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European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults 12 (2021) 1, S. 65-79



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Heinemann, Alisha M. B.; Monzó, Lilia: Capitalism, migration, and adult education. Toward a critical project in the second language learning class - In: *European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* 12 (2021) 1, S. 65-79 - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-219635 - DOI: 10.25656/01:21963

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-219635>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:21963>

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Capitalism, migration, and adult education: Toward a critical project in the second language learning class

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Abstract

Migration has become both a consequence of and support structure for global racialised capitalism. A presumed source of support for the people who migrate is adult education, especially the second language learning class. However, as a state organized institution, the policies and practices that govern second-language courses serve to inculcate the ideologies and values that support a racialised capitalist system. We draw on two case examples – the U.S. and Germany – to demonstrate these entanglements. We engage Freire’s critical pedagogy wherein learning contexts encourage students to question the realities of their lives, and Foucault’s ideas regarding heterotopian places where the hegemonic norm is suspended and different approaches of pedagogical work can be implemented. We conclude with the suggestion of different pedagogical paths – a ‘pedagogy of dreaming’ and a ‘pedagogy of courage.’

Keywords: Adult education, capitalism, critical pedagogy, migration, second-language learning

Introduction

A critical project for educators is developing a social conscience to improve the living conditions of refugee and other precarious migrant communities. With the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has become clear once more that these peoples remain outside of the dominant consciousness.

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the number of international migrants globally is on an upward trajectory that reached 272 million in



2019. Refugees accounted globally to 70.8 million human beings at the end of 2018, and every second refugee was younger than 18 years old (UNO, 2020). However, the atrocities that affect people in other countries are too often perceived as distant realities. Narratives of inevitability or deficit theorising about non-western peoples (the theory that poverty and other social ills are a result of peoples' intellectual or cultural deficits, rather than systemic conditions) allow people to ignore their complicity as humans who actively shape this world.

We will argue in this article that adult education is especially important to the maintenance of a racialised capitalism because the majority of those who enter adult education programs are those who have been “failed” by the opportunity structures that is supposed to support social mobility within the basic school education system. Adult education is supposed to ameliorate these students by offering an alternative path to improving their lives. Adult second-language learning programs are meant for migrants who do not speak the dominant language of the host countries and who often face oppressive conditions. We start from the assumption that the institutionalized state funded adult second-language learning class is a social space partly set up to reproduce oppressive structures and will argue this through later in this text.

However, spaces of reproduction are also spaces of production. Adult second language learning classes can potentially be spaces where students become critically conscious of their social conditions and oppressive structures and where new ideas and new, more just, and more human, social relations can be produced. While a critical consciousness does not, in itself, challenge oppression, it does provide the impetus for collective resistance. Raya Dunayevskaya (2000), following Marx, argued that one of the many contradictions within capitalist social relations is that the most exploited persons are typically brought together in workplaces, creating the opportunities for mass mobilization and resistance. Adult second language learning programs bring migrant and refugee communities together and therefore offer similar opportunities.

Both of us, authors, are cis Woman of Colour have experienced aspects of the oppression we write about. However, we understand that living in two of the richest nations of the world – the U.S. and Germany – and working as university professors, we have significant privilege to speak and be heard. We seek to spotlight the voices of people in our societies who *do* speak and resist but are rarely heard (cf. Spivak, 1994). Even when they are heard, their concerns often get ignored or muted by the hegemonic noise shouting ‘America first’ or ‘Wir sind das Volk’² (We are the people), drawing clear lines between those who have the rights of a citizen and those who are merely tolerated (at most) within national borders. Although we run the risk of falling into the trap of claiming to speak ‘for’ the Other, we believe we have a responsibility as academics to bring these questions to the academy.

Our focus of analysis is on migrants who are forced to seek refuge in foreign lands for survival or to live with dignity and to have opportunities for their children. Drawing on a Marxist-humanist perspective (Dunayevskaya, 2000), we position forced migration as the outcome of a racialised capitalist system that feeds off of the exploitation of non-western peoples. We also draw on critical pedagogy to argue for the potential within adult second language programs to challenge systems of oppression. While adult education trends suggest systemic complicity with capitalist interests (Mayo, 1999), we also found examples that attempt to use the second language learning class, as heterotopian spaces to implement different and powerful critical pedagogical work. Foucault (2019) describes heterotopian places, as spaces within society where the hegemonic norm is suspended. Although we recognize the philosophical differences between Marx and Foucault’s work (Crotty, 1998), we find their work complementary in regards to the production of

knowledge and the existing possibilities for transformation. Bob Jessop shows that there is a deep theoretical connection between Foucault's work and Marx, as there is 'a continued, if often unstated, adoption of key Marxian insights and his concern with the state as a (if not *the*) crucial site for the 'institutional integration' of power relations' (Jessop, 2010, p. 56).

We base our arguments on the existing empirical literature of two cases, Germany and the United States of America, wherein we live and work and, thus, also have a deeper experiential understanding. We begin by discussing the entanglement of migration and racialised capitalism. We follow with a brief description of the systems of adult second language learning in these two countries and the pedagogical practices therein. Challenging the normative professional work done in these classes, we end by considering critical approaches in education and propose the further development of a 'pedagogy of dreaming' and a 'pedagogy of courage' as an alternative approach for teachers and policy makers who want to create contexts that may empower their students and potentially begin to transform the prevailing migration regime.

The entanglement of migration and global capitalism

Although the practice of migration can be traced as far back as human life, the nature of migration that is evidenced today is significantly different. The migration that was part and parcel of a life contingent on respect for the Earth and its changing conditions came to a halt as capitalist fervour turned land into property and nations into "imagined communities". These communities were ideologically led to believe that the protection and development of "their" country should take priority over any sense of moral compass in the treatment of the Other, especially if that Other came from a perceived 'inferior' culture or race (Monzó, 2020). Here, Monzó connects migration, imperialism, and nationalism to capitalist processes. Crucial to our argument is Marx's (1977) important recognition that the 'so called primitive accumulation' (p. 874), which in large part derived from colonisation (the appropriation of lands and resources and exploitation of peoples), was not a one-time grab to spur on capitalist growth but a continuously necessary central aspect of the capitalist economy.

A Marxist-humanist perspective on capitalism

Capitalism is a racialised global system of value production with a capitalist class that owns the means of production and an exploited and alienated working class. That across the world the most exploited peoples are Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) is not an accident. From inception, capitalism thrived off the theft of labour and resources from the non-western world and the genocides that resulted were justified through notions of human hierarchies, wherein western man was deemed superior (Mignolo, 2009). This ideology, later termed racism, has served to justify exploitation by blaming the peoples constructed as 'Other' for lacking the personal or cultural strengths to gain social mobility (Monzó, 2020).

At the heart of capitalist relations is the fundamental need for capital accumulation, a labour process that seeks to exploit the greatest possible surplus value from workers, and an alienation that distorts our humanity (Marx, 1977). Although Marx argued that there is an internal crisis built into capitalism – a tendency toward a falling rate of profit. Different responses across time and countries have been developed to further increase profit, maintaining the necessary increase in accumulation of capital, and or to address

other social conditions threatening the system and thereby salvaging the system. Consider, as examples, the welfare state and neoliberalism. Both of these responded at different times to specific crises.

The welfare state is represented by public social services, including financial assistance for the unemployed or under-employed, for single mothers with dependent children, and for students. Its fundamental philosophy is that the state should intervene to increase equitable distribution of resources and take responsibility to ensure the livelihood of its citizens (Abramovitz, 2011). It first appeared in the U.S. as a response to the devastation of the Great Depression and became a feature of many industrialized nations, including Germany, which still retains important aspects. In the U.S., however, an economic downturn paralleled with a racist backlash to the Civil Rights era became a campaign against the welfare state, and ushered in a new era of neoliberal reforms that have become entrenched within all major institutions. Neoliberalism posits that the market is the best equaliser and that privatisation and competition enhances efficiency and creates innovation (Abramovitz & Zelmick, 2014). This neoliberal order has moved across the world. The German welfare state has been increasingly changing to an 'activating welfare state,' with slogans like 'Fördern and Fordern' (Promoting and Demanding), which makes clear that a person can only get unemployment benefits, for example, if they can show that they have been actively searching for waged work. Disregarding the state's responsibility to support persons who need to survive, people are pressured to fit into neoliberal ideologies of performing to suit the labour market.

We draw on Marx in our work because it is more than an economic theory but a philosophy of revolution that recognizes this process of production, exploitation, and alienation as a distortion of our humanity, turning us into things that relate to each other and ourselves antagonistically (Dunayevskaya, 2000; Marx, 1961). We would argue that this distortion undermines our human need for love and interdependence and allows us to be complacent in the face of the horrors that humanity engages, including the human suffering of migrant peoples.

Migration: An aspect of global exploitation

The increase of migration as a global phenomenon is related to the global capitalist structure that has from inception been a racist enterprise, developed in the west to enrich itself of the land, resources, and labour of the non-western world. The ability of the dominant group to practice a historical amnesia, the sanctioned ignorance (Spivak, 1999), that denies the responsibility of the west in stealing from and creating dependency among the non-western world feeds into the ideologies that allow people to exploit immigrants and reap the benefits.

In the US and in Germany there is a strong myth that immigrants are taking American/German jobs and resources. However, the ACLU (2020) reports that immigrants in the US contribute greatly to the economy by creating jobs, creating demands for goods and services, utilizing their purchasing power, and paying taxes. Indeed, this report estimates that immigrants in the US pay \$90 billion yearly in taxes, while receiving only \$5 billion in welfare. Similar findings were reported by the ZEW - Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research for the German situation:

If all social transfers, including expenditure on education and educational support, which the 6.6 million foreigners living in Germany received in 2012 are set off against the taxes and contributions that this group remitted to the state in the same year, the state is left with a net profit of 3,300 euros per capita'. 'Foreigners', meaning Germans who don't hold the German passport, contributed a total of 22 billion euros in 2012. (Bonin, 2014, p. 1)

Immigration is a necessary form of providing cheap labour for the developed world that allows the general population to achieve a greater standard of living than the rest of the world, securing the ideologies of ‘greatness’, that ensures that immigrants continue to come and further enrich the west (Monzó, 2019).

Increasingly researchers are studying the feminisation of migration. Currently women around the world make up 47% of all migrants. In the US, a greater number of immigrants are women (58%) (Migration data portal, 2020). While women migrate for similar reasons to men –survival and opportunity, the pull for women from the developed world is to resolve a ‘crisis of care’ that exist in ‘developed’ countries, including for domestic labour and child and elderly care (Tittensor & Mansouri, 2017). This also supports pushing out countries because women send back a larger share of their incomes than men (International Organization for Migration, 2020). This immigrant women’s labour market not only exploits but also channels them into traditional female roles, which has allowed middle-class women to enter professional fields and assume greater gender equality. In this sense, the immigrant women’s labour market also serves the ideological function of making middle-class women feel that the capitalist system works in their favour (cf. Dinkelaker, 2017; Meded, 2020; Mies, 1992). Of grave concern should be the fact that while these immigrant women are filling these caring roles for more affluent, usually white, women, they are having to leave their own children to care for themselves (cf. Arruzua, Bhattacharya & Fraser 2019), which continues to reproduce a stratified raced and classed next generation.

How migrant communities are treated within racialised capitalist states can be observed currently more than ever. While writing this article the whole world is in an emergency state - Curfews are imposed, schools, restaurants and shops are closed, social contact is being legally restricted, and persons are being asked to keep a significant distance from each other and to wear face masks in public. This is a challenge for most of us and actually impossible for those whose living and/or working conditions require them to share limited space, like refugees, home-less people and low-waged workers. For example, in Germany and in the US, the working conditions of the meat-packing industry, heavily filled by immigrants and other Communities of Color, has received much media attention and revealed that the inhuman working conditions make protection from COVID-19 outbreaks almost impossible (cf. Savage, 2020; Stegemann & Wernicke 2020).

In times like these, let’s call them times of ‘emergency’, it becomes even more obvious whose lives are grievable (Butler, 2016) and whose lives are ‘wasted’ and therefore not even countable (Bauman, 2003). Following, we focus on the entanglement of the second language learning classrooms with the capitalist racial state (Goldberg, 2002).

The second language learning class

Persons who do not speak the host language are generally excluded in the receiving society through ideologies that common language and culture are founding elements for building community. Second language classes are set up and legitimised with the argument that newcomers have to or should learn the dominant language and culture of the receiving society and that they can and should learn this in a classroom (Heinemann, 2018b; Kloubert, 2020). This assimilation narrative asserts that after a successful learning process, for which migrants are responsible themselves, they have a right to belong. Scholars and activists have described the impossibility of this demand (Chow, 2014;

Heinemann, 2018b; Ives, 2004). Nevertheless, the ideal of the fully assimilated immigrant is still used to divide between ‘good’ = integrated, assimilated, working, inconspicuous migrants and ‘bad’ = living on welfare, living in their own communities, threatening, criminal strangers. Hence the Second Language Learning classroom is not an innocent space but serves to promote racist discourse and hegemonic migration regime. For educators in the U.S and in Germany the effects on the institutions are very similar. We will elaborate on these processes of ‘second language learning’ as they take shape in both countries. Our goal is not comparative. Rather we want to use the examples of our respective home countries to show the different ways migration regimes instrumentalize adult education for their purposes and then discuss how critical pedagogues might respond.

The hidden curriculum of teaching and hegemonic language in a settler colonial state

The US is a settler-colonial state that has a long history of genocide, slavery and exploitation. Justification for the settler colonial state and the creation of an historical amnesia that accounts for the hypocritical assumptions that the US was made by and for the white man and has developed through what Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2015) calls erasure of the Indian – first through genocide and later through acculturation to the colonial capitalist ethos. The erasure of Natives meant that a new class of peoples would be needed to support the slave labour that would spur the US to industrialisation and to become the capitalist empire it is today. The African slaves served this purpose, giving their blood and tears, to create a country and system that continues to feed off their exploitation (Baptist, 2014). Between 1846-48, ‘manifest destiny’ and the continual need for capital accumulation led to the U.S. westward expansion that claimed a large portion of Northern Mexico and created yet another set of ‘second-class’ racialized citizens targeted for exploitation (Greenberg, 2012). Numerous guestworker programs, notorious for their civil rights abuses, have since been implemented to bring the Mexican worker and others from around the world to fill U.S. jobs, including the infamous Bracero Program (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013). As wave upon wave of immigrants entered the US with their distinct cultures and languages, the U.S. implemented a project of Americanisation, placing natives in boarding schools, teaching a Eurocentric curriculum, and making English the primary language of instruction (Hartman, 1948).

This history is critical to the large influx of immigrants to the U.S. People whose native language is not English or ‘English Language Learners’ comprise the majority of people taking adult education classes³, with 46% of students in adult education in the year 2006-07 taking ESL classes (Centre for Applied Linguistics, 2010). In 2014-15, Latinx peoples comprised 64% of all adult education enrolment in these state programmes, about 40% of these are taking ESL classes (US Department of Education, 2016). Typically, it is first-generation migrant communities in the US who arrived as teenagers or later who would need adult ESL. Although there are many immigrants to the US who have varying levels of wealth and education and are even professionals, for many their lives take an economic downturn following migration, since foreign degrees are not always accepted and an excellent command of English is typically expected for professional jobs. As a result, the vast majority of adult ESL students are employed in jobs with poor working conditions, earning minimum wages (undocumented workers earn much less than minimum wages) that are often not enough to live on, and lack health care benefits (Capps et al., 2005).

Undocumented immigrants are especially in need of ESL courses that can support both learning English and knowledge of labour laws and their human rights. Bauer and Ramírez (2010) have reported that employers often target undocumented workers, especially women, for abuse, including wage theft, rape, and harassment, and that they get away with this by threatening to report their status to the authorities. Increases in ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids (aided through surveillance technologies) during the Trump administration has created fear of being picked up and thrown into detention centres where human rights abuses abound (López, 2019). As Larrotta (2019) points out, the pressure exerted by conservative politicians to make teachers mandated reporters of undocumented students is enough to make students fear for their safety in attending school, which has impacted their willingness to enrol.

Since the US is highly segregated by a combination of class, race, and ethnicity, immigrants' enclaves have developed that allow non-English speakers to live and work without English. While these enclaves may provide a sense of community, they may also confine them to menial labour and limit social mobility.

Larrotta (2019) points out that learning English in the US *does* translate to better or greater choice in jobs, securing better health services, allows for greater access to social activities and lessens isolation, and supports intergenerational communication between parents and children. Larrotta also discusses that the anti-immigrant sentiments and policies that have been seen in the last decade have made ESL teachers respond in varying ways. Teachers who are critical of anti-immigrant policies have taken it upon themselves to provide information about immigration policies and resources to their classes so they can better understand their rights.

In the context of the adult ESL classes, migrants who share significant experiences of economic precarity, alienation, and psychological distress may create social spaces to find human connection and safety. Although migrants in the US speak many different languages and come from around the world, the segregated nature of US society and the existence of separate enclaves from almost every part of the world result in classes where students share a common first language. Raya Dunayevskaya (1985, 2000) has written extensively of the contradictions that capitalism creates by both separating people through its alienating production processes but also bringing peoples together in highly oppressive work contexts that can develop into bonds of support and humanity, which can lead to collective organizing and resistance. While certainly different than work spaces, adult education classes can be said to share some of these dynamics that Dunayevskaya discusses, especially if the ESL class can become a ground that enables personal and collective reflection about current social conditions and can provide opportunities for students to share resources and support each other. Such a humanizing space could potentially lead to building solidarity and greater awareness of shared conditions of exploitation.

Examples of such spaces can be found in alternative types of political programs around the US. One example is an education program that was developed as part of the Immigrant Women's Alliance, a non-profit organization that described itself as "a community-based organization working with low income women employed in the garment, hotel, restaurant, nursing home, and electronics industries." (Katz, 2012, p. 141). According to Katz, who researched this project via a two-year ethnographic project, the content of instruction was said to come explicitly from the participants' lives. This content included not just learning English to gain better jobs but discussion of the low-wage employment choices available to them and its connection to the global labour market. Researchers' found that the staff's familiarity to the social, cultural, and political realities of the women who participated was crucial in supporting a curriculum that was highly

attentive to gender issues while offering classes at convenient hours and providing childcare. An important finding that Katz articulated was that while the program organizers seemed to define the notion of taking greater control of their own lives through political action such as getting involved in protests, for some of the women taking control of their lives rested in more personal forms of social interaction and language use. This is an important finding that challenges us to consider the significance of honouring the trajectory by which diverse individuals seek to transform their own lives and how these individual processes connect to broader goals of social liberation.

Bringing this kind of critical pedagogy into the public ESL classroom can be a significant contribution to the work of social justice given the much greater reach to the population that public programs have. Yet, as noted earlier, capitalism creates contradictions in every context, such that any social product automatically also involves a contradictory effect. In this case, the broadening of critical pedagogy to the public schools and development of curriculum based on mandated and highly controlled teaching is likely to be watered down to mere teaching strategies instead of a philosophy of liberation and curtailing the critique of structures of oppression to reform efforts that attempt to “close the achievement gap.” Similar restraints can be found in the German context.

Forming the ‘economic subject’ after a history of ‘revolution’

The history of institutionalised adult education in Germany can be described as one of *revolution* (cf. Olbrich, 2001; Tietgens, 2010). Even though the following narrative of the ‘history of adult education’ is necessarily superficial and shortened, it shows some of the central ideas still discussed in the field of adult education, especially in relation to democracy (cf. Seitter, 2003). Starting during the period of Enlightenment with the reading revolution (Tietgens, 2010, p. 28), with the middle and upper classes forming reading societies (excluding women), in the first half of the 19th century new impulses for the education of adults were noticeable. There are two driving forces to be mentioned. On the one hand it was the economic, technical development, with which the advent of industrialization brought new demands, and on the other hand, it was fuelled by a growing resistance against the Restoration after the Congress of Vienna 1815 - a time of restrictions on freedom of expression, press and assembly. The concept of ‘education’ was increasingly replaced by the more philosophical term ‘Bildung’, referring to a process of both personal and cultural maturation and to the Humboldtian model of higher education. Soon social issues (‘die soziale Frage’) were also connected with it (cf. Tietgens, 2010, p. 30). In 1927, the ‘Reichsverband der Volkshochschulen’, a union of the adult education centres called ‘Volkshochschule’, was founded and special pedagogical didactical approaches for the adult education were developed (Tietgens, 2010, p. 39). Following all these interesting developments was a shameful phase followed during the Nazi-Regime. After the horrors of the Shoah, again actors in the field of adult education were driven by the idea of ‘changing’ and *re-democratising* the society. This change was imposed on them by the victorious powers after the war, documented by Control Council Directive No. 56 of October 28, 1947 (Note 1). In the “Basic Guidelines for Adult Education in Germany” the objectives were specified. The main goal of adult education - as stated therein - “should be to train active helpers for Germany's democratic education by making the latest social, political and scientific findings generally accessible to the adult population” (Wilson, 1997, p.19, quoted from: Hufer, 2015, transl. A.H.).

Until today the role of adult education in developing and sustaining a democratic society is an important one. As Henry Giroux states:

No democratic society can survive without a formative culture shaped by pedagogical practices capable of creating the conditions for producing citizens who are critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and willing to make moral judgments and act in a socially responsible way' (2017, p. 3).

Later, the field of adult education played an active role in the *emancipation* processes of the 1970s offering affordable learning spaces for the self-empowerment of dis/abled, women, migrants and Queers (cf. Theile, 2010). Currently, unfortunately, it has become more and more an arm of the neo-liberal labour market and state interests. The historical power of the field of adult education, rooted in the possibilities to work independently of, and even against, governmental interests, still exists but withers away with the continued reduction of subsidies and also as a result of changes in society, which continuously push for greater and greater self-optimization while losing touch with questions of solidarity and community. Business consultants or economists are selected as managers for the bigger institutes of adult education. They feel responsible for the financial survival of the institution, but very rarely are prioritising the social development of human beings or, in other words, 'Bildung' before financial profit. It is not just a question of moralities; on the backdrop of the current financial situation, it is also a question of survival – still these developments greatly change the nature of the institutions in Germany. On this background, the 'Zuwanderungsgesetz' (Immigration Act) of 2005 brought some tangible changes. With the new law, state-subsidised German as a Second Language (GSL) courses – so-called "integration courses" – had to be provided for adult second-language learners in every state of the federal republic of Germany, which came with a great deal of unexpected money for programs that had previously been struggling to survive financially. It also provided many new staff to support these programs. The target group to be served in these courses are not only newcomers but all migrants who do not have a B1 language competence level. Some people in this category have been living over forty years in Germany without ever previously having the opportunity to enrol in state-subsidised courses. A B1 competence level is described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as:

I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. [...] I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events). (European Center for the DVT, 2020)

Understanding clear standard speech and entering conversations on familiar topics obviously describes a very basic level of language use - a level likely sufficient for workplaces where people are expected to understand basic orders and to achieve basic daily tasks. The whole learning objective of the courses does not focus on 'integration' and 'participation' as promoted but on forming an 'economic subject' which responds aptly to the needs of a national neoliberal labour market (Heinemann, 2018b, p. 178).

Today it is mainly the newly immigrated and those long-term migrants, who receive social welfare, who attend integration courses. They - unlike those long-term migrants who do not need financial aid from the state - are *required* to take the courses or they will be heavily sanctioned. The atmosphere in the courses has changed greatly in the last 15 years. Initially, there was much euphoria, especially among long-term migrants who were happy to finally get a chance to learn German in classes, which one of the authors experienced while working for three years in an Institute of adult education that offered German classes after the immigration act of 2005. The teachers were also very motivated due to better salaries and greater job security. Today the atmosphere has changed to one

of disillusioned resignation (cf. Heinemann, 2018a). The teachers' role in the 'integration courses' today is to offer a fixed curriculum which is determined by the government and to record the attendance of participants. Students who arrive 15 minutes late or need to leave the classroom 15 minutes early must be marked in the attendance list, which is sent to the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). The BAMF can decide to sanction the 'culprit' (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2019). Teachers are not educators any longer but are forced to become like police officers in the name of the state, a role, critical teachers hate and, in many ways, often courageously resist (cf. Heinemann, 2018a).

Critical pedagogy and heterotopian spaces - Pedagogy of dreaming and pedagogy of courage

Courageous resistance against a hegemonic oppressive system inside the educational system is not a new phenomenon. Critical pedagogy, rooted in the work of Paulo Freire (2000) and further developed by such scholars as Antonia Darder (2016), Donaldo Macedo (2006), Henry Giroux (2017), Peter McLaren (2016), and others, is a philosophy of praxis with a long tradition. It may be especially fruitful for transforming the ESL/GSL classroom and the field of adult education, more generally. Freire developed his ideas while teaching literacy to adult peasants in Brazil, wherein peasants were led to develop a critical literacy that interrogated their social conditions and constructed a critical consciousness regarding their lived experiences of oppression. This philosophy of liberation is founded on praxis and dialogue. Rather than the banking method of depositing information, a dialogic approach was created wherein adult students connected important social texts to their own social experiences and learned to question existing social structures and relations of domination and production. Dialogue was not simply communication but rather 'epistemological encounters' – meaning that teacher and students together recognized their diverse but equally important perspectives. Freire (2000) argued that the oppressed must lead the way to liberation, in the same way that Marx urged workers to unite against capital, because it is the oppressed who have the greatest impetus and insights that may build a path to liberation. Freire argued that it was through action and reflection that the oppressed learn to see themselves as fully human with human capacities to understand, name, and transform the world. Spaces where liberating pedagogy can be performed are heterotopian spaces.

Heterotopian spaces

Even though practitioners are highly restricted, we still see the important potential of creating critical spaces inside the institutes of adult education, one of few spaces in society where adults from the margins of a society enter a hegemonic educational institution and meet together in a room of possibilities. Although Foucault's post-structuralism is seen in contradiction to the realism within critical pedagogical by scholars (Hill, et al., 2002), we believe that there are areas in which opposing theories can be complementary. Foucault's concept of heterotopian spaces adds an important dimension to critical pedagogy in that, it points us toward the type of spaces where critical approaches are most likely to develop. Heterotopian spaces, as Foucault describes them are counter-spaces inside a society which brings together people who deviate from the 'norm' in some way:

But among all these places that are different from each other, there are some that are in some way absolutely different: places that are opposed to all the others, that are in some

way destined to erase, compensate, neutralise or purify them. They are in a way counter-spaces (Foucault, 2019, p. 40, trans. A.H.)⁴

Examples Foucault refers to are psychiatric clinics, graveyards, prisons, gardens (2019, p. 11) but heterotopia can also be found on the stage of a theatre, inside an alternative project of living in community or - as we would like to state - inside a second-language learning classroom, where people come together who all deviate from the standard 'norm' of a German/ U.S. citizen. The GSL classroom in Germany as well as the ESL classroom in the U.S. brings together adults from the margins where they meet a teacher who usually belongs to the dominant group in society and can potentially be an ally that creates learning spaces that build up resistance against the oppressive structures wherein they are trapped. Even though the scope of action is not very high (the limited time within each class makes it difficult to learn all the relevant vocabulary and structures to pass the required tests and move to the next level, which again is the pre-condition to opening other doors for the participants).

Another aspect Foucault brings up to define heterotopian spaces is that heterotopia brings together spaces which are incompatible (2019). Spaces which are usually thought of as being to different from each other or seem to be 'out of place'. This is especially interesting when looking at the problem, that the spaces of the GSL and ESL classes are usually inside an institution of adult education which offer much more spaces than only dominant language classes. In the 'Volkshochschule,' for example, there are many other offers, like health and art education, political and physical education or even possibilities to do vocational training. This is true in the U.S. adult education programs as well. However, in Germany, the experience of the last 15 years since the integration courses started is that the transition from 'integration courses' into "regular" adult education courses of the institution is very low and that the integration courses exist, more or less, in a 'parallel world' to the rest of the institution (cf. Palicha & Weiß, 2020, p. 42). This tendency also occurs in the U.S. by default, since adult ESL courses are often interrupted and/or repeated at the beginning levels because of the various demands that working class conditions place on students, making it difficult for them to move into the other types of adult education courses which are usually taught in English.

The last interesting aspect we want to refer to in respect to the concept of heterotopia is Foucault's idea that heterotopian spaces always have an opening and closing system that isolates them from the environment (Foucault, 2019, p. 18). In the context of the courses we find a very differentiated selection system. Only if participants have an authorisation, which is issued by ministerial authorities, do they have the opportunity to legitimately participate in an integration course. Without the right 'passport' participating in this heterotopian space is not possible - only if you have a teacher or pedagogic professional inside the institute, who will find ways to get you in - past the locking mechanisms. In both countries the locking mechanisms are for example the restrictions to access services for undocumented peoples, the increasing demand to have teachers become reporters, and the possibility of ICE raids, which negatively impact access.

Despite all the restrictions this heterotopian place of second language courses is confronted with, critical educators have the chance to use this special space of 'deviation from the hegemonic norm' for inspiring exchanges among participants. Exchanges and debates that do not narrow their focus on a mechanical learning of predetermined contents but also strengthen participants' awareness and engagement with the society they live in. Teachers and participants themselves can involve in and encourage reflection regarding their social conditions and the possibilities to resist the impositions made on them – impositions denying their Subject position as fully respected human beings in the society

and reducing them to an economic subject in the neoliberal market (Heinemann, 2018b). Following, drawing on critical pedagogy as a philosophy of praxis, we want to conclude with two important ideas from the work of Paulo Freire and other critical pedagogues, which can be inspiring in this context.

Conclusion: A pedagogy of dreaming and a pedagogy of courage

A pedagogy of dreaming (Freire, 2007; Monzó, 2019) is a crucial component of any political project. As the personal is political (de Beauvoir, 1988 [1960]), we must also learn to dream as part of our development. Capitalism's foundation on the exploitation of the worker has led to the rejection of and/or the disillusionment with dreaming. Too often we have been told to 'stop dreaming,' that this is 'a waste of time.' However, dreaming recognizes 'history as possibility' and thus incorporates agency and the role that we play as active Subjects of history. Rather than perceiving history as what has happened in the past, history can be perceived as a much broader construct involving a less linear approach to time, wherein the future also informs the present and the past. Dreaming allows us to reflect on the present and to recognize aspects of and or limits to our present. The notion of dreaming and envisioning what liberation can look like for migrants can be a powerful way of developing instruction. It would demand honesty regarding current conditions, comparisons across class, race, gender, and other identities, and encourage students to stay present and active in current social, economic, and political contexts. Dreaming is certainly something that migrants are familiar with - they often have had to risk everything to get to safety, and dreaming of a better life must have been part of that impetus. However, dreaming is not a practice of creating pie in the sky but of constructing new possibilities out of a critical understanding of existing present and past. For historically oppressed communities, dreaming is a crucial aspect of building hope and courage because it allows us to see possibilities that have not been available to us previously.

A Pedagogy of Courage is also necessary in the critical adult ESL/GSL classroom. It builds on the idea of a pedagogy of dreaming so that students will follow their dreams even though circumstances suggest inevitability. A pedagogy of courage requires easing the pressure put on students to conform to the status quo and conformity even though it may mean negative consequences from state directives. Teachers must also be courageous and recognize that their own positioning as a teacher is relatively safe and use their privilege to open spaces for learners, where they can develop their own ways of resistance and self-confidence. Of course, being able to dream and being courageous has different limitations, always depending on one's own circumstances and possibilities. We emphasise this aspect of courage because we realise that many teachers/educators don't push the boundaries of resistance as far as they could. Many of them fall back into resignation or do not even think about the possibility that things could be different or that they could be an active part of making that change (cf. Heinemann & Sarabi, 2020). This again leaves the few who are still struggling for a humanist space in adult education often alone and very lonely, but the more educators/teachers choose the dialogic path of dreaming and courage and use the heterotopian space with all its possibilities, the more solidarity is possible and the more likely that adult education can offer spaces that contribute to the emancipation and liberation of its students.

Notes

¹ Both authors worked on this paper equally

² ‘Wir sind das Volk’ was originally used during the Monday demonstrations in the former GDR. Since about 2014, however, the slogan has been appropriated by neo-right nationalist movements like PEGIDA.

³ In the US state administered adult education programs are comprised of English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ASB), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE).

⁴ Original: Or, parmi tous ces lieux qui se distinguent les uns des autres, il y en a qui sont en quelque sorte absolument différents: des lieux qui s’opposent à tous les autres, qui son destinés en quelque sorte à les effacer, à les compenser, à les neutraliser ou à les purifier. Ce sont quelque sorte des contre-espaces.

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