Oh No, Not the "A" word! Proposing an "Anarchism" for Education

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Anarchist theory has a long-standing history in political theory, sociology, and philosophy. As a radical discourse, anarchist theory pushes educators and researchers towards new conceptualizations of community, theory, and praxis. Early writers, like Joseph Proudhoun and Emma Goldman, to more contemporary anarchists, such as Noam Chomsky, have established anarchist theory as an important school of thought that sits outside the Marxist discourses that have dominated the radical academic scene. Today, anarchists have been responsible for staging effective protests (specifically, Seattle, 1999) and have influenced autonomous groups like the Animal Liberation Front in their organizational and guiding philosophies. Interestingly, anarchism is glaringly absent from the literature in educational theory and research. In this article, I highlight aspects of anarchist theory that are particularly applicable to education, and also establishes specific ways that anarchist theory can inform one's own educational praxis. Specifically, I employ the anarchist framework of direct action and micro-level strategies, such as *sabotage*, that challenge people to resist the oppressive practices found in institutions today.

The word anarchy unsettles most people in the Western world; it suggests disorder, violence, and uncertainty. We have good reason for fearing those conditions, because we have been living with them for a long time, not in anarchist societies... but in exactly those societies most fearful of anarchy — the powerful nation-states of modern times. Howard Zinn (1971, ix)

In education, critical scholars and teachers have made significant gains in critical pedagogy that demonstrates the oppressive nature of schooling in contemporary capitalist societies while simultaneously trying to link this with classroom practice or with the building of alternative schooling structures (Anyon 2005; Apple 2000, 2004a; Apple and Beane 2007; Darder, Baltodono, and Torres 2003; Freire 1970, 1985; Giroux 1988; Irwin 1996; Kanpol 1999; Kincheloe 2004; McLaren 2006; Mercogliano 1998; Shor 1992; Spring 1998). However, this theory has not rigorously engaged anarchist cri-

tiques, philosophies, and tactics. Although anarchist theory contains a rich history of dissent against institutionalized hierarchies, it remains glaringly absent in the educational literature (DeLeon 2006; Rikowski 2001; Suissa 2006). Judith Suissa (2006), one of the few authors to actively engage anarchist thought in the educational context, asserts that anarchist theory is, "absent from texts on the philosophy and history of educational ideas — even amongst those authors who discuss 'radical' or 'progressive' education" (1). This absence is extremely problematic and may limit the possibilities in realizing and working towards a new post-capitalist future.

Arising from the idea that collectivities could form without the need of a coercive and hierarchical State, anarchists have envisioned a society based on cooperation, social justice, community participation, and mutual aid. To be explicit, anarchist theory does not represent lawless disorder, violence, oppressive individualism, and chaos, despite attempts by mainstream media outlets and the police to vilify anarchists (See Borum and Tilby 2004 for an example of this characterization). Alexander Berkman (2003), in his early 20th century polemical treatise on the nature of anarchism, effectively dispels the myths surrounding anarchist thought and actions.

> It is not bombs, disorder, or chaos.
> It is not robbery and murder.
> It is not a war of each against all.
> It is not a return to barbarism or to the wild state of man [sic].
> *Anarchism is the very opposite of all that* (xv, italics original).

Anarchism, simply defined, is a body of political thought that seeks to abolish and challenge rigid hierarchies (like the State), rethink and dismantle capitalist ideological structures, disrupt modes of forced coercion, build a society based on communist aspirations,

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free people's desires from historically oppressive social norms, and create organic and communal societies based on mutual aid and social justice (Berkman 2003; Bowen and Purkis 2004; Chomsky 2005; Guerin 1970; Rocker 1989; Sheehan 2003). Although there are more individualized forms of anarchist theory, I agree with the late Murray Bookchin (1999), who argued, "unless socialism is an integral part of anarchism, then anarchism becomes selfindulgence" (125) because of its sole focus on individual desires rather than the larger community in which the individual is situated within. Thus, the anarchism I subscribe to is also tied to an agenda for social justice that situates the discourse outside of the individual. According to anarchists, rigid state structures need to be dismantled; people need to reconceptualize how they define community, and also challenge the ideologies that emerge from a profit-based and commercialized society. Thus, I have two main objectives in this article.

The first one is to highlight the larger theoretical issues within anarchism[1] that are applicable to education. These include critiques of the State, hierarchies, institutionalized power structures, illegitimate authority, and the development of autonomous organizations and groups. This article will hopefully begin a dialogue about the applicability of anarchism in education while challenging critical pedagogues to engage anarchist critiques of the State and its various institutions. Second, I highlight anarchist strategies of *direct action*, defined by Richard Day (2004) as, "communities of various sorts working together in a circulation of struggles that are simultaneously against capitalism and for the construction of alternatives to it" (735). Although direct action will be the guiding framework in my discussion of anarchist praxis, I will also point to more micro-level strategies of resistance that anarchists have historically used, such as *sabotage*. Sabotage literally means disruption and should be

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[1] Because of the diversity of anarchist thought, when I refer to *anarchism*, I actually mean *anarchisms*, and this better represents the diverse theoretical traditions that anarchist theory encompasses.

utilized to interrupt the curriculum educators are given, the high-stakes tests their students are subjected to, and a framework for moving their resistance outside of the school walls.

However, sabotage and other anarchist strategies have not been fully theorized in the context of education and classroom practice, as critical pedagogy has been the dominant discourse for radical pedagogies in education. Although steeped in neo-Marxist thought, critical pedagogy can better inform anarchist pedagogies as it has been rooted in schools and classroom practice and anarchist theory adds to this tradition more salient examples of praxis and resistance, a fundamental critique of hierarchical systems like the State, and questions, more radically, the institutions of capitalism and the relationship to these economic, social, and cultural systems. Also, anarchists have been historically involved in many radical political struggles. From the Russian Revolution and the Spanish CivilWar; Paris, 1968; Seattle, 1999; Genoa, 2001; and other direct action initiatives, such as feeding the homeless (Food Not Bombs;www.foodnotbombs.net), reclaiming the streets from racist organizations (Anti-Racist Action; www.antiracistaction.us/pn/), anarchist networking organizations (such as Northeastern Federation of Anarchist-Communist www.nefac.net), and radical autonomous environmental groups (such as the Animal Liberation Front [ALF];[2] www.animalliberationfront.com), anarchists have pushed for a more humane and just world (Best and Nocella 2004, 2006; Bowen 2004; Chomsky 2005; Day 2004, 2005; Goaman 2004; Rikowski 2001; Rocker 1989). These groups risk incarceration, defamation, and some are even labeled "terrorist" organizations (Best and Nocella 2004, 2006). Despite this, anarchism has gained popularity because of the insistence of anarchists on techniques that challenge the State, capitalism, and oppressive social conditions here and now (Bowen and Purkis 2004; Rikowski 2001). Even with this popularity, there have been few attempts in bring-

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[2] www.animalliberationfron.com

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cators must begin to find new ways of integrating anarchism into their praxis and research.

Anarchist theory brings a sense of urgency and faith in individual and cooperative direct action that is lacking in many of the radical discourses surrounding schooling and the educational experiences in the United States. If educators want to enact real change, it is their job as academics to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and make radical discourses accessible to those people who need to understand how systems of oppression work. This is not going to be an easy task, but it is becoming alarmingly urgent. Conservative, neo-conservative, and neoliberal educational reforms are gaining momentum and have been quite successful in making their arguments clear and concise. Although there are outlets that make it easier for their voices to be heard because of who benefits from their policies, people must work more cooperatively and harder to make sure that teachers, students, and communities hear their critiques and visions for social change. It is everyone's job to highlight effective strategies of resistance and further explore through research how and why they are working. Only then will teachers uncover new modes of teaching, learning, and the ways in which they "do" schooling that their practices will be truly empowering and revolutionary.

Acknowledgments

ing anarchist theory into the discussion surrounding education, although there have been successful examples of anarchist-inspired schooling projects and pedagogies (Antliff 2007; Gribble 2004; Suissa 2006). Despite this, "anarchism is rarely taken seriously by academics, and its advocates in the political arena are generally regarded as a well-meaning but, at worst, violent and at best a naïve bunch" (Suissa 2006, 1).

Although my own radical "roots" lie in a neo-Marxist framework of economic and cultural critique, I find anarchist conceptions of direct action, autonomous organization, and commitment to anti-capitalism invigorating in a time when radical theory is relegated mostly to the halls of academia (Day 2004, 2005; Morland 2004; Rikowski 2001). Also, neo-Marxist theory has very little applicability in the context of street politics and social protest because of its privileged nature in academia. Its often "detached" way of observing and critiquing capitalist economic, social, and cultural forms does not resonate with activists who are risking bodily injury and incarceration in challenging these same structures. Anarchism is not only philosophically rooted in anticapitalist direct action, but it also provides ideas and inspiration for groups looking to challenge hegemonic practices in these hierarchical systems. Thus its applicability for education is timely in the current neo-liberal order of high-stakes testing and *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB; Apple 2004b; Hursh 2007, 2008; Leistyna 2007).

What Do I Mean by Anarchist Theory? A Brief Introduction and Summary

Anarchists and anarchism are widely misrepresented by the popular media and mainstream research. Anarchism and being labeled an anarchist carries with it serious implications. As mentioned earlier, *violent*, *destructive*, *dangerous*, and *chaotic* are some of the descriptors that have been used to describe and categorize anarchist

actions historically (Berkman 2003; Borum and Tilby 2004; Bowen 2004; Chomsky 2005; Day 2004; Goaman 2004; Sheehan 2003). Although some of the methods that anarchists use may startle or alarm people (destroying corporate property responsible for environmental destruction or confronting police brutality at protests), they have been quite effective in calling attention to their causes (Day 2005). What separates anarchist theory from other radical theories of liberation?

Anarchists contend that the State, in any form, inhibits the ability for people to build communities centered on social justice and mutual aid. The State, with its official discourses, apparatuses, punitive measures, and hierarchical organization, does not allow human beings the ability to coexist peacefully with their environment or participate in how they are governed in material ways (Berkman 2003; Chomsky 2005; Guerin 1970). States and their protective measures (such as the military or police) are structured to oppress and subvert individual and group rights, especially those from nondominant groups. As Joseph Proudhon argued, the State functions to, "limit, control, [and] subordinate the individual and subject him [sic] to the general purpose ... through its censorship, its supervision, and its police the State tries to obstruct all free activity and sees this repression as its duty" (quoted in Guerin 1970, 15). The State orders, corrects, judges, assesses, assimilates, coopts, indoctrinates, executes, authorizes, and conducts a number of other functions that are in direct contrast to equality and community.

Historically, actions in the name of the State (combined with a capitalist ethos) have subjected people to horrific surveillance mechanisms (the U.S. prison/industrial complex as an example), domesticated our political aspirations, and have been responsible for mass murder and genocide (Native American genocide, the Atlantic slave trade, or the Holocaust are good examples). According to anarchists, the State rests upon illegitimate authority and should be dismantled and remade according to more localized and autonomous free associations centered upon social justice, nonvi-

and neighbors and remaining open to new people and ideas. (119)

This "boring, small-scale, mundane business" of the "everyday" is where I believe that anarchism and critical pedagogy become a powerful force together that can help move people from theoretical discussions about oppression to acting towards anticapitalist actions.

Where Do We Go From Here? Bridging Anarchist Theory and Education for the Future

This article covered only a small portion of what anarchist theory can offer educators, and I urge teachers and researchers to form their own affinity groups to further explore anarchist theory. Anarchism is a powerful form of resistance that can provide the theoretical and guiding framework for establishing a new movement in education towards rebuilding community and resisting the corporatized and neo-liberal agenda that dominates the discourses surrounding public schooling within the United States today. Although there are tensions that exist between anarchism and critical pedagogy because of their academic and theoretical lineage, these theories move individuals towards action and social change. However, my argument is that anarchist concerns with the State, their autonomous organizational structures, recognition of the complexities of power, subversion of authority, and direct action better equip radical teachers and educators with tools to combat the assault of neo-liberalism and oppressive capitalist practices. Also, this allows people to be vigilant about the cooptation of their radical projects by the academy, especially because anarchists demand political and social action. This means rethinking teaching towards direct action. Anarchism is gaining popularity everyday, and edu-

the World Trade Organization, or WTO, and is conducted to bring about social change (Rikowski 2001). Direct action can involve confrontation with authority figures, but can also mean working with a community, like the actions of Food Not Bombs, opening up a woman's shelter, attending an antiwar rally, participating in Critical Mass, or finding new ways of communal living. The main point is that direct action does not always mean confrontation or violence (Bowen 2004). Although radical educational experiences may eventually bring about the destruction of capitalism, teachers and students can begin to make small steps in making their education more empowering and see results that are meaningful. Taking cues from critical pedagogy, direct action can involve students and teachers fighting for the expulsion of a corporate influence in their schools (like Coca Cola), or allowing students to have more control of the curriculum that is taught.

Like critical pedagogy's insistence on social change, anarchist strategies of direct action speak to the needs of activist educators who want to solve problems in their communities and the schools in which they work. Critical pedagogues and anarchists have always stressed the need for an activist approach to solving social problems. Most anarchist action, however, is always direct, such as the previous examples of Food Not Bombs, Critical Mass, CIRCA, "Black Bloc," and the ALF. Most anarchists support getting the issue resolved now, with whatever means will be most productive (Antliff 2007; Bowen 2004). As James Bowen (2004) argued, it is,

> more useful if we think about anarchism as not simply being about the redistribution of wealth (by certain historical forces at particular times) but also involving a change in our relationships with each other, institutions, technology, and our environment. This is therefore where I believe the anarchist project begins, with the boring, small scale, mundane business of making positive, non-alienated relationships with our friends

olence, shared responsibility, and mutual aid. As Noam Chomsky (2005) argued,

> I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children... (178)

Chomsky's arguments speak well to the historical and current projects of anarchist movements. This insistence upon dismantling, critiquing, and challenging authority is a common thread within anarchist theory.

We can turn to earlier writings to further contextualize anarchist objections to hierarchical State structures. Kropotkin (2002), writing in the late 19th century, argued that, instead of a State, people could form voluntary associations that were localized and noncoercive:

> [A] society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements ... [that] ... would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international — temporary or more or less permanent — for all possible purposes. (284)

Although, historically, many Marxists argued that a new socialist State would replace the capitalist State and eventually "wither

away," anarchists have argued that networks, temporary and autonomous, could replace rigid hierarchical State structures much more quickly because they can address the needs of communities more efficiently in solving their own localized problems. For example, during the large protests of Seattle in 1999, the police and media were baffled that the movement did not contain a centralized leadership structure, instead relying on autonomous groups fulfilling different protest objectives (Borum and Tilby 2004; Morland 2004; Rikowski 2001). Worker unions, antiglobalization groups, "Black Bloc" anarchists, and other affinity groups attacked corporate headquarters, marched peacefully through downtown Seattle, and confronted the police directly. Like the temporary nature of organizations that Kropotkin envisioned, anarchist groups like "Black Bloc" represent a spontaneous and anonymous organizational structure (Morland 2004). Not always welcomed by protest movements because of the use of violence when they see it necessary, "Black Bloc" anarchists signify to Morland (2004), "the absence of an obvious and hierarchical structure" (33). "Black Bloc" has adopted anarchist strategies of organization that are free, open, autonomous, and temporary. This runs counter to many still rooted in neo-Marxist thought.

Because the theoretical and scholarly lineage of critical pedagogy is rooted in Marxist politics, this proves to be an important tension between anarchist theory and critical pedagogy. In the literature on critical pedagogy, some scholars envision a socialist and democratic State to emerge in a post-capitalist world or utilize a framework steeped in Marxist politics and praxis (Apple 2003; Cole 2008; Kincheloe 2005; Martin 2002; McLaren 2002, 2005, 2006; McLaren and Kincheloe 2007). Or, as McLaren (2002) argued, "revolutionary Marxists believe that the best way to transcend the brutal and barbaric limits to human liberation set by capital is through practical movements centered around class struggle" (38). Although class struggle is a key component to anarchist praxis and the history of its development, class struggle, and la-

tion between Miles Horton and Paulo Freire (1990), Horton argued …

> I think the problem is that most people don't allow themselves to experiment with ideas, because they assume that they have to fit into the system… I just think most people can't think outside the socially approved way of doing things and consequently don't open up their minds to making any kind of discoveries. I think you have to think outside the conventional framework. (44)

These "conventional frameworks" that Horton mentions have seriously impeded human ability in producing a new society, as people are dogged by hegemonic discourses about what are "acceptable" forms of social protest. Although Highlander is a very specific example (and Horton never uses the term *sabotage*), this can have important implications for classroom teachers. Returning to the earlier discussion of the ALF, they have staged successful actions against corporations and other organizations that benefit directly from the exploitation and misery of nonhuman animals. Their form of sabotage (freeing nonhuman animals from cages or destroying corporate property that benefits from exploitation) has led to a wider understanding of the suffering that nonhuman animals experience in research facilities while also highlighting the effects that autonomous organization can have and the effectiveness of sabotage as a protest strategy (Best and Nocella 2006). Thus, more embedded ethnographic work needs to be done to better understand how radical groups can inform our own classroom practice.

Anarchists have advocated for direct action against organizations and corporations that subscribe to capitalist or other oppressive practices. Direct action, in the form of protests, marches, or even clashes with the police, has been an anarchist trademark, especially recently, after the successful 1999 Seattle protests against

for these exams. This is especially true for urban education (Anyon 2005; Crocco and Costigan 2007). Direct action against *NCLB* and other high-stakes tests can be a successful strategy in resisting standardized curriculum and sabotaging these tests is a positive step in the right direction.

Critical pedagogy has included calls for teachers to resist; however, sabotage is more urgent than similar positions in critical pedagogy, and also gives students and teachers more of an activist framework for direct action. Using the discourse of "street" activists will also introduce these concepts to students in a much more open way, instead of depending on mainstreamed news outlets or other hegemonic discourses. For example, teachers that begin to explore language and topics like sit-ins, resistance, insurgency, or direct action can model activities that allow students to explore what these mean in the context of anticapitalist struggle, thus bringing the discourse of social protest to the institutionalized classroom. This also supports the notion that social change will have to occur both within and outside of established educational structures, echoing Anyon's (2005) call for economic change to accompany urban educational revitalization. Sabotage (as a conceptual framework) allows teachers to model direct action strategies in their classrooms, and using the discourses created in radical circles also allows students to become familiar with key concepts and strategies used by radical groups, a fact often overlooked or omitted in critical educational discourses.

For further contextualization, sabotage has historically taken many forms in the context of education and schooling. For example, Miles Horton's Highlander School demonstrated the importance that education and teaching can have towards social movements (Horton and Freire 1990). In his school, civil rights leaders attended Highlander, where they learned strategies for resistance and organizational techniques. These techniques included learning about the law in relation to voting rights, but also included social protest techniques, such as sit-ins, marching, and boycotts. In a conversa-

bor (theorized from a Marxist perspective) is not the only place to locate revolutionary political action. Instead, anarchists contend that attacks against capitalism, and inevitably the State, must occur through other means as well, because of how capitalism is not only invested in material economic conditions, but also through symbolic and cultural forms (Sheehan 2003). This means rethinking how people's lifestyles add to the oppressive regimes of capitalism and the State, organizing around nonhierarchical affinity groups, and a more direct and sustained attack against capitalism and State structures.

Thus, anarchism moves adherents beyond rhetorical analysis towards more autonomous and direct actions against capitalism and the State. Although this is apparent in McLaren's (2002) call for a critical pedagogy rooted in class struggle or Marx's "positive humanism," he does not address enough his vision of what will emerge once this class struggle is realized (37). The State (and the ideologies that give rise to hierarchical systems) must be destroyed along with capitalist means of production or one oppressive State will replace another. As McLaren (2002) acknowledged, "I am not arguing that people should not have concerns about socialism or communism. After all, much horror has occurred under regimes that called themselves communist" (39). Before radical Marxists and neo-Marxists call for my head in my apparent disrespect for Marx, I argue, as May (1994) did, that "questions of the status and import of Marx's writings are as notorious as they are important [and] it is Marxism, *rather than* Marx, that we must address (18; emphasis added). But, society cannot move towards a post-capitalist future unless people attack the systemic nature of hierarchized thinking that current Marxists do not fully address (Cole 2008; Sheehan 2003).

For further contextualization, anarchists contend that replacing one State structure with another will not bring about radical change (Berkman 2003; Guerin 1970; Sheehan 2003). This tension moves people towards recognizing that small cooperatives

and communities are better equipped to solve problems communally without rigid hierarchical State structures. This is not to say that some anarchist groups do not form hierarchical leadership systems in times of need, but these are temporary and organic, dismantling them once the project or direct action is completed. Thus, anarchism remains committed to *temporary* autonomous, localized, and organic organizational structures and has allowed anarchist groups to conduct clandestine operations despite heavy police surveillance (Borum and Tilby 2004).

Although neo-Marxists are much more radical than their liberal counterparts, many still fetishize the State, as Sheehan (2003) aptly pointed out:

> Liberals, including socialists, like to imagine that piecemeal changes, albeit radical ones when necessary, can put the machinery of state on a sane basis. Exploitation can be reduced and minimized through enlightened legislation by way of political parties with the necessary will to realize their progressive agendas. (121)

Instead, anarchists understand that social, cultural, psychological, moral, and educational norms are enveloped in State structures and within the capitalist ideologies that sustain modern-day States. As Sheehan (2003) further argued, "It is especially clear to anarchists that the existing order is rooted in the control of social life and that the acceptance of certain attitudes, reinforced through structures of authority and obedience, makes up a state of intellectual imprisonment" (122). Attacking these mechanisms of control will help alleviate class, racial, and gendered oppression (Sheehan 2003). However, work needs to be done to challenge hierarchies that have become a common feature of the current capitalist order.

Hierarchical systems, to anarchists, do not allow for true participation, are coercive, and sustain historically oppressive social practices. These types of top-down social structures have been responsible for subverting individual and group rights. For example,

Area has grown to embody one of the central strategies of the anti-capitalist movement: the physicist's notion of critical mass becoming a political metaphor for the possibility of leaderless, mass action precipitating a direct action dynamic of explosive social power. (127)

As the foundation of consumer culture, attacking cars and SUVs holds both practical and symbolic value, as these vehicles embody environmental destruction, alienation, and consumer and class desires. Critical Mass is a good example of how direct action is not only conducting the operation, but also how it addresses the highly symbolic nature of modern capitalism.

Although direct action for teachers would look much different than Food Not Bombs or Critical Mass would, in schools it can be utilized to achieve certain goals. With the conditions that now exist because of statewide high-stakes testing, it is even more imperative to challenge the conditions that give rise to these tests (Hursh 2008). Teachers, dogged by pedantic and scripted curriculum, will find their time limited in classrooms to only material covered in these tests. By necessity, teachers will have to "break the rules" to even include opportunities for outside learning experiences. To sabotage NCLB means learning the history of testing, the role of early racist beliefs of IQ and eugenics (Gould 1996), to the cult of measurement proposed by neo-liberal educational reforms (Cot´e et al. 2007; Giroux 2004; Giroux and Searls Giroux 2004; Hursh 2008). These small steps can lead to further larger protest projects, such as gaining supporters from other schools in the district to support resistance towards high-stakes testing, an urgent issue facing public schools today. Scholarship on preservice teachers in schools and through my own informal observations has demonstrated that high-stakes tests dominate the time and energy of most teachers and administrators (Borg, Plumlee, and Stranahan 2007; Hursh 2007, 2008; Leistyna 2007; Romanowski 2008). Significant amount of classroom instructional time is dedicated to "preparing"

or ways to resist federal and state mandated standardized testing. Whatever the case or scenario that the community is addressing, direct action has a wide variety of uses.

For example, if one looks at anarchist affinity groups that utilize direct action, one can more fully explore how anarchist groups seek social change outside institutional structures. The anarchist group Food Not Bombs utilizes a direct action strategy in feeding the homeless, despite recent attempts by law enforcement agencies aimed at shutting down their operations (Borum and Tilby 2004). Food Not Bombs in Hartford, Connecticut, for example, utilized a public park to provide hot meals for the poor and homeless, using donated or discarded food from corporate and local restaurants and from the activists themselves. By not seeking "permission" from state structures, anarchists are able to feed the homeless and working poor directly. Direct action is most viable when communities decide that institutional structures can no longer serve them and actions must be done now to alleviate the problem. Along with this, anarchist groups like Food Not Bombs do not have traditional hierarchical structures, meaning that one person is not the "leader," making the groups highly autonomous and difficult for authorities to disrupt and infiltrate. This should inspire teachers and educators to look to techniques and strategies that are not socially sanctioned because of the ability to solve pressing problems as quickly as possible.

Other anarchist strategies of direct action, like Critical Mass, are also effective and further demonstrate actions that fall outside of socially sanctioned resistance. In short, Critical Mass includes a large group of people on bicycles that converge in one area and take over the public street, highlighting the need for alternative forms of transportation. Or as Sheehan (2003) described,

> Critical Mass has spread around the world from its 1992 origins in the US, and what started … as a local attempt to oppose car junkies and SUVs in the Bay

the creation of racial hierarchies (with Europeans at the top and the "Other" at the bottom) was responsible for one of the many justifications of African slavery and Native American genocide. Although there have been successful social movements that have utilized hierarchical organization (the Civil Rights movement in the United States, for example), these have not kept their radical character, instead being engulfed into the existing social order and further domesticated (McLaren 1997). One does not have to look too far to examine how activists like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other radical figures have been domesticated into the current neo-liberal order (Kohl 2005; Loewen 2005). Unless a movement is organic, autonomous, and temporary, it runs the risk of cooptation and recreating new forms of oppression. As May (1994) argued, "Anarchist struggle is conceived not in terms of substituting new and better hierarchies for the old ones, but in terms of getting rid of hierarchic thinking and action altogether" (51). Other theories, such as feminism and eco-justice, also point to the inherent problems in hierarchies (Ferguson 2000; Goldman 1969; Riley-Taylor 2002; Tong 1998). Anarchists contend that human beings need to have the freedom to make decisions, participate in the political process, and have opportunities to build community through activism and participation, all of which are limited by hierarchical systems (Bowen 2004; Bowen and Purkis 2004; Guerin 1970).

Although not always mentioned directly, but a vital point in anarchist critiques, are the notions of power and its reproduction. Michel Foucault (2000) viewed power in a much different way than it had been historically conceived and has influenced anarchist conceptions of power as well (May 1994). Before Foucault, many scholars conceptualized power in a one-dimensional way, in which power was reduced to something that a person, organization, or State wields. Stepping away from the notion of *power over*, Foucault introduced the concept of the *fluidity* of power. Power is not something that we posses per se, but works through us. In this way, power is not always a commodity, but instead, power is productive.

As Foucault (1995) wrote, "Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (70). In this way, power is not just in a single person but is present within the entire operation of an institution. Schools, within this analogy, then become a site of power production, in which the entire schooling system (personal interactions, curricula, spatial arrangements, relationships, etc.) exerts the productive nature of power. Whatever the context, there is a power relationship that exists (Foucault 2000).

For many anarchist groups, power is at the heart of their critiques of capitalism and strategies in resisting State power. Power is diffused within anarchist groups, such as the organic and temporary nature of anarchist affinity groups or towards the autonomous organizational structure that many anarchist groups assume (Best and Nocella 2006; Crimethinc 2001, 2005). The previous discussion of "Black Bloc" groups is a good example of organic and temporary organization that comes together only at a specific time to confront police brutality (Morland 2004).Also, as Suissa (2006) argued, anarchists not only attack capitalism and its manifestations, but also recognize, "a far more tactical, multi-dimensional understanding" of capitalism and its reproduction (136). Because of the highly symbolic nature of late capitalism, many anarchists refuse to participate in common social norms, thus promote and live more communally, participate in open relationships, and provide a system of support through free trade or through strategies like dumpster diving. Thus, anarchists have assumed radical and original ways of combining activism with lifestyle strategies that mock authority or that challenge bourgeois social norms.

For example, at many of the larger protests against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, some anarchist groups dressed themselves as clowns to mock authority and social norms, diffuse tensions, and cause disorder to the police dispatched to sub-

archism, too, runs the risk of domestication, anarchist principles of direct action and sabotage of oppressive structures keeps it well rooted in radical street politics, but people must remain constantly vigilant and reflective as to how institutions coerce and domesticate their theories and political actions (Shannon, in press). Unlike previous radical theories in education, anarchists directly confront institutional coercion, but also develop sophisticated techniques of sabotage that groups like the ALF utilize. People must look to historical and contemporary examples that demonstrate the importance of more direct forms of resistance and the role they have played in social movements to help resist these domesticating practices.

Various forms of protest have been effective in bringing about social change, and groups have outlined effective strategies. Those interested in these tactics should explore the literature (Best and Nocella 2004, 2006; Cot´e, Day, and de Peuter 2007; Crimethinc 2001, 2005; Day 2004; Ferguson 2000; Goaman 2004; Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Kohl 2005; Naples and Desai 2003). Traditionally, "critical" methods in education have meant pedagogical practices specifically applicable to the classroom. A vital component to critical pedagogy happens in the classroom, but educators must also do actions outside of the school if they are serious about social change. This means examining successful strategies and employing them against oppressive institutions and structures. Anarchist modes of direct action are useful here in moving society towards social change, rather than just critique, because direct action demands and means working towards active participation in alleviating social problems. Educators can utilize anarchist praxis in the classroom, but also larger projects need to occur outside the school walls. Direct action techniques can be modified to address classroom praxis, such as clothing drives that provide jackets for students for the cold winter months, food drives that allows students and their families to feed themselves, forming neighborhood committees that discuss how to address concerns in their local schools,

question is addressed in the next section, where I discuss anarchist strategies for resistance and their applicability in the context of education within the United States.

Anarchist Strategies: Direct Action and Sabotage in the Educational Context

Unfortunately, in the current ideological climate in the United States, *NCLB* has effectively restructured curriculum so that schools are not only preparing students for tests at a much earlier age (kindergarten in some public school districts!), but also shapes what will be taught in schools (Crocco and Costigan 2007; Hursh 2007, 2008). Stressing the sciences, math, and a narrow definition of reading places schools in a difficult position, as they are judged based on student's scores in these content areas. Despite the work of progressive and radical teaching, this has not moved the conversation forward in a meaningful and substantial way amidst the neo-liberal assaults on public schools and higher education (Apple 2004b; Giroux 2004; Giroux and Searls Giroux 2004; Hursh 2007, 2008; Leistyna 2007). This is where I believe that teachers and scholars in education can look to more radical theories for new ideas and inspiration.

As already noted, anarchists contend that the State is illegitimate, created to sustain the privileges of wealthy social elites, while also maintaining strict social control over subordinated groups (Berkman 2003; Chomsky 2005; Guerin 1970). Although other "critical" traditions have also argued about the problems of States and hierarchies, the neo-Marxist lineage of critical pedagogy does not leave room for challenging the State directly. In the past, Marxism included calls for social change and protest, but unfortunately, it appears that institutional acceptance of Marx has domesticated its message, much like what has happened to multicultural education in the academy (McLaren and Kincheloe, 2007). Although an-

vert protestors (Routledge 2005, in press). Routledge (2005, in press) pointed to an example where a police blockade had surrounded a group of anarchist protestors. When they were fully encircled, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (or CIRCA), dressed in full clown costumes, surrounded the police in a larger circle. Thus, it not only diffused the tension, but also mocked authority figures that represented State power. The lively nature of anticapitalist protests, with clowns, large puppets, and drumming, are all examples of how anarchist affinity groups are rethinking and reimagining how power is diffused and subverted through play, ridicule, and mockery. This reflects anarchist engagement with poststructural conceptions of the productive and repressive nature of power (May 1994). Rethinking and reimagining institutions that perpetuate unequal power relationships are concerns for anarchists that want to confront power and its manifestations.

Anarchists also insist that human beings need to have the capability of managing their own affairs without the need of top-down social structures. This rests upon the belief that people should govern every aspect of their lives and this should be done in a way that is as cooperative and noncoercive as possible. Anarchists contend that people are naturally cooperative and that social systems, such as capitalism, have conditioned them to be selfish. Instead of relying on the traditional dichotomous system of ruler/ruled, anarchists insist on building new forms of organization that account for self-governing that are nonhierarchical. Colin Ward (1982) argued that "we have to build networks instead of pyramids. [Anarchism] advocates an extended network of individuals and groups, making their own decisions, controlling their own destiny's" (22). Because modern Americans live in a multiracial and linguistically diverse society, many would point to the inherent problems in forming network affinities across such diverse populations. But, this is where anarchist theory again proves to be useful. Anarchists recognize that divisions between communities are false and artificial and argue for weaving together these identities into a new fabric

that works towards constructing postcapitalist identities that are situated outside of identity politics. Despite cultural, racial, gender, and linguistic diversity, there are groups that have been successful in overcoming these socially constructed identities that follow networked organizational structures. A good example of an autonomous network that is nonhierarchical and dispersed has surfaced in the animal liberation movement, spearheaded by the ALF.

The ALF have been very effective in calling attention to the destruction that corporations and animal research facilities have been responsible for towards nonhuman animals. Although they release communiques that cover their visions and justification for their actions, their importance is in their direct action techniques, such as freeing animals from cages or conducting clandestine sabotage methods against animal research facilities (Best and Nocella 2004, 2006). The ALF is a decentralized, autonomous and a nonhierarchical network that provides a clear and compelling critique of corporate capitalist society. The ALF is any individual or group that decides to strike against animal exploitation while following ALF Guidelines. Although the ALF deals primarily with nonhuman animals, the focus for my purposes is not on the oppressive system they choose to resist (in this case, anthropocentrism), but their organizational structure, their willingness to risk their own safety for a project rooted in justice for life, and their use of tactics that fall outside socially sanctioned forms of social protest. In my own work, this proves to be highly inspirational because they not only produce tangible results, but also form autonomous networks that reflect my own commitments as an anarchist. Linked to both the state and hierarchical structures, anarchists have also contended with illegitimate authority.

Illegitimate authority has been responsible for bureaucratic States and has limited the capacity of human beings in making their own decisions. As Berkman (2003) argued polemically,

OBEY! For if you will cease obedience to authority you might begin to think for yourself! That would be most dangerous to "law and order," the greatest misfortune for church and school. For then you would find out that everything they taught you was a lie, and was only for the purpose of keeping you enslaved, in mind and body, so that you should continue to toil and suffer and keep quiet. (40–41)

This resistance to authority has come in many forms besides just vehement protests against the State. Some anarchists have also tried to change their daily lives. Polyamorous relationships, the anarchist traditions of "squatting," spontaneous "guerrilla theater," or other creative lifestyle choices and actions are all conducted to resist hegemonic social norms, such as middle class consumerism and heteronormative assumptions of monogamous relationships. As Morland (2004) pointed out,

anarchism has sought out alternative modes of opposition. Establishing communes, building free schools, publishing radical tracts, writing anti-hierarchical lyrics, planting flowers, living in trees, growing organic food, squatting in unused properties, and recycling cooking oil into green diesel are evidence of how resistance within anarchist circles assumes symbolic and cultural forms. (35)

It is important to stress that these are only suggestions and the decisions must come from the community because outlining all of the possibilities for resistance in this article is unrealistic. Anarchism is not simply lifestyle politics, but instead anarchism rests upon the assumption that people can and should make decisions for themselves that work towards dismantling the State and ushering in a new postcapitalist era (Bookchin 1999; Guerin 1970; Morland 2004). How, then, do we move towards strategic action? This