being exercised. For him, the point was to replace capitalist hegemony with working class hegemony, with a hegemony that represented the interests of the majority.

Gramsci's work represents an unequivocal siting of adult critical reflection in political struggle. Given the centrality of hegemony to ideological analysis, a critical theory of adult learning should help us understand how adults learn to recognize hegemony in the beliefs and assumptions they live by, and the structures they live within. It should also examine how adults learn to contest hegemony individually and collectively by striving to replace it with a system of beliefs and practices that represents the interests of the majority.

CRITIQUING CRITICAL THEORY: REENGAGING
IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE WITH PRAGMATISM

Just as critical theory illuminates the way that positivism and Enlightenment rationality are cultural artifacts (rather than universal truths), forms of understanding created in a particular time and place, so we must understand critical theory itself as the product of a particular social, political, and intellectual milieu. In Marcuse's (1968) words, "Critical theory is, last but not least, critical of itself and of the social forces that make up its own basis" (p. 72). So for critical theory to be critical, it must be on guard against its own ossification as a "grand theory" meant to explain all social interaction, for all people and for all time. A critical stance toward critical theory entails a productive skepticism with regard to its universality and accuracy. It means that those engaged in critical theory building must apply the same standards of critical analysis to their own theory as they do to that theory developed by those energetically pursuing capitalism and subscribing to bureaucratic rationality. Predictably, those within critical theory who ask uncomfortable questions and point out the theory's negative consequences risk being ostracized as intellectually unsound pariahs. Critical theory has its share of Stalinists who will not tolerate deviation from the party line.

Howard Zinn (1990), a prominent American historian, pointed out that those who challenge the social order are just as capable of creating their own orthodoxies as are dominant groups. He wrote that "the experience of our century tells us that the old orthodoxies, the traditional ideologies, the neatly tied bundles of ideas—capitalism, socialism, democracy—need to be untied, so that we can play and experiment with all the ingredients, add others, and create new combinations in looser bundles" (p. 8). Zinn urged us to make declarations of independence from rigid dogmas, and it is precisely this self-critical posture toward its own proposi-

tions that a critical theory of adult learning must display. This self-critical stance is familiar within critical theory because the theory itself began as an attempt to reformulate Marxist thought in conditions Marx had not foreseen. Gramsci (1971) observed that Marxism "tends to become an ideology in the worst sense of the word, that is to say a dogmatic system of eternal and absolute truths" (p. 407). In a 1918 article in *Il Grido del Popolo* (*The People's Cry*), Gramsci (1988) wrote that Marx "is not a Messiah who left a string of parables laden with categorical imperatives, with absolute unquestionable norms beyond the categories of time and space" (p. 36). He believed that the value of Marxist ideas was always a provisional value.

In Gramsci's stance toward Marx we can see how critical theory stands consistently for a rejection of unchanging dogma and is watchful for its own reification. In the holy trinity of contemporary ideology critique—race, gender, and class—it is race and gender that have assumed greater prominence and class that has been displaced. Feminism, Afrocentrism, queer studies, postcolonialism, and critical race theory are just a sampling of critical positions that point to omissions in the Frankfurt School analysis. In addition, as a helpful anonymous reviewer of this article pointed out, the binary Marxist framework of ruling and working class (the few and the many) is too parsimonious to address the multiplicity of social and ideological formulations that warrant inclusion in a critical theory of adult learning. Space does not permit a consideration of these critiques, each of which warrants several volumes. But a reunification of ideology critique and pragmatism—in which the latter does not overshadow the former—goes some way to ensure that critical theory remains on guard against its own entombment. Pragmatism's emphasis on unanticipated contingency and its openness to continuous reformulation means it strives for ever greater degrees of inclusiveness. Engaging ideology critique with pragmatism means that the former is constantly alert to addressing the sorts of omissions identified above. It also opens the insights of critical theory to those who do not consider themselves Marxist. If, as McLaren (1997) argued, "many if not most critical educators work outside the orthodox Marxian tradition and do not consider capitalism an irrevocable evil" (p. 172), then a critically pragmatic stance toward Marxism brings useful non-Marxist analyses into the discourse.

Not all agree that such a fusion is either possible or desirable. Indeed, several of those associated with the critical tradition reject entirely the idea that pragmatism has any liberatory dimension. In his introduction to a reissued volume of Horkheimer's (1995) essays, Aronowitz condemns pragmatism as subversive of, and antithetical to, social and political critique, describing it as "the theory of nontheory" and claiming that "it leaves no room for critical theory" (pp. xv-xvi). In *Eclipse of Reason*, originally published in 1947, Horkheimer (1947/1974) himself denounced pragmatism as a form of scientism that put all its faith in improvement through systematic experimentation and therefore represented the intellectual "counterpart of modern industrialism" (p. 50). The result of pragmatism's focus on the experimental improvement of contemporary conditions meant that "speculative

thought is altogether liquidated" (p. 103). Gramsci (1971) too regarded pragmatism's focus on practice as undertheorized and inherently conservative, leading "to the justification of conservative and reactionary movements" (p. 373).

However, if we conceive of pragmatism as the flexible pursuit of beautiful consequences, it is reasonable to argue that the most beautiful social consequences of all are those of freedom and justice presupposed by Horkheimer (1995) as the defining necessities of critical theory (pp. 230, 242). Taking a pragmatic slant on critical theory argues for a defensible flexibility with regard to ways these values might be realized and encourages a self-critical, self-referential stance. It also reaffirms the creation of democratic forms of life as the central project of theory. The concern to democratize production to serve the whole community, and the desire to reconfigure the workplace as a site for the exercise of human creativity, are the meeting points for critical theory and pragmatism. Habermas (1987) himself acknowledged this connection, admitting that "I have for a long time identified myself with that radical democratic mentality which is present in the best American traditions and articulated in American pragmatism" (p. 198).

Perhaps, the most sustained attempt to reinvent pragmatism as a critical philosophy is West's (1999) passionate enunciation of prophetic pragmatism. The prophetic element in this philosophy "harks back to the Jewish and Christian traditions of prophets who brought urgent and compassionate critique to bear on the evils of their day" (p. 171). The pragmatic element "understands pragmatism as a political form of cultural criticism and locates politics in the everyday experience of ordinary people" (p. 151). West argued that "the emancipatory social experimentation that sits at the center of prophetic pragmatist politics closely resembles the radical democratic elements of Marxist theory, yet its flexibility shuns any dogmatic, a priori or monistic pronouncements" (pp. 151-152). For him, the twin pillars of prophetic pragmatism are "critical temper as a way of struggle and democratic faith as a way of life" (p. 186), with the pragmatist spirit ensuring that the certitudes of critical theory never become reified and are never placed beyond healthy criticism. Despite Gramsci's rejection of pragmatism, West contends that "Gramsci exemplifies the critical spirit and oppositional sentiments of prophetic pragmatism" (p. 169), and he goes so far as to invoke Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals in describing prophetic pragmatists as those who "relate ideas to action by means of creating, constituting or consolidating constituencies for moral aims and political purposes" (p. 146).

CONCLUSION

A critical theory of adult learning should have at its core an understanding of how adults learn to recognize the predominance of ideology in their everyday thoughts and actions and in the institutions of civil society. It should also illuminate how adults learn to challenge ideology that serves the interests of the few against the well-being of the many. Such a theory is inevitably a theory of social and

political learning. It studies the systems and forces that shape adults' lives and oppose adults' attempts to challenge ideology, recognize hegemony, and unmask power. Such a theory must therefore recognize its explicitly political character. It must focus consistently on political matters, such as the way formal learning is structured and limited by the unequal exercise of power. It must not shy away from connecting adult learning efforts to the creation of political forms, particularly the extension of economic democracy across barriers of race, class, and gender. It must understand adult education as a political process in which certain interests and agendas are always pursued at the expense of others, in which curriculum inevitably promotes some content as "better" than some other, and in which evaluation is an exercise of the power by some to judge the efforts of others. Critical theory springs from the desire to extend democratic socialist values and processes, to create a world in which a commitment to the common good is the foundation of individual well-being and adult development. A critical theory of adult learning will always come back to the ways in which adults learn to do this.

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Understanding African American Learners' Motivations to Learn in Church-Based Adult Education

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The adult education literature is clearly lacking as a source of knowledge about learning among African Americans. This study examined the motivations for learning among African American adults in three church-based adult education programs. A survey was developed to identify learners' motivations. A seven-factor structure was selected as the most conceptually meaningful in explaining their motivations. Four factors were identified that are consistent with findings of prior research, and three factors appear to contribute new insights into adults' motivations to learn. The African American church as a site for learning is discussed in light of these motivations.

Due to social segregation and racism, the church has served a unique role in the African American community, often functioning as a social agency providing multiple services including education. Historically, many African Americans turned to the church as a site for learning. The church not only served as a place of spiritual worship but also as a refuge from racism and a location where African Americans could learn values, knowledge, and skills. It fulfilled individual and communal needs that, for the White society, were filled by a range of social and civic institutions. The African American church has concerned itself with upgrading the psychological, social, economic, and physical well-being of the African American community (Phillip, 1993). It has assisted African Americans in developing a greater appreciation for their culture and history, gaining basic literacy skills, acquiring trades, and keeping abreast of societal issues. The church in other words

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has not limited itself to spiritual and religious edification of African Americans. From the time of slavery to the present, the African American church has been involved in every aspect of its members' lives (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

African Americans attend church more frequently and participate in other church-related affairs more often than their White counterparts (Ellison & Sherkat, 1995; Taylor & Chatters, 1989; Taylor, Thornton, & Chatters, 1988). They have been described as the most religious people in America. More than 82% of African Americans are members of a church (Dilulio, 1999). They have been and continue to be active participants in the educational lives of their churches (Beatty & Hayes, 1989). Massey and McKinney (1976) asserted that African American church people "invest in what they hope will be 'meaningful church membership.' Meaningful membership includes a viable education program" (p. 91).

According to Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), generally speaking, any "black Christian person is included in 'the Black church' if he or she is a member of a black congregation" (p. 1). Henry (1990) explained that the African American church not only encompasses the millions of Christians in predominately Black denominations (governing bodies) but also includes African Americans in predominately White ones as well. For purposes of this study, an African American church was defined as a church whose membership was predominately African American.

Traditionally, African Americans have placed a high value on education (Guy, 1996; Neufeldt & McGee, 1990; Peterson, 1996), and historical literature illustrates that the church was a primary site used for education purposes. Gandy (1945) provided an extensive example of the types of adult education activities taking place in African American churches in the early part of the 20th century. Neufeldt and McGee (1990) further illustrated the church's role in adult education. As they indicated, however, it "merits further analysis" (p. viii).

PURPOSE

Despite the church's historical educational role and African Americans' traditional high regard for education, we found no studies that have examined motivations to learn among adult learners in the African American church. Although the church has been a major provider of education for African Americans, we know very little about African American adult learners' reasons for learning (Briscoe & Ross, 1989). Although previous studies that examined reasons for participation in adult education among adult learners included African Americans in their samples, specific information pertaining to their motivations was scant. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe African American adults' motivations for participating in church-based education. We sought to determine if individual motivational items could be grouped into conceptually meaningful dimensions of motivation for participation in church-based educational programs in the African American church. The present study was deemed important to widen our under-

standing of motivations for adult learning in general and to understand motivations of African American adult learners in particular.

DESIGN AND METHOD

The African American experience in the United States is very different from that of the mainstream population. Thus, we were extremely reluctant to measure African Americans' motivations on theoretical dimensions derived from the dominant culture. Whereas many studies have used some version of Boshier's (1971) Education Participation Scale (EPS) to measure adults' motivations for participation, the EPS originally was designed for use with middle-class participants enrolled in traditional educational programs (Boshier & Riddell, 1978). Boshier (1991) admitted, "The middle class ethos of the EPS . . . is not wholly desirable in the 1990s and beyond" (p. 150). We would add that the implicitly White cultural orientation of the EPS adds an additional bias. Because the present study was being conducted in an informal setting with an entirely African American sample, an instrument was developed that was deemed more appropriate and reflective of the adults to be surveyed.

Instrument Development

One of the first steps we employed in developing the instrument was the use of focus group sessions and personal interviews with African American pastors, Christian educators, and individuals from different socioeconomic and educational levels. A standard of "saturation" was employed to obtain all possible motivations for participating in educational programs in the church. These activities resulted in a total of 218 potential items. Included in the instrument development process were critique sessions with a panel of experts in survey research and reviews from African American church, religion, and/or adult education experts. In the end, a survey consisting of 65 unique motivational items and 11 demographic items was developed using a response range of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

The validity of the instrument was established principally on the method used to develop the instrument. The focus group sessions and individual interviews with African American Christian educators, ministers, instructors, and church laity ensured that the items were drawn directly from African Americans' experiences. Care was taken not to contort the use of natural language. The interview process was continued until a point of saturation was reached in an attempt to capture the full range of possible motivations for educational participation for the target population. As a result, the study was not overly constrained by prior motivational studies in predominately White populations. Because the survey instrument was assumed to be multidimensional, coefficient alpha was not calculated for the overall instrument.

Sample

Given the purpose of the study, the identification of African American churches was essential. There are hundreds of religious bodies in the United States. Among African Americans, however, the Baptist church is the largest denomination in Black America (Payne, 1995). As a result of its large African American membership, three predominately African American Baptist churches in a major metropolitan area in the southeast served as the sample for the study. The churches were selected based on congregation size, location, educational offerings, and the wide range of income levels of their members. Church size ranged from 1,500 to more than 9,000 people.

The larger of the churches had more than 9,000 members. It is located in the heart of the inner city and in the poorest census tract within its state. It is adjacent to a public-housing project and is in an area that can be described as depressed and dilapidated. The majority of its members are working-class people, and the majority are between the ages of 25 and 40. It has a senior citizen population of 10% to 15%. Approximately 20% of the membership ranges in age from 18 to 24. About 20% of the membership hold college degrees, and 2% possess doctorate degrees. The smallest church in the sample is located in the suburbs by the metropolitan airport. It is nestled in a transitional area. It is situated in a locale where the socioeconomic status varies greatly. Many of its members are professionals. More than 50% of its membership is 45 years of age or older. Of that percentage, 75% are between the ages of 45 and 60. Approximately one fourth of the membership is between the ages of 25 and 40, and the remainder is younger than age 25. Of its 1,400 members, approximately 60 people hold doctoral degrees, and an even larger number possess master's degrees. Finally, the second largest church had approximately 5,000 members. Representing a wide socioeconomic spectrum, it is located in the fastest growing county of African Americans in the state and includes two affluent communities with many middle-income and professional people residing there. The median age of its members is 45. Young adults (18 to 25) comprise approximately 20% of the membership, and adults 65 and older comprise 15%. Data on the educational levels of the members was not available.

For purposes of this study, the term *church-based adult education* was used to describe all the adult educational activities in the church including both religious and secular offerings. A religious offering was defined as one whose major focus was the teaching of biblical principles. These included courses such as Adult Bible Study, Baptist Pathfinders, Great Characters of the Bible, Great Truths of the Bible, Sunday School, Teachers' Council, and Thru the Bible. On the other hand, offerings where biblical principles were not the central focus were labeled secular. This included offerings on topics such as Arts and Crafts, Computer/Internet Training, Finances, History, Sign Language, and Physical Fitness. Although not equal, there was a balance between religious and secular offerings used in the study. Combined, the churches delivered more than 250 educational offerings in 1998. Classes were

offered weekly, quarterly, and annually. Special topics, such as health and careers, were addressed periodically throughout the year. Participants were surveyed from 32 different classes. Classes were selected that captured the variety of educational offerings among the three churches and that provided a balance between religious and secular subject matter as well as gender and age. Class sizes ranged from 1 to 42 attendees.

A total of 330 surveys were used in the final analysis, for a response rate of 91%. An examination of selected background characteristics revealed that the mean age of respondents was 42. There were more women (66%) than men (34%). The majority of respondents (73.2%) were employed full-time. Nearly 1 in 5 (17.6%) held managerial/administrative positions and had an annual household income between $30,001 and $40,000 (20.5%). More than one third (35%) held bachelor's degrees, and 20% held graduate degrees. An overwhelming majority of respondents (70.4%) indicated they attended educational programs outside the church.

The percentage of adults from the three congregations who participated in educational programs within their respective churches was unknown. Likewise, their participation in church programs versus other educational settings was unknown. Also, the sociopolitical views of the churches and their connections to the motivational factors were not examined, nor were they derived as a motivation for participation. The purpose of this study was not to examine selective groups of learners within the sample, and thus there is no discussion of select groups' motivations for participation. These limitations might be addressed in future research.

Data Analysis

To group the individual items into conceptually meaningful dimensions of motivation for participation in church-based educational programs, the 65 items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis. To determine the best solution, a number of solutions ranging from 2 to 10 factors were generated using both orthogonal and oblique rotation. Ultimately, a 7-factor orthogonal solution (see Tables 1-7) was selected because it captured a larger range of items and explained a larger percentage of the variance than the other factor solutions.

FINDINGS

The seven motivational factors identified in this analysis were as follows: (a) Familiar Cultural Setting, (b) Spiritual and Religious Development, (c) Love of Learning, (d) Support in Facing Personal Challenges, (e) Family Togetherness, (f) Service to Others, and (g) Social Interaction. In reviewing the tables, it should be noted that the criterion level for factor loading was set at .475. Of the 65 items, 15 failed to load on any factor at the criterion level.

Familiar Cultural Setting

This factor refers to a sense of comfort among respondents at being in the African American church or community. Comfort arose from the opportunity to engage in learning with other Christians and with people who had similar interests and ethnic/racial backgrounds. We might suppose that these adults had choices about where to learn. This factor suggests that the choice to attend both secular and religious classes at church may have been based on a desire for a setting where racial and cultural difference was minimized. It is noteworthy, however, that some of the items in this factor showed quite low mean ratings. This finding suggests that such motivations were not prevalent among this particular group of learners.

Spiritual and Religious Development

This factor represents the motivations of adults who participated in church-based education because they wanted to develop spiritually and enhance their relationship with God. They also wanted to learn more about their religious beliefs and become better Christians. Others felt it was part of their Christian mandate. It is to be expected that this factor would emerge from the analysis because the church is a place where individuals presumably go to deepen their spiritual understanding. Because a majority of the classes surveyed were religious in nature, it is logical that learners would have motivations that reflect a commitment to spiritual and religious growth.

Love of Learning

The factor Love of Learning reflects the motivations of adults who participated because they valued learning and found it exciting. Learning enabled them to become more knowledgeable and provided them with an opportunity to learn something new. Love of learning is a common motivational factor in studies of participation in adult education (Boshier, 1971; Boshier & Collins, 1985; Boshier & Riddell, 1978; Fujita-Stark, 1996; Morstain & Smart, 1977; Wlodkowski, 1999).

Support in Facing Personal Challenges

Adults motivated by this factor sought assistance in coping or dealing with problems in their lives. Personal challenges included common adult developmental tasks such as divorce, retirement, or job change as well as more idiosyncratic life events such as ethical dilemmas or hospitalization. The findings suggest that some African American adults in this study turned to the church as a place for gaining assistance to meet whatever challenges they perceived as affecting their lives.

TABLE 1
Factor 1: Familiar Cultural Setting

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
54	People are more accepting of me.	.72	2.21
20	Feel more comfortable asking questions.	.72	2.24
21	Interact with other Black people.	.70	2.45
40	Feel more comfortable participating in discussions.	.70	2.35
53	Prefer the church to other educational settings.	.63	2.45
11	More comfortable because more Black people there.	.63	2.24
43	Gives me something to do with other Christians.	.60	2.77
45	Gives me something to do with people like me.	.58	2.59
58	Familiar with people at church.	.58	2.38
44	Gives me something to do with people who have lifestyles similar to mine.	.54	2.61
42	Meet people who are facing problems similar to mine.	.52*	2.49
31	Because it's held in the Black community.	.52	2.13
33	To see my friends.	.48	1.99
49	Gives me something useful to do.	.48	2.63
29	Other people I respect are participating.	.48	2.27

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that an item loaded on more than one factor.

TABLE 2
Factor 2: Spiritual and Religious Development

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
3	Learn more about God.	.84	3.73
5	Learn more about my relationship with God.	.83	3.65
4	Makes me feel closer to God.	.78	3.50
2	To be a better Christian.	.73	3.72
37	Learn more about the Bible.	.73	3.56
6	It is part of my duty to God.	.68	3.41
10	Pastor emphasized the importance of education.	.59	3.05
39	Like the Christian perspective of the course.	.53	3.29
7	Classes will help me to live better.	.48	3.55

Family Togetherness

In relation to this factor, the term *family* was not limited to its traditional meaning (i.e., mother, father, children) as in the nuclear family. Rather, it referred to

TABLE 3
Factor 3: Love of Learning

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
17	Learning is exciting for me.	.73	3.48
16	To gain knowledge.	.79	3.62
15	Learn something new.	.72	3.48
13	Value learning.	.71	3.60
14	Enhance knowledge about a particular subject.	.69	3.30
8	To develop skills.	.61	3.43
56	It is a good source of information.	.57	3.33
55	To be a knowledgeable person.	.56	3.31
32	Achieve a specific personal goal.	.49	3.04

TABLE 4
Factor 4: Support in Facing Personal Challenges

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
28	Find ways to overcome personal challenges.	.70	3.28
46	Get an encouraging word while going through a trial.	.68	3.08
47	Get emotional support.	.67	2.88
48	Learn survival skills.	.66	3.05
30	Fulfill a need in life.	.61	3.37
41	Help with a situation at home.	.61	2.66
26	Help with personal life.	.59	3.37
42	Meet people who are facing problems similar to mine.	.40*	2.49

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that an item loaded on more than one factor.

extended family as well as persons to whom an individual feels a close personal relationship such as a romantic companion. With that in mind, Family Togetherness identified motivations of adults who participated in church-based education because the entire family could participate or because it enabled their children to participate in certain activities while they were engaged in learning. This factor also reflects motivations to share in activities with a spouse or significant other. Although this is usually not possible in other educational settings (e.g., community colleges, technical institutes, or the workplace), the African American church provides a place for learners to bring other individuals with whom they have a significant personal relationship and provides an opportunity to enhance that relationship while engaging in learning. An examination of the factor means suggests that, like

TABLE 5
Factor 5: Family Togetherness

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
35	Family is participating.	.77	1.98
34	Kids can participate in activities.	.74	1.87
18	Share in activities with a spouse or a significant other.	.63	2.33

Familiar Cultural Setting, this was not a great motivator for many of the respondents in the study.

Service to Others

This factor represents adults' motivations to be of service to their church or community. Essentially, this motivational factor reflects an altruistic attitude toward education and learning. Adults who wanted to help address a community or social problem or be involved in the service mission of the church expressed this as a motivation. In addition, adults who had achieved a particular status or level of expertise and who wanted to share their knowledge identified this factor as reason to participate.

Social Interaction

Finally, adults participated because they wanted to network with or get to know other people and enhance their social skills. This social aspect of education and learning attracts learners to church-based adult education programs. This motivational factor may be linked to the historical role of the church as the social center in the African American community (Phillip, 1993; Wiggins, 1995).

DISCUSSION

The seven-factor motivational structure derived from this analysis leads to several important observations about motivations to learn among African American adults. Four factors were consistent with prior research and suggest a certain stability or continuity among adult learners regardless of ethnicity or site of learning. Spiritual and Religious Development, Love of Learning, Service to Others, and Social Interaction all have precedence in earlier studies that identified these reasons as important to adult learners. However, three factors, Familiar Cultural Setting, Support in Facing Personal Challenges, and Family Togetherness appear to be

TABLE 6
Factor 6: Service to Others

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
65	Help other people.	.69	3.30
64	Improve community.	.67	2.94
59	To teach for the church.	.58	2.57
50	To enlighten others.	.48	3.33

TABLE 7
Factor 7: Social Interaction

Item Number	Item	Loading	Mean
27	Network with others.	.54	2.60
57	Enhance social skills.	.49	2.45
1	Get to know other people.	.48	2.92

newly identified. The following discussion is organized around this division of factors into those evident in prior research and those that are newly identified.

Factors Evident in Prior Research

Four of the seven dimensions of motivation—Spiritual and Religious Development, Love of Learning, Social Interaction, and Service to Others—replicate previous adult and religious education findings. Therefore, it seems quite reasonable—one could even say expected—that African Americans' motivations are similar to those often identified with the wider population.

Spiritual growth is a significant aspect of learning among adults in the church, especially for African Americans. Wickett (1980) found that adults spent more than 50% of their time learning for spiritual growth. Using an adaptive version of the EPS, spiritual growth and obedience to God were identified as motivations for participation in Christian education programs (Atkinson, 1989).

Love of Learning described motivations of African American adults who participated because they valued learning and found it exciting. Learning for learning's sake is a motivation to participation commonly cited in adult education literature (Boshier, 1971; Boshier & Collins, 1985; Boshier & Riddell, 1978; Fujita-Stark, 1996; Morstain & Smart, 1977; Wlodkowski, 1999). Love of Learning is directly comparable to Houle's (1988) learning motivation. The presence of this

motivational dimension suggests that some learners seek learning opportunities for reasons that may transcend demographic or social factors such as age, ethnicity, race, culture, or religion.

In this study, Social Interaction is comparable to the activity-oriented motivation described by Houle (1988). The motivation to participate is to meet and interact with other adults. Several other studies (Boshier, 1971, 1991; Boshier & Collins, 1985; Boshier & Riddell, 1978; Fujita-Stark, 1996; Morstain & Smart, 1977) have found that social interaction was an important motivation to learn.

In studies of religious education, Conrad (1986) and Atkinson (1989) found that adults participated either for altruistic reasons or because participation would enable them to achieve a service goal. Morstain and Smart (1977) suggested that in general, adult learners have a humanitarian spirit. Service to Others appears compatible with Houle's (1988) goal orientation in the connection of learning to the particular goal of service. Boshier et al. also have identified service as a motivation (Boshier & Collins, 1985; Boshier & Riddell, 1978).

These similarities suggest that certain motivational factors cut across contexts and cultural groups. We can surmise that these factors would be identified among other groups of learners. Furthermore, it is likely that these motivational factors will appear consistently across different educational contexts.

Newly Identified Motivational Factors

Familiar Cultural Setting represents motivations of adults who participated because they could be around other Christians and, in particular, African Americans whose lifestyles (i.e., Christian), beliefs, and values were similar to theirs. The term *cultural* was applied to this factor because the responses indicated a sense of shared community and identification with that community. This response seems quite consistent with religious, sociological, and historical literature that states that the church is a central part of the African American community and that it has been involved in every aspect of African Americans' lives (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The church has been a place for African Americans to have their self-worth and being affirmed (Cone, 1989) and to associate with other people who understand their plight and experiences. Consistent with Courtney's (1992) argument that participation in adult education is a subset of the broader construct of social participation, we can propose that the respondents' participation in church-based adult education programs was an extension of their participation in the church.

We believe that this factor is particularly important due to its roots in our racially divided society. It is interesting that for the respondents in this study, the desire for a familiar cultural setting was not as important as other factors in their motivation to participate in church-based education, perhaps due to particular characteristics of this group or the church context. Future research might explore the significance of cultural perceptions and attitudes among different groups of African American adult learners and in different learning contexts.

The African American church developed, in part, as a result of suffering and oppression (McClain, 1990) and as a refuge from encounters with racism and changing individual circumstances (Cone, 1989; Paris, 1985; Walker, 1982). It is not surprising that some respondents participated, as reflected in the factor Facing Personal Challenges, because they saw the church as a comforting place to seek help in addressing problems they faced. In an analysis of data from the National Survey of Black Americans, Taylor et al. (1988) reported that African American adults felt the church sustained and strengthened them by helping them to go on with their lives, overcome troubles, and remove sadness and depression.

Religious coping is a mechanism commonly used by many groups in stressful times (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). Religious coping methods include seeking spiritual support, collaborative religious coping, and spiritual connection. However, the concept of religious coping does not have an educational or secular component, as do the motivations associated with Facing Personal Challenges. This type of challenge might be addressed by secular as well as religious activities, with the primary emphasis on learning to address personal problems. For example, educational program offerings among the three churches in this study addressed religious and secular topics, such as drug addiction and stress management. This broad focus is consistent with the previously discussed nature of the church's involvement in many aspects of African Americans' social lives.

Personal problems are often discussed in the adult education literature as a barrier or deterrent to participation (Cummings, 1995; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). However, Wickett (1980) found that a crisis could serve as an impetus to learning. Furthermore, participation in religious education has been found to aid individuals in coping with changes in their lives (Conrad, 1986). The present study provides evidence that personal problems may be a factor in motivating African American adults to participate in church-based adult education. However, it remains to be understood whether particular types of personal problems lend themselves more to church-based education or whether the severity of particular kinds of personal difficulties would be a deterrent or a motivator to participation.

Family Togetherness referred to sharing in educational activities with family members or significant others. It ranked the lowest in mean importance among the seven factors identified in the study. Because the average age of respondents was 43, many of them may have been less likely to have young children who would participate in family- or youth-oriented church activities. This type of motivation might have more importance if data were analyzed by subgroups, such as young parents or singles who participate to be in the company of a friend or significant other.

For the group as a whole, social motivations, Family Togetherness and Familiar Cultural Setting, were not as strong motivations as the perhaps more predictable ones, Love of Learning and Spiritual and Religious Development. Perhaps, the historical tendency of African Americans to use the church as a social center was not

that important for this group of learners, or perhaps they felt that such social needs were met primarily in the church's noneducational activities. However, these social dimensions of learning might have more importance as indirect influences on participation rather than as independent factors. Further research might explore the interactions among motivations and their combined importance to African American adult learners.

CONCLUSION

The African American church continues to be instrumental in the lives of African Americans. The church is increasingly aggressive in its social outreach and community involvement (Lincoln, 1999), and its membership continues to remain stable. Although current circumstances of African Americans are not as limited and restrictive as they were in the past, the church continues to play an important educational role within the African American community. There are many social ills such as drugs, AIDS, homelessness, and cancer that plague the African American community. In many instances, the church is responding through its educational programming (Dilulio, 1999). We can surmise that the church will continue its important educational role in the African American community.

Despite the proliferation in congregational size and subsequent programming in the church, published research on contemporary adult education within its confines is limited. Misap (1994) stated that much of the literature relative to the African American church typically is not classified as adult education. Instead, it falls under the auspices of religious or general education. Adult educators continue to overlook this significant site for adult educational activities and research.

Although some studies have done an adequate job in explaining adults' motivations in general, most have failed to include an analysis of race (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Valentine, 1997). Often, minority populations have been represented in such small numbers in such studies that an analysis of race was rendered impossible. In contrast to other studies, this study was unique in that it not only provided an in-depth examination of African Americans' motivations, it did so within a sociocultural context with particular relevance to this group—the African American church.

Like their White counterparts, African Americans engage in learning for a sundry of reasons. Our findings demonstrate that adults, regardless of their cultural background, participate in educational activities because they enjoy learning, meeting new people, and helping others. As would be expected, adults in this study also participated to enhance their relationship with God and their understanding about their religious beliefs. Learning, social, and service factors have been cited repeatedly in adult education literature as motivations for learning. Our findings build on this work, providing further evidence of certain common motivations for learning across contexts and groups.

However, the social context in which adults engage in adult education can affect their motivations to participate in adult educational activities. A learning environment that is suitable or comfortable to one group may not be for others. As Anderson (1988) pointed out, African Americans' social, cultural, and environmental milieus differ from other ethnic groups. This may explain why African Americans have responded favorably to programs offered in nonformal settings that encompass nontraditional learning (Briscoe, 1990). We speculated that the participants in this study might favor programs held in a community-based institution with cultural beliefs and values in line with theirs. In contrast, a desire for learning in a familiar cultural environment was not a significant motivator for a number of our respondents. However, this group of learners possessed characteristics associated with the typical adult participant in formal education (such as high socioeconomic and educational levels). Further research could explore the significance of these motivations of learning among more selective subgroups of learners within the church.

In terms of practice, if adult educators seek to provide quality programming that is responsive (Rachal, 1989; Ross-Gordon, 1990) to the learning needs of African American adult learners, they cannot rely solely on guidance from motivational concepts grounded in studies dominated by White middle-class adults (Courtney, 1992; Wlodkowski, 1999). This is important because African Americans' participation has commonly been cited as poor in formal settings. In nonformal settings, rich descriptions of African American adults' lifelong learning activities can be found (Briscoe & Ross, 1989; Neufeldt & McGee, 1990). Such nonformal contexts provide the setting for challenging existing knowledge about adult learners' reasons for participation. With further refinement of this knowledge, adult educators can refine or develop new strategies to enhance participation. If adult educators seek to be more responsive to the needs of all learners, they must understand not only commonly generalized motivations of adult learners but also those motivations that are contextually and ethnically based.

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Learning and Professional Practice: A Study of Four Professions

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The purpose of this research was to investigate how knowledge becomes meaningful in professional practice across four different professions. Eighty semistructured interviews were conducted with social workers, lawyers, adult educators, and nurses who had attended continuing education programs 9 to 24 months previously. Findings indicate that professionals make meaning by moving back and forth between continuing professional education programs and their professional practice. In addition, each profession studied framed their meaning-making process through an understanding of the nature of their professional work. Implications for research and practice in continuing professional education are drawn.

How does knowledge become meaningful in professional practice? Is this process the same or different in a variety of professions? We do know that over the course of their lives, professionals develop an integrated, holistic knowledge framework that is used in the context of the services they provide to clients. We have also established that this knowledge is often developed from continuing professional education (CPE) programs, from conversations with colleagues, and from experience in professional practice. However, we do not fully understand the process by which this knowledge becomes meaningful within the context of professional practice.

The value of CPE and its application has been studied from a variety of perspectives. However, many studies have tended to isolate and analyze the individual learner, rather than evaluate that learner within a particular context. Previous research in the transfer of knowledge (Broad & Newstrom, 1992; Ottoson, 1995), adoption of innovation (Hall & Loucks, 1981; Lockyer, 1991), and diffusion of

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innovation (Rogers, 1995) has laid the groundwork for the study of learning and context. More recently, researchers (Black & Schell, 1995; Eraut, 1994; Grzyb, 1997) have begun to question the relationships between knowledge presented in CPE and the ways in which that knowledge becomes meaningful at the work site. However, the missing element is still a comprehensive, holistic assessment of the interrelationships between the learner, the knowledge generated within the educational program, the elements of professional practice, and the context of organizations in which professionals are employed.

The purpose of this article is to describe research that asked about the ways in which knowledge becomes meaningful in professional practice. This is an important issue within the field of adult education for a variety of reasons. First, employers and professionals spend billions of dollars annually on professional development programs. Employers "spend over $50 billion per year on formal employee training and education. Approximately $180 billion per year is spent on informal, on-the-job training" (Rowden, 1996, p. 3). Despite this huge investment in CPE programs, the field of adult education can offer few assurances that the knowledge learned in these programs is linked to the context of professional practice.

Second, professionals develop and change their practice with the intent of continually meeting clients' needs and expectations. However, most professionals go through this process of professional development without a clear understanding of how knowledge learned in CPE becomes meaningful in practice. Although the stages of professional development have been described (Benner, 1984; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986), the learning process underlying professional development and the connection to the context of practice has not been articulated. For professionals to continue meeting the needs of their clients, a greater understanding of the connections between the context of practice and professional learning is needed.

Finally, adult educators could benefit from developing a better understanding of how knowledge becomes meaningful in practice, particularly given long-standing empirical and theoretical insights (Benner, 1984; Cervero, 1988; Schon, 1987) that have yet to have much impact on CPE practice. For example, a better understanding of the relationship between knowledge and practice would improve CPE practice. As professional autonomy dwindles and professionals continue to be integrated into organizations (see Mott & Daley, 2000), the linkages between context and practice need to be defined and analyzed so that learning and professional practice can continue to grow in these new settings.

CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The interrelationships of two major concepts, knowledge and professional practice, were explored in this study. Jarvis (1999) framed a distinction between general

information and meaningful knowledge vis-à-vis the relationships between knowledge and professional practice. Jarvis indicated that information may come from a variety of sources, and as we learn, we validate information through our thinking: "What is learned and accepted then becomes knowledge. Knowledge is subjective; information is not" (p. 147). Knowledge, for the purpose of this study, was viewed as an active construction of information that occurred through a process of learning.

According to Roth (1994), three distinct lines of research underlie the study of constructivist learning. The first is a cognitive approach that locates cognition and understanding within the individual. The most salient feature of this perspective is the "notion that learners respond to their sensory experience by building or constructing in their minds, schemas or cognitive structures which constitute the meaning and understanding of their world" (Saunders, 1992, p. 136). Constructivists, writing from this cognitive approach (Ausubel, Novak, & Hanesian, 1986; Brunner, 1990; Novak, 1998; Piaget, 1966), believe that individuals create knowledge by linking new information with past experiences to create a personal process for meaning making. Within a constructivist framework, the learner progressively differentiates concepts into more and more complex understandings and also reconciles abstract understanding with concepts garnered from previous experience (Novak, 1998). New knowledge is made meaningful by the ways in which learners establish connections between knowledge learned, previous experiences, and the context in which learners find themselves. Lambert et al. (1995) identified multiple principles of constructivist learning theory: (a) Knowledge and beliefs are formed within the learner; (b) learners personally imbue experiences with meaning; (c) learning activities should cause learners to gain access to their experiences, knowledge, and beliefs; (d) learning is a social activity that is enhanced by shared inquiry; and (e) reflection and meta-cognition are essential aspects of constructing knowledge and meaning (pp. 17-18).

A second line of research from a constructivist perspective takes a cultural approach (Roth, 1994). Growing out of the work of anthropologists and Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978), this line of research locates cognition in the interaction of individuals and their culture, rather than primarily within the individual (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978): "Perhaps the most distinguishing theme of Vygotsky's writings, is his emphasis on the unique qualities of our species, how as human beings we actively realize and change ourselves in the varied contexts of culture and history" (p. 131). The cultural approach to constructivism emphasizes that "making meaning is thus a dialogic process involving person-in-conversation, and learning is seen as the process by which individuals are introduced to a culture by more skilled members" (Driver et al., as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 262).

A third line of research from a constructivist perspective "goes beyond the individual and the culture, and includes the physical context of the acting individual" (Roth, 1994, p. 199). Thus, constructivist learning in this framework is viewed as situated (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wilson, 1993).

In this view, the authentic "activity in which knowledge is developed and deployed . . . is not separable from, or ancillary to, learning and cognition. Nor is it neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of what is learned" (Brown et al., 1989, p. 32). Lave and Wenger (1991) have indicated that authentic activity and tools within the context of use help foster constructivist learning.

Even though multiple authors discuss constructivism, according to Fenwick (2000), "All views share one central premise: A learner is believed to construct, through reflection, a personal understanding of relevant structures of meaning derived from his or her action in the world" (p. 248). Thus, constructivists believe that learning is a process of probing deeply the meaning of experiences in our lives and developing an understanding of how these experiences shape understanding. Within a constructivist framework, learning activities are designed to foster an integration of thinking, feeling, and acting while helping participants to learn how to learn (Novak & Gowin, 1984). Bredo (1994) acknowledged that multiple forms of constructivist learning exist and advocated a "more collaborative relationship between the formal and informal, the theoretical and practical, the universalistic and the particularistic. We can seek a well-functioning division of labor . . . rather than the dominance by one or the other or their total divorce" (p. 34).

In summary, "Professional knowledge cannot be characterized in a manner that is independent of how it is learned and how it is used" (Eraut, 1994, p. 19). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the way in which knowledge became meaningful in professional practice across multiple professions: How does knowledge become meaningful in the context of professional practice? What differences or similarities exist across a variety of professions?

METHODOLOGY

Using an interpretivist approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), individuals from four different professions were interviewed 9 to 24 months following attendance at 1- or 2-day CPE programs on topics pertinent to their particular profession. The CPE programs provided the vehicle to analyze what new knowledge was learned and how that knowledge became meaningful in practice.

A purposive sample (Patton, 1990), consisting of 20 social workers, 20 lawyers, 20 adult educators, and 20 nurses, was recruited. These four professions were selected specifically because they represent a wide variety in professional and semiprofessional work including differences in the structural components of the work, diversity in educational preparation, and variety in CPE requirements. Each professional group in this study included practitioners from three different arenas. Social workers in this study worked in state and government agencies, private counseling practices, or health care facilities. Lawyers in this study worked in solo practices, one- to three-person firms, or large firms. Adult educators in this sample worked in colleges and universities, business and industry, or community edu-

cation settings. Finally, nurses in this sample worked in home care, acute care, or long-term care facilities.

Data were collected through semistructured interviews and document analysis. Prior to conducting the tape-recorded interviews, the researcher conducted a document review of the CPE planning information that specified the program objectives, content, time frames, and evaluation strategies of each CPE program from which study participants were drawn. The researcher conducted the document review so that an in-depth understanding of the information presented in the CPE program was created. This allowed the researcher to interview participants specifically about their learning subsequent to a CPE program. Participants were then questioned to determine what they had learned or not learned, how they did or did not incorporate that information into their practice, and what aspects of their practice they considered significant in fostering learning.

Three data analysis strategies were employed. First, the researcher created a concept map (Novak, 1998) depicting connections that study participants described between learning and professional practice. Second, categories were created to encode all data. These categories, developed through a constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1973), identified thematic areas articulated by participants and were developed following a review of all concept maps in the study, along with the data generated in the individual verbatim transcripts. Third, a system of matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was created to examine participant groups' responses to each of the research questions under study that allowed the researcher to compare the responses of social workers, lawyers, nurses, and adult educators. The combination of these three data analysis strategies permitted the researcher to examine connections between concepts under study, to compare and contrast different groups in the sample, and to examine both individual and group findings related to the research questions.

Three quality control mechanisms were employed in this study. First, member checks were employed with all study participants throughout the interview process. Second, the concept maps created were returned to participants. Each participant reviewed the concept map created from their interview for accuracy and completeness. Third, two qualitative researchers completed a qualitative data analysis audit to review the study for dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Findings from the audit indicated that the methodological decisions (dependability) made during the process of the study were sound and that the study findings were confirmable in the data.

FINDINGS

The research questions that guided this inquiry will be used as the organizing framework for reporting study findings. First, the meaning-making processes used by each of the different professions in this study will be described. Study results indicate that the differences in meaning-making processes were framed by the

nature of professional work and by client-based experiences within an individual profession. Second, the general meaning-making processes that were similar across all professions will be presented. These general meaning-making processes appear to support theories of constructivist learning.

How Knowledge Becomes Meaningful in Professional
Practice: The Nature of Professional Work

A major finding of this study was that the process of making meaning from the knowledge presented at CPE programs was framed for each profession by the nature of its professional work. Social workers, lawyers, adult educators, and nurses each had a unique view of their work and integrated that view into their meaning-making and learning processes.

Social workers. Social workers framed their meaning-making processes in a number of different ways. One was through their advocacy role. Social workers described themselves as "stewards" of the information and explained how they actively sought out ways to help their clients by using information learned in CPE:

> I went to that session wanting to know what was going to be happening with the social work profession in the near future, especially with the W2. I guess it was a broader thing, a more political interest that I had; how could I use what I learned to help defend my clients' needs in the system.

When social workers attended CPE programs, they clearly had their clients' needs in mind. Social workers felt that it was "vital to have the newest information" so that they could "support, defend, and advocate" for their clients within larger systems and with other professionals. Another social worker described how attending a CPE program on the use of psychiatric medications was important to her, although she would never prescribe the medication, because "by having that information I can intelligently approach the issues with the client and advocate for the client when he or she sees the psychiatrist." Social workers overwhelmingly discussed further that CPE also provided a vehicle by which they could "create new energy for their practice." Social workers specified that CPE provided "an avenue that gave them the opportunity to reaffirm what they already knew," which reminded them of why they had chosen their profession in the first place:

> From going to the conference, you kind of get a sense of excitement about being part of this profession, that is so much bigger than what it is that you are exposed to every day, and the diversity of it. There was an energy being created that helped me remember why I became a social worker.

Social workers also described their need to take a break from the day-to-day practice struggles and have an opportunity to refresh both their minds and spirits. They

described how they needed to "climb out and refresh" so that they could reenter their profession with renewed commitment, enthusiasm, and energy:

> It [the CPE program] was rather refreshing. Like I said, I came back just very energized in a negative and positive way. I was kind of appalled at some of the things that were discussed, and the seminar gave me time to think and decide what to do; so it just made me get all fired up again.

So key components to making knowledge meaningful for social workers included learning new information in a CPE program, combining that information with their experience in professional practice, and reaffirming their commitment to their profession.

Lawyers. Lawyers, on the other hand, saw CPE as providing a "road map" for their practice. Lawyers indicated that their professional role was to examine the case that the client presented and then "boil down the case to the bottom line issue." Once the bottom line issue was identified, lawyers compared the case, as presented, to the law. The law was the standard. Lawyers saw CPE as a mechanism to provide information on changes in the law. With this updated information on the law, lawyers then felt they were prepared to deal with new cases brought by clients:

> When you go to law school, your brain gets rewired in a number of ways, and you learn a new language. It is a language of law. It is not just a lot of phrases but a way of speaking and a way of connecting things. It is a form of logic as well as a form of speech. You are not allowed to vary from logical principles.

Lawyers also indicated that the use of information in practice was straightforward: "You either apply the information or you don't. The outlines alone are valuable because you get to take them home. . . . You use that information on an ad hoc basis as clients and cases demand." Lawyers explained that their practice demanded a very logical and linear thought process, and as such, they used CPE as a mechanism to support that thought process for their practice. Knowledge from CPE programs was important to lawyers because it facilitated their becoming more "action oriented." Because they believed that a client's case may "rise or fall on the details," lawyers used CPE information as updated reference information for their cases. In addition, they used CPE to help expand their practice into new areas. Lawyers would describe how they often attended a CPE program before venturing into a new area of practice to obtain basic information about that new area of the law:

> I decide two criteria [for attendance at CPE]. One, if it is an area of practice that I currently work in, I will often go to get continuing updates. The second criteria is if it is an area that sounds interesting that I don't practice in and that I am curious if I can incorporate into my practice. Devoting 6 hours to something, maybe $150.00, is a minimum commitment for me to make that kind of business decision.

Finally, lawyers, like other professionals, indicated that CPE did help reaffirm their knowledge, but that the logic of the law helped separate the emotion from their cases. Lawyers described how the logical thinking process prevailed in their work, and the updated information from CPE helped foster that process.

Adult educators. Adult educators provided yet another view of the ways in which knowledge became meaningful within professional practice. Adult educators indicated that from attending CPE programs they would often get one idea that was the "spark for a creative process" that would connect the new information to ideas and experiences or "connect different bodies of knowledge." But adult educators were different from other professionals in that they felt that sharing this creative process or idea was part of the meaning-making process. Adult educators described how they often took on the role of a "hummingbird" because they felt obligated to take this new information and "drop a little bit here and there" into different groups:

> I might get ideas in a program, but I am really a resource, a conduit for people to be able to move forward in their jobs, because I do explain the information to them that I get. I often take information I learn and develop it and bring that forward and say, "Here is a program; here is something we should learn about."

Adult educators used this connection process to make knowledge from CPE programs meaningful to them and to the groups in which they worked. For example, an adult educator in this study had attended a CPE program on the shifting emphasis from teaching to learning:

> I was thinking about our teaching innovation center after that program. That is part of the whole picture of learning on our campus. As a matter of fact, we are working right now in a small committee to try to diagram a concept of our learning system, and I am sure that the stuff we learned that day is in several different places. As we go through this process, I try to pull in what we learned that day, so that everybody has an opportunity to learn it.

Finally, as with other professionals, adult educators indicated that CPE was a mechanism to reaffirm what they already know. For example, after a CPE program an adult educator indicated,

> When I left that program, it wasn't so much that I learned things, but it reinforced a lot of what we were doing here or that I had thought about or considered. When I left there, I wanted to make sure that the information went somewhere. I think I was more interested in seeing some action come out of it than in my own process. Again, I don't know that I learned new things; it was probably affirming stuff that I believed.

Nurses. Nurses explained how they linked client needs with new information from CPE so that their knowledge became integrated. This knowledge, then,

functioned more like a web of information that nurses would draw on when presented with new clients:

> I mean, I can't really say what helps me deal with what. I think of it more like creating mosaics. I mean, you have all these little pieces that come from all over, and in and of themselves, they don't mean much, but when you put them together, you have a beautiful picture. I take little pieces of what I learn from many places and put them together until I have my own picture. (Daley, 1997, p. 109)

For knowledge to become meaningful for nurses, they had to think about the information, have some feelings about it, and ultimately take some action on the new information. Nurses described how when they learned something new it was often based on the needs of their clients and was relevant to their practice. For example, this nurse described a CPE program and how she incorporated the information into her practice:

> Well, it was a very practical-oriented workshop, because you go right back to the labor and delivery and you're working with fetal monitoring on a daily basis. You're able to interpret the results much more. For example, I had a woman who was having deceleration, and normally decelerations make you nervous, but I had a better understanding of how to delineate between a stressful deceleration and a normal deceleration.

For this professional, the knowledge was relevant to practice and based in the needs of the clients. Nurses, like other professionals, reported that CPE often reaffirmed what they already knew, contributed to their personal growth, and increased their confidence:

> If you have confidence that what you know is good information and it works, then I think you exude that confidence and therefore put the patient in a more relaxed state. Another thing, it revitalizes you. When you have a speaker that is so vital, it revitalizes you for your own role. You say, "Okay, we're all thinking like this."

In addition, nurses indicated that for knowledge to become meaningful to them, they needed to take action on what they had learned. This action was sometimes talking with colleagues at conferences and at their work sites. Often, however, the action was trying a new idea with a client and seeing positive results.

Thus, professionals indicated that knowledge became meaningful through processes they used to link information with their practice and that meaning was related directly to the nature of professional work in which each group engaged. For example, social workers described advocacy as a professional role and as such linked information obtained in CPE to their ability to enhance or maintain their advocacy skills. Lawyers described their work in a more logical, linear fashion and indicated that the role of CPE was to inform their practice in that same logical and linear way. Adult educators saw their work as sharing information with others, so knowledge from CPE became meaningful in the sharing process. Nurses identified

their work as providing care, and as such, knowledge to them became meaningful when they took caring action with it.

How Knowledge Becomes Meaningful in Professional
Practice: Client-Based Practice Experiences

Professionals indicated that their client interactions also affected their meaning-making processes. Often, it was an emotional encounter with a client that changed a professional's practice, particularly if confronted with client situations that challenged their knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions. This challenge triggered a reflective process that began an examination of issues within the professional's role. In many of the cases described by professionals, an event occurred in their practice that forced them to examine their own beliefs or their previous learning. Thus, professionals described how they learned topics in educational programs only to have their ideas on those topics changed in the context of practice. Often, these encounters were such memorable experiences that professionals tended to use them as a way to organize and rethink their professional work. Benner (1984) called these *paradigm cases* and argued that professionals develop networks of paradigm cases that help foster an understanding of their learning and their professional roles. Professional practice seems to facilitate meaning making by fostering a reflective process (Schon, 1987).

For example, a social worker in this study described how her understanding of resistance in working with involuntary clients changed her views on the connections between social work and politics. She indicated that her basic education "labeled people as resistant." She explained the impact of her practice on this perspective:

> When somebody comes to you with a problem, I learned that you don't have to spend as much time fixing that person as you do fixing the things around them in the environment. If you listen, you know it is not so much resistance, but it's racism, it's poverty. I learned to reconceptualize resistance and focus not so much on the individual in a therapeutic sense but to focus on the system and to be an advocate at the system level.

This social worker indicated that she had constructed a new meaning of the concept of resistance through her practice and that she had changed her perspective so that her interventions with clients were on a much broader level (Daley, 2000).

In another example, a lawyer indicated how his views on dealing with divorce cases had changed:

> When I first started practicing, I would become very aggressive in divorce cases about dividing up assets. That was what I learned; I made sure that I evaluated assets to maximize my client's side of the ledger, and I made sure they were divided in such a way that my client would get absolute top dollar, and I would fight very forcefully and aggressively. When I look at things now, I think it is important that people get the dollar

amount that they should, but I think there are other aspects that come into play also, like a continuing good relationship between the husband and wife, if it is possible to preserve that—such as continuing good relationships with the children, such as peace of mind, such as not spending a great deal of money on attorney fees, such as avoiding a trial and the bad relationship that can carry over for years between parties.

This lawyer indicated that he had constructed a new understanding of divorce and shifted his practice from a focus on the financial to a focus on the human aspects of the process.

Adult educators also changed their perspective on learning following significant interactions with clients. One adult educator explained how she had learned instructional planning and program development in her graduate school experience, only to have those ideas changed in her practice in an adult literacy program. She described working with a 35-year-old man over a long period of time and getting to know this person as a unique individual:

I went into that experience with some preconceived notions about people who can't read as being uneducated and unable to do many things. But this man was so interesting; we would have wonderful discussions. This man wanted so much and deserved so much. He had a job and was able to negotiate his world, and nobody at work knew he was illiterate. He wanted to learn to read so he could drive a car, so he could find a better job, so he could read the newspaper. He loved knowing what was going on in the world. He put in a full day's work and then would come to work with me; he never missed a day. When I start thinking that what I do is not important, I think back to this gentleman who was very courageous, and I think this is why I do what I do. When we talked, I learned many lessons from him. I was teaching him how to read, but he was teaching me about life.

This adult educator changed her practice based on a new understanding and respect for the learner, indicating that to her education was more than instructional plans and program; it was about the two-way relationship established with the learner.

Finally, a nurse in this study described how she had seen herself as a relatively good communicator (Daley, 2000). She had learned communication theory in her basic professional preparation program, reviewed it in CPE programs, and practiced the skill with her clients while doing assessments, interviews, and treatments. When she worked with a client who was dying, however, this client taught her what it really meant to communicate:

I was working on a medical unit, and I met this incredible man who was dying of cancer. I used to spend a lot of time talking to him. He talked to me a lot about dying. He was in a private room, and people would walk into the room. He said, "Watch them. They barely come into the room. They don't come near the bed. When I told them I didn't want any more treatment, that I was willing to die, each day they got further and further from my bed. None of them sit down now." He said to me, "They think they are communicating, but they are not." This really hit home for me because my assumption was that if I said the right words, I was communicating well. After this experience, I recognized that I was basing my actions on a view of communication that was not re-

ally accurate in my practice. I now believe that communication is about presence, caring, and time, not just words.

In this example, the professional learned by constructing an understanding of the concept of communication and by changing her perspective and assumptions about what communication meant following a significant practice experience. Thus, a major component of how knowledge becomes meaningful in professional practice is determined by how the professionals' perspectives change through client interactions. In this study, it was evident that professionals did change how they viewed their practice following significant client interactions.

Meaning-Making Processes Across All Four Professions

Professionals across all groups in this study described how their knowledge was constantly changing and that experiences, attendance at CPE programs, and dialogue with colleagues all contributed to the continual growth and refinement of meaningful knowledge. For example, one lawyer indicated the following:

> Everything has changed since I got out of school: the criminal code, the total family code. . . . Everything that has changed I have basically learned from new seminars. Every single thing about my divorce practice now is something I learned in practice and in seminars.

Professionals described how their knowledge was changed and meaning enhanced each time they learned something new. They did not see transfer of learning as an outcome of their educational endeavors; they viewed transfer as an integral part of the meaning-making process. New information learned in CPE programs was added to a professional's knowledge through a complex process of thinking about, acting on, and identifying their feelings about new information. Professionals indicated that new information had to connect to other concepts before it was meaningful to them, and part of the process of making knowledge meaningful was to use it in practice in some way. Thus, transferring information to practice was essential to the process of meaning making because often, in this process of using information, the professionals again changed what the information meant to them based on the results they observed. In other words, incorporating new knowledge is a recursive, transforming process, rather than a simple, straightforward transfer of information from one context to another.

Consider the following examples. A nurse in this study described how she used information from CPE:

> It's a response that you come up with from the knowledge that you've got, and you do it without even thinking about it. Like I said earlier, it's reserved in your mind. When you need it, you are able to pull it out and use it. Maybe not exactly the way it was taught but in some fashion.

An adult educator made a similar point: "Well, where I get some of my ideas, I can't always say because I can't go back and say it was this meeting or that meeting, because it kinds of pulls together. Everything builds on everything else." The following is another example:

> What happens is as I listen, my brain moves into the bigger picture, and it just gives me all kinds of ideas. Sometimes, they are not even directly related to what I have been hearing. But something I see, something will be said, and my brain will go into high gear, and then it goes out several levels, and all of a sudden, this will fit in here or there.

Constructivist theories of learning (Novak, 1998) help us to understand these examples of making meaning in practice. The four groups of professionals interviewed in this study described learning and using knowledge as a very active process of linking, relating, and connecting multiple pieces of information until they made sense to them. To make knowledge meaningful, professionals assimilated information into their cognitive structures from a variety of sources such as CPE programs, experience, client interactions, reading, and observation of mentors. This information was both assimilated and integrated with previous experience such that the nature and character of both the new and the old information changed. These professionals are describing the progressive differentiation and integrative reconciliation involved in concept learning (Novak, 1998). In this process, concepts are differentiated into smaller and smaller components and at the same time reconciled by connecting these components and linking them to previously known information. As this process occurs, both the nature and character of the previous and the new information change, making it more and more difficult to separate small chunks of information. Professionals explained that knowledge became meaningful when it blended information together in unique ways. Each of the professions used a slightly different meaning-making process. The differences appeared to arise from the differences in professional work.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the interrelationships of knowledge and professional practice appeared to exist in a highly complex, interrelated system that reflected concepts of various forms of constructivist learning (see Cervero, 1988; Schon, 1987). Knowledge became meaningful for professional practice through these constructivist learning processes and through the professionals' perceptions of the nature of their professional work.

This study raises a number of questions for CPE. First, it suggests a major research question: Is application of knowledge an outcome of continuing education or part of the meaning-making process? This study supports Detterman's (1993) position that there is no general cognitive skill that promotes learning transfer, and thus the importance of contextualized learning is emphasized. This study should be

replicated across additional disciplines, such as teachers, engineers, and architects for instance, to determine if other professions integrate new knowledge in a similar fashion to the four described here.

Second, this study raises questions about current conceptions of constructivist learning. Professionals in this study described meaning-making processes that reflected both cognitive and situated depictions of constructivist learning. These data seem to support both Bredo's (1994) and Fenwick's (2000) view that similarities exist across the multiple views of constructivist learning and that complex meaning-making processes use elements of multiple forms of constructivism.

Third, this study raises questions about how significant, emotional interactions with clients foster meaning-making processes. Many professionals in this study changed their practices based on an examination of their assumptions and actions following significant client interactions. This finding raises a number of questions. Is this type of meaning making part of constructivist learning, or is it more akin to transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991; Merzirow & Associates, 2000)? Are these significant client interactions similar to "disorienting dilemmas" (Mezirow, 1991) that initiate examination of assumptions? Further research is suggested on the relationships between constructivist learning, transformational learning, and professional practice.

Fourth, this study suggests that the process of knowledge becoming meaningful for professional practice is tied tightly to the nature of professional work. More research is needed on the nature of professional work and the links to constructivist learning. Finally, this study suggests implications for the practice of CPE because it clearly demonstrates that knowledge and professional practice interact in the learning process. Yet, most CPE programs are created on the premise that simply transmitting information in an educational context will affect practice. In reality, the elements of professional practice link with the information from CPE programs to create meaning for practice, and different professions will use their different understandings of the nature of their work to frame the learning process. This implies that CPE providers need to be more creative in employing teaching and learning strategies to foster this complicated meaning-making process.

As Houle (1980) stated,

> The task for this generation is to move ahead as creatively as possible, amid all the distractions and complexities of practice to aid professions . . . constantly to refine their sensitiveness, enlarge their concepts, add to their knowledge, and perfect their skills so that they can discharge their responsibilities within the context of their own personalities and the needs of the society of which they are collectively a part. (p. 316)

Even though these words were written 20 years ago, the need for CPE as a field of practice to move ahead creatively still exists. Cervero (1988) concurred, stating, "The primary goal of continuing education should be to improve professional artistry or the professionals' ability to operate in the indeterminate zones of practice"

(p. 54). The results of this study can assist in guiding both practitioners and researchers to a greater understanding of professional learning and the connections professional learning has to the context of professional practice.

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CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S LITERACY EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

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Fink, M. (1992). Women and popular education in Latin America. In N. P. Stromquist (Ed.), *Women and education in Latin America: Knowledge, power and change* (pp. 171-193). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. $19.95.

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This essay reviews studies of women's literacy education in Latin America and identifies literacy's potential and limitations for contributing to women's empowerment and social change. Empowerment has cognitive, psychological, economic, and political dimensions

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(Stromquist, 1995b) and can occur at personal, interpersonal, and collective levels (Rowlands, 1997). Espousing a critical, feminist perspective, these authors believe that literacy education should equip women to develop a sense of self, exercise power in relationships, and work with others to solve collective problems. After briefly describing these texts and the context of women's literacy in Latin America, I outline three characteristics of a critical, feminist approach to women's literacy—the view of literacy as a social practice, the need for gender awareness, and analysis of the individual and structural constraints that women face. I discuss the factors that accounted for the successful implementation of Freirean pedagogy in one case study and identify the ways in which literacy empowers women individually and collectively. These texts also highlight tensions such as the extent to which women's literacy can foster social change, the ways in which it reinforces and/or alters women's roles, and educators' degree of control in emancipatory education. I conclude by addressing the gaps in these studies, namely the need to integrate spirituality, work with men, and answer the question, "liberation to *what*?" Grappling with the issues and challenges that these authors illuminate will equip adult educators to reflect more critically on the ways in which our practice and programs foster and/or hinder women's capacity to "read and write their world."

OVERVIEW OF TEXTS REVIEWED

Since teaching a women's literacy class in a Salvadoran squatter settlement, I have sought to understand how literacy education can promote social change and enable women to live with more dignity and justice. Given my background, I have been interested in literature that critically examines literacy education among marginalized Latin American women and that yields insights into the promises and challenges of emancipatory education. For this review, I selected books and book chapters that have helped me—and should help other readers— become more aware of the ways in which literacy and gender intersect in more or less empowering ways. The texts include two book chapters that provide overviews of women's literacy and popular education and three qualitative case studies, two in book form and one book chapter.

Drawing on critical and feminist analysis, these scholars contend that literacy is fundamentally a gender issue; as such, it should allow women to challenge oppression, become active citizens, and build a more just society. It is interesting that the programs they studied were Freirean, but none focused on gender issues. The authors reject individualistic approaches that ignore the structural causes of illiteracy and instrumentalist approaches that use women's literacy to promote economic growth, reduce population growth, and other approaches that tend to reinforce women's traditional roles.

Although the authors focus on Latin America, their work has implications for a North American audience. For example, Purcell-Gates and Waterman conclude each chapter with implications for adult education in North America, addressing issues such as "forms of adult literacy instruction" and "critical engagement." Each text reveals how literacy is gendered in terms of access, participation, and benefits. These texts can enable adult educators to examine the ways in which our practice differentially affects women and men and to design and implement programs that equip women to alter undesirable aspects of their lives. Finally, these pieces underscore the promise and shortcomings of using a critical feminist literacy

approach to foster social change. They can help adult educators address the structural issues that shape women's lives.

Through her incisive scholarship on women and development in Latin America, Nelly Stromquist (1995a) has exposed gender inequality in education and challenged educators and policy makers to address this injustice. Her chapter, written from a critical feminist perspective, provides a valuable overview of women's literacy and its benefits for women. I included this chapter in the review because it clearly outlines the central issues involved in women's literacy and shows how literacy education can enable and/or hinder women's capacity to improve their lives.

Marcy Fink critiques popular education with a critical feminist lens, arguing that although these programs have solved local problems and helped women gain personal skills, they have not catalyzed social change. Drawing on local knowledge, popular education involves working with the most marginalized sectors of a community to engage in a process of individual conscientization, the building of cultural identity, and collective social change, often as part of a social movement (cf. Hammond, 1998). I selected Fink's chapter because it is one of the only pieces that I have found in English on the gendered aspects of popular education in Latin America.

Stromquist's (1997) case study focuses on Movimiento de Alfabetizacão de Jovens e Adultos (MOVA), a state-civil society partnership in Sao Paulo, Brazil, that sought to foster citizenship. The partnership concept, the program's emancipatory aims and regional scope, and Freire's role as the municipality's secretary of education made this a unique endeavor. Using feminist and sociocultural lenses, Stromquist examines the acquisition, uses, and outcomes of literacy for 19 women, highlighting the individual and structural constraints that limited their participation in and benefits from the program. Concluding that "there is no evidence that literacy represents a major contribution to the development of more democratic and fair societies" (p. 218), this study questions whether emancipatory literacy education can effect social change. I reviewed this book because Stromquist's nuanced, critical analysis of MOVA's effects on women and the relationship between literacy and social change make this text an invaluable resource for adult education scholars and practitioners. It is an exemplary case study of women's literacy.

Using a "sociopsycholinguistic" literacy lens, Victoria Purcell-Gates and Robin Waterman's ethnographic study explores how eight *campesina* (peasant) women became fully literate and learned to analyze their world in a Freirean literacy class in Papaturro, a repopulated village in El Salvador.[1] Although the authors use Freirean rather than feminist analysis, they are sympathetic with feminist perspectives and their study illuminates the gendered aspects of literacy education with campesinas. Because Waterman taught the class for 2 years and directed the regional program, El Movimiento de las Mujeres de Cuscatlán, the book is filled with practical insights about which factors contributed to success (e.g., integrating dialogue and literacy skills). Due to the class's success, Purcell-Gates and Waterman are more enthusiastic about the potential of Freirean pedagogy and less critical of its limitations than the other authors. Conversely, they document Freirean programs' failure to elicit dialogue and/or help women become literate. I chose this ethnographic study because it describes the context, women, and class in rich detail and shows explicitly how Freirean education leads to literacy acquisition, which few other books do. The book moved me deeply because it reminded me so much of the Salvadoran women I taught and rang true to my experience.

Monique van der Westen reports the findings of a 3-month qualitative study of a literacy program in rural Honduras. Targeting members of peasant cooperatives and their wives in 23 communities, the partnership between the Honduran Institute for Rural Development (IDHER) and the National Peasants Association (ANACH) used a primarily Freirean methodology. The program sought to develop peasants' capacity to understand and analyze their situation and search for alternatives. van der Westen discusses, from a critical feminist perspective, reasons for women's participation and nonparticipation, women's exclusion from program design and implementation, and the lack of dialogue. I included this text because it focuses on a different country than the others and reveals the gap between planners' intentions and program outcomes.

LITERACY EDUCATION IN CONTEXT: WOMEN'S REALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

These texts highlight the ways in which Latin America's complex social, political, cultural, historical, and economic contexts affect the dynamics of women's literacy education. Differences such as class, race, ethnicity, language, religion, age, education, national political situations, and family structure uniquely shape Latin American women's experiences, yet they also share some common experiences and interests. Salient gender issues include employment, domestic work, sexual abuse and violence, health and nutrition, political representation, and education.

Women have born the brunt of armed conflicts, oil and debt crises, and structural adjustment programs, yet these crises have also compelled women to enter new public arenas. For example, social movements have organized to provide basic services and/or demanded that the state provide them (Stromquist, 1997). Paradoxically, the changing context and roles may motivate women to pursue literacy, but survival needs may take precedence over education. Educators must recognize how women's roles and responsibilities as wives and mothers, workers, community managers, and citizens intersect with literacy education.

Stromquist (1995a) describes the state of women's literacy. Worldwide, women comprise two thirds of illiterate people. Latin America has the highest educational gender equality—and the most unequally distributed wealth—of any developing region. Male and female enrollment in formal education is nearly equal and the gender gap in adult literacy is approximately 4%. However, these statistics obscure inequalities: Women's illiteracy rates range from 6% to 63%, affecting more than 24 million women; educational inequality is growing; and women who are poor, indigenous, older, and live in rural areas are disproportionately illiterate. For example, the gender gap in literacy rates is 6% in urban areas but 12% in rural regions.

These texts show that the intersection of gender and poverty accounts for women's higher illiteracy rates. Illiteracy reflects women's subordination, which is achieved through male control of women's sexuality and the sexual division of labor, which is pronounced in rural areas where families rely on subsistence production and traditional roles are prevalent (Stromquist, 1995a, 1997). Domestic work prevents girls from attending school and hinders women's participation in literacy education. Women's limited geographic mobility also creates less need for literacy and less contact with print, which reduces their opportunity to

develop literacy skills. Family-related factors (e.g., illness, early marriage, and parents' resistance to mixed schools) and school-related factors (e.g., distance from school, quality of education, relevance of the curriculum, and teachers' attitudes toward boys and girls) also limit girls' education (van der Westen, 1994).

The stories of the campesinas in the Papaturro class verify these generalizations. Six of the eight women had never attended school. Tomasa's story reveals why she could not attend (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000):

> Because she was the oldest girl in her family of six children, four of whom were boys, her mother asked that she help her with the survival tasks relegated to females. So Tomasa helped care for younger siblings, helped make the tortillas and prepare the beans, washed the family's clothing, and collected wood for cooking. Tomasa's father died when she was still young, which further increased the need that Tomasa stay home from school and help her mother. (p. 54)

Her family did not have enough money to send all the children to school or to purchase pencils and notebooks for those who could attend. Unfortunately, Tomasa's experience is quite typical.

The experiences of Brazilian and Honduran women also reveal how gender and poverty shape women's literacy acquisition. Women in both countries were older (older than 35) and thus more able to rearrange domestic responsibilities. Women in the Honduran study spent an average of 11 hours per day in reproductive and productive work. Often, they had to decide whether to attend literacy classes (and keep their daughter(s) home to help with domestic work) or send their daughter(s) to school (and forego literacy classes because of domestic work). MOVA women "were expected to fulfill their domestic responsibilities as in the past" (Stromquist, 1997, p. 73), which included cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes, going to the market, and caring for children. Frequent illness, which stems from poverty, also disrupted women's education. Brazilian women lived with the violence of poverty (e.g., 11.8 murders per day in Sao Paulo) and spousal abuse. Stromquist heard three times in her first year "the story of a man who had poured hot oil on the hands of his wife to prevent her from attending literacy classes at night" (p. 72). Violence pervades the lives of marginalized women, whether they live in Latin America or the United States.

FOUNDATIONS OF A CRITICAL, FEMINIST APPROACH TO LITERACY

Whereas most literacy programs emphasize literacy as an isolated set of technical skills, are gender-blind, and focus on individual motivation and constraints, these authors view literacy as a social practice, stress the need for gender awareness in literacy education, and analyze the individual and structural constraints that prevent women from acquiring literacy. I highlight these themes because they are foundational to a critical, feminist approach to literacy and represent common threads in the texts. The case studies show how these concepts work in real programs and in women's lives and reveal that outcomes often did not reflect planners' emancipatory ideals. Adult educators in North America can use these analytical tools to analyze the ways in which literacy education affects women and men in more or less liberating ways and to assess the degree of consistency between principles and practice.

Literacy as a Social Practice

The authors view literacy as a practice that is embedded in a particular social, cultural, political, and historical setting and that intersects with women's social location—that is, age, race, ethnicity, class, language, geographical location, number of children, marital status, sexual orientation, and religion. Purcell-Gates and Waterman use a sociocultural definition of literacy as "the ability to read and write for the purposes and to the degree to which individuals feel the need given their individual life contexts and aspirations" (p. 238). These "ideological" (Street, 1994) definitions counter "autonomous" ones that depict literacy as a neutral set of technical skills that apply to any context. These studies reflect the belief that literacy is a social practice mediated by the interaction between the learner and her social environment. For example, Purcell-Gates and Waterman describe how the Salvadoran civil war indelibly shaped women's pursuit and practice of literacy. They and Stromquist (1997) did not assess literacy outcomes through a standardized test; rather, they examined how women used reading and writing for distinct purposes in different social contexts, such as community life, church, work, and family. Each of the authors values not only the cognitive outcomes of literacy but also the psychosocial and political ones. For instance, Stromquist points out that women valued MOVA literacy classes as a safe social space.

Need for Gender Awareness

Stromquist, van der Westen, and Fink emphasize a need for literacy programs that explicitly focus on gender issues. Although women comprise the majority of adult learners, few state or NGO programs seek to understand how their needs and interests may differ from those of men. MOVA, for example, did not recognize women as a specific group and failed to discuss gender as a part of citizenship. In Honduras, the facilitators who conducted the base study for planning the program vetoed interview questions about gender relations and family planning. Women were interviewed in the presence of male family members, who answered most of the questions. Consequently, only 1 of 25 curricular themes related specifically to women's position in communities. Even popular education programs seldom focus on women's needs (Stromquist, 1995a) and have few women in leadership positions (Fink, 1992).

Fink and Stromquist contend that Freirean programs often privilege class analysis. Stromquist (1997) observes that gender issues emerge less often than class issues in Freirean dialogue and that Freire's definition of citizenship did not include women's rights. "Adopting a Freirean approach to literacy is no guarantee that attention will be paid to the perspectives of women, nor that the dynamics of women's oppression and emancipation are identified in the political analysis" (van Es-Scheffer, 1992, p. 33, quoted on p. 21). Since literacy does not "make women *ipso facto* more powerful" (p. 21), educators should balance gender and class analysis.

Individual and Structural Constraints

These studies reveal the interplay of individual and structural constraints to becoming literate. Stromquist (1997) and van der Westen (1994) found that the following factors limited women's attendance: having small children, lack of child care, violence, lack of husband's

consent, class proximity (fear of danger), informal economic work, domestic workload,[2] chronic health problems, lack of invitation from planners, and class meeting time. Women at a later stage in the lifecycle[3] and those who had community (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000)[4] and spousal support (Stromquist, 1997) were most likely to participate in literacy education.

Several of the Papaturro women had participated in literacy classes in the refugee camp but did not attend regularly due to health problems, domestic work, and intense experiences of sadness and anxiety. Celia, who tried to attend literacy classes in the camp, told how her sons' deaths affected her learning (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000):

> I had a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for learning. But after I started studying, I found out my son was murdered. My capacity for learning was gone! That is the hardest thing, when you are told your son is dead . . . . As the years went by, I lost my will to do anything. But later, I tried again (to attend literacy class). I was just starting when I heard that another one of my sons was gone. [He was disappeared.] That is how I could not study in Honduras—on account of the bad news and sorrow. It is like a stabbing into your heart! (p. 25)

This example poignantly shows how trauma shapes women's learning.

Given the realities that these studies depict, "to speak of 'motivation' as a factor that determines participation in literacy programs is to ignore the set of obstacles and conditions over [which] these women have little control" (Stromquist, 1997, p. 83). Purcell-Gates and Waterman recognize these constraints but still attribute the women's persistent attendance to their engagement and motivation, which were due to mutual relationships, relevant themes, and the use of authentic texts. The authors did not thoroughly examine what enabled these women to attend class for 2 hours per day for more than a year. Nevertheless, their study shows that educators can take steps to make literacy education more relevant to women's lives.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION
OF FREIREAN PEDAGOGY

Studies that have examined the implementation of Freirean pedagogy have largely found that dialogue is difficult to achieve (Stromquist, 1995a, 1997). According to Stromquist (1997), MOVA had mixed success. Women moderately increased their literacy skills, which led to rich psychosocial gains, but they were not able to maintain literacy practices. Furthermore, the political component of MOVA classes was very weak. van der Westen examined success in terms of stimulating dialogue and discussion, including gender issues vis-à-vis women *and* men. The study shows that Honduran facilitators did not stimulate dialogue, largely because they used traditional teaching methods—memorizing, copying, and learning by rote. In discussions, learners tended merely to confirm what facilitators said.

By contrast, Purcell-Gates and Waterman's study provides a model for using Freirean dialogical methods to teach literacy skills. The authors evaluated progress toward literacy and "critical consciousness and voice" (i.e., the women's capacity to analyze and critique, express their ideas, and participate in community life). Literacy indicators included attendance and tardiness, attitudes toward themselves as literacy learners, attempts to read and

write in class, increased accuracy, impressions that they were learning, and capacity to incorporate reading and writing into their lives. They perceived the class as a success because

> the eight women who began the . . . literacy class as virtually nonliterate . . . emerged after 18 months as literate, active members of their community, capable of incisive sociopolitical analyses of their lives and capable of expressing it orally and in writing. In addition, they could now read and write for their own purposes to meet their own relational and communicative needs. Members of the group had assumed leadership roles in their community that required the ability to read, write, and comment-reflect on text. (p. 161)

For example, the women "moved from an assumption of hopelessness and self-denigration to one of excited realization that they were learning . . . . The claims of 'I can't' soon disappeared" (p. 179). Their reading and writing accuracy increased and they integrated print into their lives, expressing joy with their growing abilities. Women's voices also became more audible in the classroom.

The class's success, the authors conclude, was due to "the dynamic interplay between the critically engaging group dialogues and the reading and writing that fed, extended, and reflected the meanings and the reality of the world of the participants." The women became fully literate because of the "complex synergism between the vital engagement of the learnings . . . and the cognitive benefits afforded by the activities of writing and reading their writing" (p. 95). Factors contributing to women's progress included relationships of mutuality, focus on generative themes and critiques, assumption of ability to learn, affective encouragement, using students' own language, and explicit explanations of print-speech relationships. The authors assert, "Vital engagement with text leads to literacy development" (p. 205). Authentic texts included stories about the war written by Salvadoran campesinos, poems, personal letters, the Bible, and Lenten meditations. As the women connected these texts to their personal experience and sociopolitical reality, they developed their capacity to think critically and express their thoughts.

The authors assert that teachers of engaged learners are committed to social change, have pedagogical and cultural knowledge, and are *teachers*, not "laissez faire facilitators." Living in the community and actively learning about local culture allowed Waterman to gain trust and build close relationships with the women and other community members. She also has a master's degree and extensive experience in Freirean pedagogy. Stromquist (1995a) contends that close educator-learner relationships, more than class dialogue and content, may stimulate "a new ideological and political awareness" (p. 57).

This study underscores the importance of teachers' background and education. Although Waterman regularly trained 14 other teachers in the regional program, none could facilitate an engaging dialogue on generative themes. Nor did they "understand how to link the dialogue with related writing and reading activities" (p. 192). After a year, they finally began to implement the type of instruction Waterman recommended. The Papaturro women had learned nothing in similar, previous literacy classes. It is ironic that Latin American adult educators embrace Freire's political philosophy but continue using traditional teaching methods.

Literacy facilitators have little education, receive little or no pay, work a full day, and have limited time to prepare lessons. The authors recognize that Waterman's access to education helped the class succeed and that they could not expect other teachers to accomplish what she

did. Yet, they still seem to blame the facilitators for not "getting it." The Salvadoran educational system socializes people into learning and using rote methods, so training alone will not change embedded practices; it also requires systemic change. Despite ongoing training, none of the other classes in the program were as successful as Papaturro. This begs the question, how can literacy programs with few resources—and little or no access to experts—help volunteer teachers connect Freirean process with literacy skills?

The women's previous exposure to political discourse and critical reflection also explains their success. They and other community members who belonged to the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN)—the leftist revolutionary movement that is now a legal political party—were refugees, were politically organized, and participated in a Base Christian Community (BCC), which integrates Biblical reflection with sociopolitical analysis and action. Because of these experiences, "this group did not totally reflect the fatalism . . . or alienation which Freire reported as typical of oppressed people before liberation" (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000, p. 180). The women's familiarity with the concept and discourse of sociopolitical analysis helped them develop sharp analytical skills and learn to speak out. Educators working with women whose daily discourse is *not* political should expect a more arduous process, including resistance to political themes, as Stromquist (1997) found.

DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT: OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS OF LITERACY FOR WOMEN

Fink, Stromquist, and Purcell-Gates and Waterman identify ways in which literacy and popular education benefit women individually and collectively, as well as its limitations in doing so. The Brazilian women only made modest cognitive gains (e.g., making lists) (Stromquist, 1997), whereas the Salvadoran women showed substantial gains in literacy development:

> Most of the women eventually became capable of reading and writing on their own, capable of utilizing their own self-monitoring and self-correction strategies to make meaning from and with print . . . . They each began to use print for communication, for community work, for daily tasks, for religious reflection, and for pleasure. (p. 180)

Due to the scarcity and expense of reading materials, Brazilian women had difficulty maintaining literacy practices, whereas Waterman provided some materials for women. Stromquist (1997) concludes, "Social changes may have to precede emancipatory literacy rather than the reverse . . . the heavily 'feminine' nature of the women's reading does not foster emancipation. Unless a strategy is in place to produce emancipatory readings, the new readers will consume dominant messages" (p. 167). To become active, literate citizens, women need materials that foster critical reading.

The individual, psychosocial benefits of literacy (i.e., personal empowerment) are the most prevalent. Indeed, "enhanced self-concept is the greatest and most universal outcome of adult literacy education and yet many policy statements treat it as a serendipitous side benefit or fail to mention it at all" (Beder, 1991, p. 128, quoted in Stromquist, 1997, p. 138). By participating in literacy education, women escape isolation and become more self-confident, assertive, independent, and open to others. They begin to see themselves as valuable,

knowledgeable, and capable human beings. Educational programs provide a cherished opportunity to develop friendships and share personal problems. However, Stromquist (1997) observes that

> women sought the literacy program for the pleasant and relaxing environment it afforded them . . . yet, women did not want to discuss chronic problems linked to their poverty and marginal social status in the classroom. Had poverty issues become a regular theme of discussion in the literacy classes, they may have reinforced their identity as persons with subordinate status in society . . . the women, in contrast, were there to improve their position vis-à-vis others. (pp. 206-207)

Perhaps the Salvadoran women were more willing to share their stories about the war because it helped them heal; they also identified specific ways to address their problems. Without this step, analyzing problems can lead to despair. Educators must discern how to maintain a valued social environment while developing women's capacity to analyze their reality—with hope.

Families and communities also benefit from women's new outlook and skills. Women may create new socialization processes for their children and seek to alter power relations in the home (Fink, 1992). On a community level, helping women develop leadership skills and play a greater role in grassroots organizations can provide building blocks for continued organizing. As the women in Papaturro, for example, developed "critical consciousness and voice," they became leaders and active participants in the BCC. They also

> offered practical solutions as to how to put into practice the insights that they gleaned from reflection on the text, showing greater clarity than ever that they *could* be, and *need* to be, the central activists in bringing about any change that is necessary for an improved existence for their families and for the community as a whole. (p. 183)

Literacy can help women analyze problems, imagine alternatives, and work collectively toward that vision. These studies show that literacy can lead to personal and relational empowerment that benefits women, families, and local communities. However, as Fink and Stromquist emphasize, literacy does not necessarily lead to collective action and widespread social change.

TENSIONS IN WOMEN'S LITERACY EDUCATION

Despite its powerful psychosocial benefits, Fink and Stromquist question to what extent emancipatory education can contribute to social change processes such as democratization or changing government policies to benefit women. Put differently, why hasn't local consciousness-raising led to structural change and political power?[5] According to Fink (1992), most popular education programs have failed to address "the broader issues such as laws, policies, and economic structures that inhibit women's full contribution to society and national development" (p. 186). To achieve its emancipatory aims, local literacy initiatives should connect with women's organizations, social movements, and/or other local and national democratic initiatives, as these have provided a viable way for women to work toward social change and gender equality. In short, emancipatory literacy education and macro-level change have to occur simultaneously.

The ways in which literacy education reinforces or alters women's roles is a second tension (Fink, 1992; Stromquist, 1995a, 1997). By focusing exclusively on women's daily concerns and survival-related needs ("practical gender needs" such as caring for children), programs may reinforce women's domestic roles and marginal status. Thus, these authors argue, programs fail to address women's strategic gender interests—that is, improve their collective social position.[6] Programs must be relevant to women's daily lives and build on their traditional knowledge. However, they should also introduce new knowledge and skills that challenge women's perspectives and equip them to enter new social, political, and economic arenas. The challenge is discerning how to meet growing survival needs without losing sight of women's demands for greater equality and opportunity for active participation in formulating alternatives (Fink, 1992).

This raises the question, to what degree does—and should—the teacher direct the choice of topics, activities, and procedures (Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000)? How should educators respond if learners' interests (e.g., favorite "ice cream flavors") seem irrelevant to critical sociopolitical analysis? Purcell-Gates and Waterman suggest that a dialogic teacher-student relationship requires student input at all levels, but this does not mean neutral facilitation. Citing Freire, they contend that the oppressed participate in their own oppression. Yet, "to impose explicitly rejected topics is not empowering and does not lead to greater student agency" (Ellsworth, 1989, quoted in Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000, p. 117). The authors do not resolve this dilemma but urge educators to build authentic relationships with learners and use power responsibly so that they can honor learners' interests *and* help them critique those interests. Educators would do well to emulate Waterman's reflexivity.

FILLING IN THE GAPS

The gaps evident in these texts also reflect the wider literature on women's literacy. Critical feminist educators, including the authors reviewed here, should address more adequately the role of spirituality in women's lives and literacy education, discern how to work with men to support women's literacy, and envision what women should be liberated *to* as well as *from*.

Integrating Literacy and Spirituality

Deeply religious values have shaped the field of adult education (Deshler & Grudens-Schuck, 2000; Jarvis & Walters, 1993), molding the philosophy and practice of educators such as Paulo Freire (Blackwood, 1987). Spirituality compels many adult educators to promote justice and social change (Tisdell, 2000). Religious faith is also an integral part of most Latin American women's lives and often motivates them to pursue literacy. Despite the religious roots of emancipatory adult education and the significance of spirituality in educators' and learners' lives, feminist educators tend to ignore religion and spirituality or view them as inherently oppressive.[7] Adult educators are beginning to pay more attention to spirituality (e.g., Gillen & English, 2000), but we need more feminist perspectives on adult education and spirituality. *Now We Read* is the first case study that I have seen that documents how a literacy educator built on women's spirituality as a source of dignity and strength, rather than viewing it as inherently disempowering. This study provides a model for thoughtfully integrating critical pedagogy with religious themes that matter to women.

Because the Papaturro women wanted to study the Bible and participate fully in their BCC, Waterman used some religious texts as a way to examine personal experience and sociopolitical reality. She believed the women would become literate by reading and writing about that which deeply "engaged," "energized," and "truly mattered" to them (p. 111). For instance, given the women's religious interests and the centrality of Lent to the life and faith of Salvadorans (because of the suffering they have endured), Waterman used Lenten Biblical readings as authentic text, which sparked lively discussions about the war and people's suffering.

Rather than promoting subservience, the integration of religious texts developed women's analytical and leadership skills. For instance, Margarita participated "in the community's pastoral team, helping to plan and guide the community's religious celebrations . . . . She also began to speak out during the time of reflection and dialogue within these services, something unusual not just for Margarita, but for any woman in the community" (p. 174). Waterman's background in liberation theology and the women's involvement in the BCC enabled them to read texts critically.

Stromquist (1997) found that women with religious interests read the Bible more confidently and thus could "perform better in their church" (p. 145). MOVA women, she asserts, "see the benefits of literacy programs in very narrow parameters," such as "following street directions" and "strengthening their religious bonds (and those of others) by reading the Bible" (p. 195). Rather than exploring what reading scripture or participating in religious life *meant* to women, Stromquist discounts these as narrow, performative activities—despite the fact that women valued them. On what basis do educators define religious bonds and activities as narrow, even if they provide women hope, sustenance, or a sense of belonging to a community?

In many ways, religion has justified or contributed to women's oppression, but women also draw on spirituality as a liberating source of dignity and power (Diaz-Stevens, 1993; Tábora, 1992). Educators should build on the empowering aspects of women's religious traditions and explore how women can participate in their faith communities while critically examining their gendered practices. Educators might draw insights from Latin American feminist theologians, who work from within their traditions to challenge women's oppression and promote justice (Foulkes, 1989; Tamez, 1994).

Working With Men

Male responses to women's literacy range from enthusiastic support to violent opposition. Because women's education can precipitate conflict, some popular education initiatives integrate men into programs so that they can see the benefits for their wife and family and gain respect for their wife's skills (Fink, 1992). Some feminist educators depict women's literacy and empowerment as a zero-sum game, but working to educate women creates a healthier community for everyone. The goal of literacy education should not be separation from men but reconciliation and healing of broken social relationships, manifested in violence, illiteracy, wage discrimination, and so forth.

A comprehensive approach to women's literacy should seek to enlist men's support and educate them about gender issues in culturally appropriate ways. Changing women is one part of the equation; another is changing men's attitudes and actions (the personal) and the

systemic practices that are embedded in social institutions (the public). Unfortunately, none of these authors discuss how to ensure women's safety while working with men in a sensitive way.

Liberation From What to What?

According to van der Westen, literacy programs often focus on "liberation from" rather than "liberation to." As feminist educators, we must develop a compelling vision of the kind of world in which we want to live, for this vision guides action. In the MOVA study, Stromquist (1997) speaks of empowerment as "enabling [women] to acquire identities that are less conventional along gender lines" (p. 221). Is the rejection of traditional roles a prerequisite for women's empowerment? By and large, marginalized Latin American women's identities revolve around their roles as wife, mother, and grandmother. If they cast off these roles, with what do they replace them? We should explore not only how literacy allows women to take on new roles, but also "how women in their traditional roles are agents of change" (Brusco, 1995, p. 3). We should heed Brusco's warning: "If we are going to exclude women from feminism because they value the roles of mother and wife and because they see the family as their source of strength, if we accuse them of false consciousness, we are committing a grave error" (p. 3).

Rather than using Western definitions of empowerment to judge whether or not Latin American women live full lives, educators should enable them to develop their own vision of what it means to flourish and to discern from what, and to what, they wish to be liberated. Analysis reveals the distortion and brokenness of human experience and social systems; imagining alternatives and identifying personal and collective action inspires hope. To foster literacy education that equips women to read and write the world, educators and learners need to do both.

CONCLUSION

These critical feminist authors insightfully portray the salient features and tensions of women's literacy in Latin America. Based on a view of literacy as a practice embedded in social relations, they argue that literacy programs must attend to women's interests and analyze the constraints to participating in and benefiting from literacy. The Salvadoran women developed strong literacy and social analysis skills due to mutual relationships, stimulating dialogue, and engagement with meaningful texts. Teachers' training and learners' familiarity with political discourse are also key factors.

These texts suggest that although literacy education has powerful psychosocial, family, and community benefits, it does not necessarily promote widespread social change. The challenges for educators include linking literacy initiatives to social movements and institutions, building on and challenging women's knowledge and roles, and discerning how to use power to cultivate learners' freedom. Educators should also consider how to integrate spirituality in empowering ways, work with men, and help women answer the question, "liberation from and to what?" In this way, literacy education can equip women, their families, and communities to decide how they can, and should, shape their world.

NOTES

1. Many rural villages were abandoned during the civil war (1980-1992). Later, refugees returned to their villages or settled in a new area on deserted land.

2. One woman stated, "When my husband has not yet returned from the field, I have to wait for him to prepare his meal. Only after giving him his dinner I am [sic] allowed to go" (p. 272).

3. Older women have older children, can arrange childcare, and/or have achieved some independence (Stromquist, 1997).

4. The head of Papaturro's *directiva* (governing body) wanted women to be more involved in all levels of community.

5. Levine and Stoll (1995) explore this problem in terms of progressive religious groups in Latin America. Focusing on the importance of building social networks, they conclude that "bridging the gap between empowerment and power is more likely when power itself is not an initial goal . . . . The progression from consciousness-raising . . . to mobilisation and power is actually a much longer and more tangled process of change" (pp. 24-25) than progressives had thought.

6. Lind (1994) and Wieringa (1994) provide an excellent critique of practical/strategic gender needs and interests, which they argue are inextricably linked.

7. Religion is a formal system of shared meanings, beliefs, rituals, and traditions; whereas spirituality refers to the personal quest for meaning and experience of the Transcendent, which may or may not include participation in religious institutions.

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THE RESTRUCTURING OF ACADEMIA

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The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning, by Stanley Aronowitz. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000. 217 pp., $26.00.

The Corporate Campus: Commercialization and the Dangers to Canada's Colleges and Universities, edited by James L. Turk. Toronto: James Lorimer, 2000. 223 pp., Cdn. $19.95 (paper).

Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University, by Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. 276 pp., $17.95 (paper).

The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism, by Richard Sennett, 1998. New York: Norton. 176 pp., $13.00 (paper).

In 1995, shortly after I finished my graduate studies in adult education, my department disappeared. Victim of a downsizing (valiantly resisted) that sent individual faculty members spinning off to different departments across the university, the department now exists as a loosely linked adult education program. Several years later, when I took up work as a professor in language and adult education at a university in Asia, program faculty there were trimmed down, sliced up, whirled around, and eventually resurrected part in the business school and part in a new for-profit Extension Center. Just what was going on here? In trying to understand these changes and place them in broader perspective, I found that my experience was shared by many in the field. Within the larger movement toward the corporatization and privatization of the public research university, adult education has had more than its share of restructuring, at times painful and at times creative and productive, but clearly marked by a reorientation toward the corporate marketplace and away from social change.

The year I graduated, a survey of North American graduate adult education programs (Harrison, 1995) revealed "an alarming number of adult education program eliminations and the increased use of adjunct faculty" (p. 1). Reporting on the state of affairs 5 years later, Judy Milton and Karen Watkins (Milton, Watkins, Spears Studdard, & Bruch, 2000) noted that

adult education programs continue to be eliminated and merged into other programs or are internally riven between HRD and social change orientations. As one of their survey respondents put it, "The entire enterprise of academe has changed in five years. We have gone from the academy to business" (p. 276). Echoing this plaint was a second "mapping" of adult education by Kjell Rubenson (2000), wherein he found that in the last 20-odd years, "the long arm of the job" has assumed an importance previously reserved for social justice and for more educational concerns (pp. 398-399). Similar characterizations of changes in the fields of comparative and adult education from Australia, Canada, the United States, and South Africa have been made by others as well (e.g., Currie, 1998; Wallis, 1999). In short, the experience of "restructuring" adult education toward the corporate world is now common to many in the field, extending across institutions, national boundaries, and alliances. Who among us, after all, has not by now been affected to some degree by these changes? How are we to understand them?

Three of the books under review address different aspects of the wider corporate restructuring of the academic world to which the field of adult education belongs. In the absence of a volume specific to academia, the fourth, *The Corrosion of Character*, is included because it focuses on human consequences of the new regime of corporate capitalism not adequately addressed in the other three. Taken together, the four volumes provide a portrait of the market reformation of public research universities, offering powerful insights for anyone employed or involved in higher education, and for university professors (by whom all of the books were written), students, and staff in particular. None of the works, however, adequately addresses issues of gender, race, and other diversities within academia in relation to these changes, a point to which I will return later in this review. Although the field of adult education is not the specific subject of inquiry in these books, it clearly holds a central position in the changes they describe, being as it is not only subject from the outside—like all academic fields—to the forces of corporatization in the university at large but also moving internally toward its own accommodation with the world of private markets and business corporations. This latter shift is evident, for example, in the move from labor education to HRD (Schied, 1995), the shift from public extension education to commercialized distance learning (Noble, 2001), and the reorientation of adult literacy education from social justice toward human capital development (Quigley, 1997).

VIEW FROM THE LEFT

The first of the four books, Aronowitz's *Knowledge Factory*, is an inspired, informed, and well-written history and critique of the reformation of U.S. universities. Aronowitz argues they have turned away from their civil, democratic existence as open, accessible centers of engaged learning and experimentation for the public good in the 1960s and 1970s. As elite knowledge production and credentialling centers, they have now come to resemble the private corporations they began to serve directly in the 1980s and 1990s. Belying Aronowitz's 30-year involvement as a labor activist and prolific scholar of the Left ("I must confess that although I am *in* academia, I am not *of* the academy," p. ix), the book is written from a labor perspective. It treats changes in academia at their root as an intensification of the class division between academic labor and management and the imposition of a corporate hierarchy mediating relations between the two.

In the preface to the book, Aronowitz details his own life encounters with labor and academia. In the ensuing seven chapters, he then narrates the post–World War II and Cold War expansion of public universities and their subsequent financial straits. He identifies the diminishment of defense dollars and the waning of U.S. economic dominance of world markets as the cause of universities' fiscal crises. As Aronowitz makes clear, universities have now shifted to preparing students for the job market and research "products" for sale in the knowledge economy. They are less interested in housing public intellectuals (unless they are marketable stars) and increasingly undervalue teaching. Corporate culture and business practices are now supplanting collegial faculty (and student) governance of universities as well.

The hallmark of corporate university management is clear in a new class of presidents and chancellors who increasingly act like CEOs in corporate organizations. This emerging system is described by all of the first three books, but most coherently by Aronowitz. Ceding power to professional administrators and boards of trustees, faculty senates and committees now take a largely advisory role over decisions on departmental restructuring, faculty hiring and firing, classroom size, and workloads. Moreover, although most universities have experienced a freeze or cuts in faculty hiring, there has been a boom in administrative hiring, adding new ranks in academic management, marketing consultants, fund-raisers, and so on. Cheaper, part-time "factory" labor—five to eight temporary adjuncts for the price of one junior faculty—is more and more the norm, along with distance education programs often run by the same. Grades have taken on renewed importance for students with an eye to future employment. This is to the detriment of real learning, "if by that we mean the process by which a student is motivated to participate in, even challenge, established intellectual authority" (p. 143). Accounting principles have also taken hold in cost centers, faculty performance indicators, and the demise of unprofitable fields of study. Spectator sports—chiefly college football and basketball—have assumed a renewed role as university moneymakers and potential conduits to corporate alumni, even while their academic function (and amateur status) remains cloudy. As student grants and loans have been cut and affirmative action overturned, so has the essence of the public meritocracy: Privatization has increased barriers to education for poor and marginalized people.

The strength of *The Knowledge Factory*, beyond Aronowitz's impressive knowledge of the academic world of labor, is the historical perspective he has skillfully woven into each chapter of the book. This work is not flat, merely descriptive, or neutral in tone like so many social science treatises on education; it is real because it has life and history and personality. Like many good teachers, Aronowitz helps us to critically understand where current changes originated; that the status quo has not always stood, and therefore need not always stand in the future. Yet, his view of the future is perhaps the weakness of the book. In his closing chapter, "Dismantling the Corporate University," although he posits a new role for the university as a community and lifelong learning center, he also offers a fairly narrow, prescriptive list of all the authors we should read for a critical higher education. This, he suggests, allows for an inquiring, historical view of society and helps us to identify our place within it. The problem is that this listing too closely resembles the sort of essentialist cultural specification undertaken most famously by E. D. Hirsch in his *Cultural Literacy* (1988). That is, it is based on the assumption that middle class, White, educated men can somehow specify one, single national culture for everyone. Although many progressive educators would find Aronowitz's list a good one (and here I reveal my own bias), it clearly suffers from a Eurocentric monochrome male worldview to the exclusion of other perspectives.

The Corporate Campus, a collection of 16 edited papers presented at a Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) conference, offers a somewhat wider discussion of topics covered in Aronowitz's book, but with a focus on Canada. After editor James L. Turk's introduction, "What Commercialization Means for Education," the remaining papers are grouped into five sections of three papers each, nicely tying the work together as a whole: (a) What Is at Stake? (b) Privatizing Knowledge, (c) Teaching as a Commodity, (d) Corporate Management and its Consequences, and (e) In the Public Interest: Reclaiming Our Purpose. Like all edited collections of conference papers, this volume has its redundancies and inconsistencies across contributors. But this is also part of its attraction. Even though it may not be a highly polished academic publication, it has the feel of an open and critical exchange of views by a diverse group of scholars across many fields (only two are in education), engaging a topic of common professional and personal interest.

Among contributions of particular interest to adult education are two on distance education. The first, "Introducing the Automatic Professor Machine" (APM), by Langdon Winner, is a clever and thought-provoking parody of online distance education in its worst imagined corporate techno-guises. Written as a launch presentation for the APM, the piece describes parent company "Edu-Sham Inc." and "The Center for Distant Educators," both part of "Glow-Ball University," which "has no campus, no faculty, no actual physical location . . . [but] is entirely composed of bits and pieces of software strung around the planet, connected by satellite communications and other high-speed links" (p. 93). Replete with computer-generated illustrations, Winner's piece rings so true that at times it could be taken as a realistic view of the future, were it not for the author's dry wit: "There are a great many questions about the future of education that remain to be addressed. For example, questions about our price/earnings ratio, employee stock option plan, market volatility, intellectual property in the global economy, and the other great pedagogical issues of our time" (p. 98).

A second worthy piece on distance education, looking to the past rather than the future, is David F. Noble's analysis of the historical roots of commercialized distance education. In "Rehearsal for the Revolution," the fourth installment of his Digital Diploma Mills series (Noble, 2001), he examines the historical process whereby correspondence education was transformed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from a progressive effort to popularize higher education into a private commercial venture. This venture was by 1933 condemned by the American Association for Adult Education for its poor educational quality, unsatisfactory working conditions for instructors, and reliance on "drop-out money" (nonrefundable tuition fees after registration) to generate income (pp. 116-118).

The tale of commercialized correspondence education, as Noble sees it, was the "rehearsal" for today's "revolution" in online distance education. He argues that the universities that have now begun plunging resources into on-line education will once again discover, as was true for correspondence education, that overhead and operating costs are prohibitive. The only apparent option is to reduce labor costs (increase the number of students per teacher, decrease the amount of time teachers spend with students, and hire cheaper instructors) and increase revenues (lower the admission standards to increase the number of student "customers" and devote more budget and staff to sales and marketing). In other words, universities might become "knowledge factories" selling fairly low quality online education. Whether contemporary programs (adult education now has at least two online degree programs, at Penn State and the University of Georgia) acknowledge this history and manage to balance competing interests of education and business remains to be seen. One hopeful sign,

however, is Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT's) recent announcement that course materials for nearly all of its 2,000 courses will be available online and free of charge over the next 10 years (MIT, 2001). This marks an initiative that could expand into free or low-cost distance education, thus offering a public alternative to more commercialized programs born of the corporatization of the university.

VIEW FROM THE CENTER

In contrast to the first two books, *Academic Capitalism* seems a rather neutral and anonymous academic study of the corporate restructuring of academia. The authors, both academics themselves, seem personally unaffected by these changes. The Aronowitz and Turk books assume the perspective of those who are being left out, what is being lost, and what is to be done. In contrast, Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie tend to situate themselves as researchers and policymakers above the fray, perhaps appropriate to their positions as professor in the Center for the Study of Higher Education and Academic Dean in the College of Education, respectively, at the University of Arizona. Where Turk contributors and Aronowitz see only changes to the detriment of intellectual academic culture, Slaughter and Leslie find "advantages and disadvantages of academic capitalism" (the title of chapter 4). They write, for example, of "organizational turbulence" (chapter 3) rather than "downsizing" and freely accept the concepts of "entrepreneurial research" and "entrepreneurial faculty" or "state-subsidized entrepreneurs." For them, it is as if there were few possible conflicts of public interest or controversy surrounding these ideas. In some ways, they have thus moved beyond Turk et al. and Aronowitz, in that they begin their work by implicitly accepting the new corporate rules of the game and seek mainly to understand who wins and loses, and why.

In the final analysis, however, *Academic Capitalism* makes much the same case about recent changes in the university as the other two works, but on a slightly broader scale. The first three chapters are an in-depth study of the global political economy underlying the shift in academia toward the market in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. We learn, as Aronowitz also makes clear, that the roots of change are found in the desire of governments in the 1980s to align national educational policy toward economic ends to compete more effectively in post-Fordist world markets. Moreover, whereas Thatcher-Reagan era conservative governments clearly promoted these changes as consistent with the dismantling of the social welfare state, so did Labor and Liberal Party governments in Australia and Canada. Although the institutional structures of policy change were different in each country, all four countries experienced similar changes. University enrollment and tuition increased, government support declined, loans replaced grants, research became oriented to market sales, professors taught more students but had less autonomy than before, funding shifted to applied techno-sciences, and academic workplaces increasingly resembled business corporations. (When their research was conducted in 1993-1994, Slaughter and Leslie still saw Canada as a partial exception to some of these changes, but as contributors to *The Corporate Campus* make clear, by 2000, Canada had converged with the other three nations.)

Chapters in the second half of *Academic Capitalism* describe how administrators, department heads, and entrepreneurial faculty have fared under academic capitalism; how technology and knowledge developed at universities moves into the marketplace (in effect, the risks of investment are socialized and the profits privatized); and how power is being centralized

and redistributed within universities toward those administrators, departments, and "faculty market actors" who have done well financially. In their concluding chapter, Slaughter and Leslie not only predict a future of intensified academic capitalism, almost identical to that described by Aronowitz, but also endorse it. They call for "state action to ensure that universities permit market principles to operate internally," thereby neatly allowing greater efficiency and accountability. A greater role perhaps emerges for faculty governance, as successful faculty entrepreneurs replace middle management and focus their energy on profitable research, while other faculty assume heavier teaching loads and part-time employment (pp. 241-245). Reminiscent of neo-liberal social Darwinism as a corporate ethic, it is clear who "wins" in this scenario: those who can and will devote their efforts toward creating intellectual products for the marketplace. What is largely ignored, however, are those who will not or cannot.

Restructuring Human Character

In *The Corrosion of Character*, sociologist Richard Sennett, in the compassionate and engaging style for which he is widely admired, challenges and expands the ways we think about the corporate arrangement of work and its effects on human character in the post-Fordist knowledge economy. Under the new corporate regime, Sennett elaborates how the concept of the lifelong career has given way to multiple, impermanent, and flexible jobs. This concept augurs against traditional bonds of loyalty, trust, and mutual commitment and brings into question our personal and social identities. In the push toward "flexibility" and teamwork predicated on short-term fulfillment of tasks, corporate actions such as downsizing or restructuring become somehow incontestable entities with no identifiable human authority behind them. Down-sized workers are left with a sense of betrayal and failure, but no one to blame except themselves: "The absence of authority frees those in control to shift, adapt, reorganize without having to justify themselves or their acts . . . . Change is the responsible agent; change is not a person" (p. 115).

For those spared the axe in restructuring, the world of work is now a leaner and meaner place, where mutual distrust, anxiety over their own jobs, and a "continual state of vulnerability" are in constant evidence (p. 83). Those who remain can look for job security only in their embrace of nebulous systems of quality management, performance indicators, and personal politics. The new cultures of work favor younger, more flexible mind-sets, risk taking, high energy personalities, and those not likely to speak up against bad decision making. The environment favors people who are good at temporary but often superficial human relations skills and canny players ready to move quickly to other jobs if necessary. Those learning to question established authority and received knowledge at the university are certainly not welcome here. Looking at the same free market processes that Slaughter and Leslie believe will favor successful faculty entrepreneurs as managers, Sennett sees the breakdown of human character: "In an unfettered institution, those in a position to grab everything do so," which eventually calls into question the entire system: "A regime which provides human beings no deep reasons to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy" (pp. 89, 148).

As the new corporatism described by Sennett has taken hold in universities, there has been a feeling, particularly among young and untenured faculty, that they are not in control of their career paths; that theirs is a fairly stressful and tenuous occupation, with less clarity of

intentions and rewards than in the past (Thorsen, 1996). Milton et al. (2000) call on poet Yeats to characterize this sentiment in adult education programs: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre . . . . Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" (p. 277). Certainly, for the temporary labor force of adjunct professors described in the first three books, for those Ph.D.s unable to find tenure-track positions, and for those passed over for tenure once they arrive, being a professor in the 1980s and 1990s was no longer the charmed and secure occupation it was once considered to be. The new academic world of work presented new professors with the prospect of ever-increasing workloads, lessening control over university decision making, the threat of faculty and program cutbacks, and the various other manifestations of workplace restructuring described above. It is small wonder that faculty are experiencing increased occupational stress and job alienation, as the Aronowitz and Turk et al. books make clear. However, it is also true that from the late 1990s, the strain of competitive corporate restructuring had begun to ease somewhat. With relative economic prosperity, the retirement of the cohort of post-War baby boom professors, and increased university enrollments by that generation's children, universities have now in fact begun to expand academic hiring, reversing earlier downsizing trends. Thus, academic staff today have increasing leverage to reinvent the university once more. This may not only allow a less stressful work environment, but may also help renew our "deep reason to care about one another" (as Sennett puts it in the quote above), about education, and about the universities for whom we work.

MISSING PERSPECTIVES

The composite portrait presented by the four books, however informative and engaging, suffers from a neglect of the differential consequences of academic capitalism. Critical analysis of inequities of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability are almost nowhere to be found in these volumes. Clearly, the marginalization of women and minorities in academia is no longer news to any except perhaps the most intellectually sheltered. However, taking changes detailed in these books as a guide, it is more than likely things will get worse.

Looking at gender, for instance, we know that women academics and students are (still) disproportionately represented in marginalized fields such as Cultural Studies, Education, Human Resources, English, and Social Work. These are the very fields that have suffered most under academic restructuring. Even when women move into more secure fields in science and technology, as they have for example at MIT, they face extreme gender bias in salaries, resource allocation, promotions, and governance, only very recently being addressed (MIT, 1999). Moreover, despite a generation of women and people of color moving into the university over the past 25 years, full professors across U.S. academia are still overwhelmingly men (82%) and White (90%) (Kreger, 1998). Likewise, whereas few women or people of color appear in the ranks of the high-level administrators set to prosper under the new corporate regime, they are overrepresented on the shop floor, that is, in the least desirable and most vulnerable adjunct and low-rank teaching positions, where women's salaries were, in 1999-2000, only 62.3% to 76.7% of men's salaries (Evans, 2000).

In short, if we believe that the commercialization of higher education outlined by Aronowitz, Turk et al., and Slaughter and Leslie has or will soon come to pass—and they make a strong case that it has—then we can safely predict that marginalization of women and minorities in academia will intensify. What Sennett teaches us about the consequences of

this new capitalist regime, however, should come as little surprise to those women and people of color who have long endured job insecurity, a sense of vulnerability, "last hired, first fired" policies, income disparities, and outright discrimination on a regular basis. Whereas downsizing and its humiliations, sense of dislocation and betrayal, and questioning of self-esteem and identity (the feeling of being "stiffed," as Susan Faludi, 1999, put it) may be new experiences for White middle-class men, we are left to wonder, after reading these books, how women and others long left out and short-changed have fared under the changes they describe. Suffice to say, the future does not look promising.

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Book Reviews

A Transactional Perspective on Teaching and Learning: A Framework for Higher Education, by D. Randy Garrison and Walter Archer. New York: Elsevier Science, 2000. 222 pp., $89.00 (hardcover).

In this book the authors claim their intent is to provide "a coherent theoretical framework on the basis of which reflective practitioners of education can select one method or technique over another" (p. 3). The authors' conceptual framework for their transactional perspective, introduced in Part I, rests on two foundational concepts: A constructivist approach is necessary for learners to create meaning, and collaboration is essential for creating and confirming knowledge. The themes of students' and teachers' responsibility for learning and control of the educational transaction are woven into all learning activities. Finally, the processes of critical thinking and self-directed learning are argued to be essential for achieving the goals of adult and higher education. The authors use the theories of John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and Jurgen Habermas to build their transformational model based on the concepts that (a) knowledge is influenced by experience, (b) learning must be relevant and oriented to everyday concerns of the student, and (c) the transformational perspective of teaching and learning is based on change, reflection, collaboration, constructivism, freedom, self-awareness, and socially validated knowledge. Part I also presents a review of various adult learning perspectives: traditional behaviorism, information processing theory, schema theory, Vygotsky's socioculturated situated theory of cognition, Bandura's social learning theory, Piagetian theory, Perry's model of cognitive development, Kitchener and King's theory of reflective judgment, and theories of critical thinking and of self-directed learning.

In Part II, strategies for facilitating critical thinking and self-directed learning are provided. Learning is contextualized in school settings, as the authors focus on four key learning activities: listening, reading, talking, and writing. One chapter devoted to technology argues it is not limited to enhancing access but can also expand and enhance communication in the teaching-learning transaction.

There are many strengths of this book worth mentioning. First, the authors' discussion of the limitations of the information-processing perspective is an important one. They criticize information-processing models that overly focus on cognitive structures and schemata and ignore the phenomenological aspects of learning, the social world of the learner, and devalue or overlook the importance of the learners' self-concept, beliefs, interests, and intentions. Another strength is the final chapter that provides a coherent integration of previous chapters and a discussion on the limits to meaningful learning. The authors argue that current practices based on competitive grading and workload are barriers to long-term change in education. A final strength is that the authors explicitly state what their transactional perspective is *not*. Encouraging students to be autonomous and self-directed learners does not mean that we are asking students to teach themselves, as they do in unstructured learning situations. In structured learning environments, teachers should facilitate student reflection and responsibility.

Although the breadth provided in this book is impressive, there were several areas I found myself looking for more depth. For example, given the importance the authors place on goal setting, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and modeling, I was somewhat surprised by the limited attention given to Bandura's social-cognitive theory and his most recent work on efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). I was also hoping for more connections between self-directed learning and other models of self-regulated learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998). As a third example, more in-depth comparisons between Dewey, Rogers, and Habermas would have been helpful. Although Garrison and Archer state their purpose is not to document the differences among the three theorists, I found myself asking, why not? For readers like myself who may be unfamiliar with Habermas's work, more differentiation among the three theorists may have facilitated better understanding. With regard to integrating their model into the adult education literature, again more connections would have been helpful. Although the authors credit Mezirow's work on critical thinking, they do not distinguish between their own and Mezirow's work. Nor do they clearly connect their own ideas with Knowles's work on self-directed learning. As a final critique, I would have liked some discussion about the potential limitations of critical thinking and self-directed learning. McKeachie (2000) recently argued that educators and researchers must consider contexts in which self-regulated learning actually interferes with optimal performance. The possibility that some learning processes might be detrimental in particular situations is not addressed in this book.

Overall, the authors meet their goal in providing the reader with enough conceptual information about responsibility, control, critical thinking, and self-regulation so that one can select appropriate teaching methods. The book will not satisfy readers seeking an empirical understanding of Garrison and Archer's transactional perspective. However, for those wanting to critically examine their own teaching philosophies and strategies, this book provides helpful tools.

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Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum, by John P. Miller. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000. 168 pp., $14.95.

Education and the Soul is a far-ranging discussion about introducing more soul into daily educational practices. The book provides the reader with a range of theoretical, historical, and philosophical conceptions of soul, a reasonable approach in a book for today's secularized, nonsectarian, yet spiritually curious educator. It explores different ways to express soul

in classrooms, curriculum, and teaching practices. Overall, the book presents a thoughtfully written and readable statement that calls into question a supposed avoidance of soul and spirituality in contemporary educational practices emphasizing mind and body.

The book is organized in two parts. In Part I, Miller presents his conceptual framework for soul. He challenges teachers to become participants in the growing educational emphasis in bringing the soul more fully, even centrally, into educational practices. The reader is drawn to the conclusion that love and work are essential to the soul's fullest expression and ultimate destiny and that education can play a key role in this expression. In Part II, the author describes how to design and implement educational practice to nurture the soul. Miller suggests that teachers take a nonintrusive approach to introducing soul into their classrooms. Meditation, visualization, and storytelling are described as curricular components for soul expression. In the last chapters, the author explores how the arts, the earth, environment, and the actual design of school buildings can help develop soul.

There is much to commend in the book. There are a number of practical suggestions for designing learning experiences to nurture the soul. The author argues, cogently and intelligently, for shifts in thinking concerning what is most important in schooling. The author recognizes that educational changes are needed that permit greater inclusion of the soul and that the practices of schooling need to more fully embrace those changes. The reader is led to conclude that the best teachers will be those who teach in more fully human ways.

The problems with the book are philosophical and epistemological. The author argues in Part I that there is no actual separation between the spiritual and the secular. This idea may have postmodern appeal but is neither supported nor supportable by logic or good theological thinking. Secular means of the earth; sacred refers to being set apart, or holy. If everything on the earth were holy, then child abuse would be holy. The sacred and the secular are distinct. If they were inseparable, then a book like this urging teachers to integrate the spiritual would not be necessary. The author might have built a more convincing case for greater inclusion of soul in schooling had he argued from a more theologically informed position.

Another surprising gap in the argument is the absence of any developmental basis for his discussions concerning instructional design and pedagogy. There are no faith development, spiritual formation, or even psychosocial foundations for his ideas about how to design learning experiences. Therefore, when it comes to nurturing the soul in education, "one size fits all." Wonder is kept alive in a child's heart through deliberate attention to the heart's development. Faith is nurtured in a young person's heart through a teacher's deliberate attention to how faith develops. Mystery is dwelt on when a teacher and learner together travel in learning experiences that attend to the difference between knowing what the mysteries are and knowing what are the mysteries. The book is quiet with regard to designing learning experiences so that the soul is nurtured. But perhaps most troubling of all is the absence of a pedagogy that includes "learning," how different individuals learn and develop spirituality, the role and place of knowledge representations in learning and spirituality, how people think about their learning, and how learning and spiritual formation are linked. The book is written from the teacher's perspective, not from a learner's or a learning perspective. So the most important questions remain unanswered: what a nurtured soul looks like, how the development of a nurtured soul takes place, and what particular ways of being a nurtured soul exhibits.

Despite the book's philosophical shortcomings, it could be a helpful primer for those teachers interested in exploring how to create a more caring, fully human way of teaching. The book adds one more voice urging teachers to be soul-based.

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Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century, by Edmund O'Sullivan. London: Zed Books, 1999. 304 pp., $22.50 (paper).

With an enthusiastic plea for people to have a love affair with the universe, Edmund O'Sullivan builds a unique educational vision premised on a number of postulations. The first is that modernity, despite many historical consolations, has reached its limits of fruition. Second is that transnational economies and globalization represent the most malignant and destructive forces of modernism. Finally, he argues that the most fundamental educational task of our time is to choose a sustained planetary habitat of interdependency over and against the sirens' call of the dysfunctional global competitive market place. In this complexity, not just humanity, but the entire natural world is positioned both at a crossroad and already in a transitional period. O'Sullivan presents a transformative perspective demanding radical restructuring of current educational directions to "re-enchant" the natural world. Like a triptych, the text is a story painted in three parts.

Part One: Survive details life in the face of unfulfilled promises of modernity. Here we learn that "educators in the survival mode" must emerge from denial, tackle despair, and cope with loss. *Part Two: Critique* is a collage that investigates educational institutions' (in)abilities to face our planetary conditions. To O'Sullivan, one of the most prominent omissions in education, and especially in critical pedagogy, is the lack of attention to ecological issues. The reader encounters scores of women and men woven into the tapestry of critique: Isaac Newton and Michael Welton, William Blake and Mechhthild Hart, William Yeats and Descarte, Charles Darwin and Jeremy Rifkin—to name only a very few. All have a role to play in the way the author constructs the intersection of science, spirituality, and education—a triumvirate that he finds compatible rather than contradictory.

Contemporary education is interrogated for its lack of a comprehensive cosmology, which can, the author tells us, be (re)captured by attention to the natural sciences. But, it is not the mere physicality of the universe or its mechanistic ticking of which he speaks; it is most importantly its mystical dimensions. Without a universe-centered consciousness, humanity lacks a viewpoint and will ultimately fail. O'Sullivan suggests that each educator must find her or his own way; he does not prescribe, but instead offers guideposts to mark the journey. These are articulated within an unambiguous framework: Patriarchy must be overturned; violence uprooted; sexism, racism, and class exploitation eliminated; and habitat and species loss arrested. The chapter "Dimensions of Power" is riveting in its poignant examples of oppression.

However, even when presented as "interlocking systems," these contentions fail to fully address a new phenomenon: the complexity and diversity of the conservative "rightist" culture

on the present-day landscape. The author's specific discussion on "conservativism" is largely in the realm of education rather than from a broader cultural critique. Simple narratives about groups marked by singular, monolithic identities (White, male, upper class, straight, etc.) are often erroneous. Life is composed of more fluid and multiple dislocations and alliances than O'Sullivan sometimes describes. The gender, complexion, class, and sexual orientation of the right-wing, at least in the United States, have changed. That the "enemy" in the struggle for equity and justice no longer looks like *he* formerly looked would have been worth addressing.

Part Three: Create reminds us that to delight in a scientific experience can also be to delight in a human experience, and both can be employed in building an awesome planetary vision. Here, spirituality, until recently a stigmatized space in adult education, becomes confluent with science. In a probing analysis, the author brilliantly pries open some of the hidden normative assumptions in notions of sustainability, which are omitted by many creation-centered authors, including those from whose work he heavily draws.

At times the language in the text seems forced in an attempt to bring words, smithed from the natural sciences, into educational discourse. Thus, the transformative perspective is designated "an ecozoic vision," and the reader must contend with "the terminal cenozoic," "technozoic visions," and "cenozoic-ecozoic tensions." These, juxtaposed with the text's creation spirituality and miracle-of-the-universe themes, may seem impervious to some readers. Equally hermetic are such statements as "the ecozoic dream as an exercise in ecological consciousness." Yet, despite these occasional tendencies, the book is a joyous lyric poem to life, a work reminiscent of the ancient prophets' reproach to heal broken covenants. Imbued with a passion for social action, it stirs with anticipation and the likelihood that humanity can celebrate its way into an ecological community of hope.

O'Sullivan's self-reflexive narrative is partly confessional concerning White male subjectivity and his complicity as oppressor. He pens, "Because of my position [of privilege], I am frequently victimizer without being conscious of the effects of my position of privilege" (p. 133). I am reminded of Elizabeth St. Pierre and Wanda Pillow's challenge in *Working the Ruins* (2000): "How do those of us who have been privileged by the authority of [the modernist project], those who have begun to understand [our] complicity in perpetuating its indignities, proceed?" Fortunately, O'Sullivan offers at least partial answers to this haunting question. We are to proceed by kindling the fires of the soul and educating the human spirit. Those who hold the tenet that education should not just satisfy the mind but should delight the heart will find succor in this visionary book.

REFERENCE

St. Pierre, E., & Pillow, W. (2000). *Working the ruins*. London: Routledge.

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Under the Sign of Hope: Feminist Methodology and Narrative Interpretation, by Leslie Rebecca Bloom. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998. 188 pp., $19.95 (paper).

This book draws a number of theoretical and methodological issues into an accessible discussion of what it means to engage in feminist research, interpretation, and writing. As the author states, a primary focus of the book is nonunitary subjectivity, a concept that rebuts the Western humanist notion of the unified and autonomous self. The assumption of nonunitary subjectivity allows for the possibility of change in subjectivity over time; the roles that language, social interaction, and experience—*including the research experience itself*—play in the production of subjectivity; and the existence of even contradictory multiple subject positions that people may occupy at the same time.

Part One discusses the practices of feminist methodology, with particular attention paid to the relationship between the researcher and participant in qualitative research. Bloom distinguishes feminist methodology from traditional qualitative research as an approach that "break[s] down the one-way hierarchical framework of traditional interviewing techniques" (p. 17) by striving to create an interview relationship that is egalitarian, interactive, intimate, and long-lasting. Bloom illustrates her own struggle toward this objective in her relationships with two respondents, "Olivia" and "Sandy," and it is these intimate tracings developed throughout her text that make her book unique among volumes explaining feminist methodology. Through her experiences, Bloom examines a postmodern conceptualization of power, where power is complex and dynamic rather than held and wielded by one over another.

Part Two addresses the use of nonunitary subjectivity in interpreting narratives. Bloom illustrates how nonunitary subjectivity is represented in both Olivia's and Sandy's personal narratives. By revisiting a life event with Olivia in several interviews, Bloom shows how subjectivity changes over time, even (especially) in the research relationship. Sandy's multiple and divergent personal narratives about gender and sexuality provide a feminist researcher the opportunity to "be open to multiple interpretations, reinterpretations, and playful interpretations" (p. 136) rather than to read conflicting narratives as simply negative or pathological.

In the conclusion, Bloom argues that gender is not a useful analytic category in the absence of other categories (e.g., class, sexual orientation) of subjectivity. Bloom also argues that although the study of women's lives through personal narrative is important, we must not interpret personal narratives uncritically for they are structured by master scripts of self-representation and storytelling. And although she agrees that questions women have about their own lives provide a better framework for understanding than questions that men have about women, Bloom points out that in an interactive feminist research relationship, it is difficult to discern where the research questions come from, the divergent subjectivities of the researcher or the respondent.

Under the Sign of Hope not only contributes to the literature on feminist methodology but also should interest adult educators grappling with issues of knowledge, relationship, and representation. Our struggle to understand and fairly write the experiences of adult learners is evident in our debates and critiques of our assumptions in major adult education journals. Nonunitary subjectivity can apply to all people regardless of gender, but it was only likely to become clear in the analysis of lives lived outside the center, because the center is dominated by a masculinist notion of a unified self.

Bloom recognizes that not only is knowledge in the eye of the beholder but also that individuals can know in different ways at the same time and their knowledge and ways of knowing can change over time. Knowledge is not merely the result of a mutual construction between researcher and respondent. Rather, Bloom recognizes the unapologetic generation of knowledge free from "essentializing, naturalizing, constraining, and oppressive identifications" (p. 11) within the research relationship. Writing under the sign of hope involves making transformation happen, rather than simply observing and wishing it to unfold.

Bloom's nonunitary subject remains illustrative of a certain kind of person, as Bloom has not fully explored the intersections of class and race among other subjectivities in this book. The transformative potential of recognizing our multiple subjectivities is found in our motivations to incorporate these various knowledges into our ever-changing understandings of ourselves and our worlds. But a self that is extremely fragmented also may be habitually fragmented. It may be difficult for educators with relative privilege (middle class) to identify with and represent the extremely fragmented self for which fragmentation is the safest state. Nonetheless, Bloom's accessible book offers positive first steps, and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in better understanding and representing adult learners.

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