BEYOND REASON AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF COERCIVE RESTRAINT

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Abstract

> *This article challenges a popular assumption in adult education that all forms of coercion are evil; it begins to articulate a pedagogy of coercive restraint for use when faced with perpetrators of social injustices. The author clarifies the need for such a pedagogy based on critiques of adult education theories and practices. Forms and levels of restraint appropriate to different levels of conflict are described. The pedagogy of coercion is then situated within the broader pedagogy of mobilization, with suggestions for development of the ideas.*

Résumé

> *Cet article remet en question la croyance populaire voulant que toute forme de coercition soit nécessairement répréhensible. On y articule une pédagogie de la contrainte physique à utiliser dans les cas d'injustice sociale. En se fondant sur les critiques formulées à l'égard de la théorie et la pratique de l'éducation des adultes, l'auteur soutient qu'une telle pédagogie répond à un besoin. Il décrit les formes et les degrés de contrainte physique qui sont appropriés en présence de différents types de conflits. Le texte situe la pédagogie de la coercition dans le contexte élargi de la pédagogie de la mobilisation, et contribue quelques idées pour sa mise en pratique.*

Look around any neighborhood, village, city, or nation, and you are likely to see grave social maladies: abject poverty and gross income inequalities, hunger and starvation, poor health, environmental pollution, unsafe habitats, and so on. Many of these conditions stem from the actions or inactions of human beings. I refer to human-spawned, social maladies as social injustices. The hurt and harm resulting from social injustices are real, and are not diminished by the relative guilt or innocence of the perpetrators. Moreover, in many situations, the witting or unwitting perpetrators (when made aware of their pernicious actions) do not readily exhibit self-restraint. When perpetrators of violence and injustices fail to readily exhibit self-restraint, when the injuries they inflict are consequential and sustained, adult educators who are serious about redressing social injustices are left with one option: they must try to coercively restrain the perpetrators.

The Necessity for Coercive Restraint

Coercion is the "use of physical or moral force to compel to act or assent" (*Webster's Dictionary*, 1986, p. 439). To coerce people is to prevent them from doing what they would otherwise have done, or to cause them to do what they would not have voluntarily done. Coercive restraint, then, is an attempt to forcibly change a person's behavior, not necessarily his or her system of values or beliefs. With coercive restraint, the goal is merely to stop or curb the violence or injuries.

What educators do, in addition to restraining the perpetrators of injustices, depends on how they construe and explain the perpetrators' behavior. If the pernicious acts are construed as intentional, informed, and principled—that is to say, if the perpetrators are believed to be acting as acting as true enemies—then coercive restraint is the only reasonable recourse. If, on the other hand, the injurious actions are construed as the result of ignorance, ineptitude, neuroses, or the like—that is to say, if it is assumed that the perpetrators are misguided foes—then, in addition to coercively restraining the unwitting perpetrators, it seems appropriate that adult educators try to enlighten them.

Enlightening includes attempts to change not only people's actions but, more importantly, their knowledge, capabilities, beliefs, attitudes, system of values (and so forth) which nourish, sustain, and legitimize those actions. In contra-distinction to coercive restraint, people enlighten by appealing to reason and personal integrity, rather than to physical or moral force. In other words, when enlightened discourse is used as a way to alleviate injustices the assumption is that if perpetrators truly apprehend how their actions affect others, and knew what they could do to alleviate the hurt, they would.

To summarize, it is perfectly reasonable to try to redress social injustices by appealing (solely) to the perpetrators' sense of reason and personal integrity, if the injuries are transient and minor, and if we adult educators are confident that the injuries are caused by persons who are misguided, and can be rehabilitated without resorting to force. However, when social injuries are sustained and grave, or when they are committed wittingly (i.e., by true enemies) then justice demands that we coercively restrain the perpetrators.

Distinguishing Between True Enemies and Misguided Foes

To help the reader understand the thesis of this paper, I must clarify what I mean by *true enemies* and *misguided foes*. Webster's dictionary defines an enemy as someone who "seeks the injury, overthrow, or failure of a person or thing to which he [sic] is opposed..." (*Webster's Dictionary*,

1986, p. 750). In this definition, intent is assumed. In addition to intent, my notion of *true* enemy assumes that the injurious acts are based on sufficient knowledge and principled conviction. In other words, the harmful actions of true enemies are intentional, informed, and principled. True enemies intend, *on principle*, to frustrate the goals of their opponent because their opponent's goals stand in opposition to theirs. However, true enemies need not exhibit unsavory emotions toward each other. True enemies may like each other and get along well. (Webster's Dictionary explains that two otherwise loving brothers may be political enemies). People are considered true enemies when they pursue goals that are antithetical—if one party wins, the other parties to the transaction must (of necessity) lose. It is in this sense, for instance, that people refer to opposing teams in a sporting event as enemies. I should emphasize that context determines one's status as enemy or ally. In other words, a person need not always be my enemy. Someone might be my enemy on the football field, but my ally on the job; my enemy on issues of abortion, but my ally regarding taxation or welfare reform. Moreover, I may be my own enemy—acting in ways that frustrate my own causes.

In contrast to true enemies, misguided foes injure others unintentionally. Misguided foes act perniciously because they are either insufficiently aware of the negative consequences of their action on others, or they are in some way incapacitated or unable to control their actions. Once they become sufficiently capacitated or aware, or once cured of their neuroses, misguided foes are likely to change their ways and become potential allies.

The distinction I draw between true enemy and misguided foes rests on the assumption that irreconcilable conflicts exist; that differences are not always resolvable into win/win outcomes. If this assumption is shown to be incorrect—that indeed there are no irreconcilable situations—then my true enemy/misguided foe distinction is bogus. This objection, however, would not weaken the force of my argument that adult educators should coercively restrain people. The hurt and harm inflicted by misguided foes are not diminished by their relative ignorance or good intentions. Accordingly, adult educators have a duty to try to stop all forms of injurious actions, whether inflicted wittingly or unwittingly.

Adult Educators' Enfeebled Responses to Social Injustices

In *Defining the Enemy*, Michael Newman (1994) argues that when it comes to dealing with perpetrators of violence and social injustices, fashionable adult education theories are simply too nice, too unfocused, too inward-looking, or too mechanistic (see especially chaps. 2, 3, & 6). Labeling these theories as "traps, tricks, and hegemonic sidetracks,"

Newman has shown how they enfeeble our (adult educators') efforts and leave our enemies free to continue "burning Rome." This, according to Newman, is because most of our theories avoid or ignore dealing with enemies. Our focus, he argues, is largely on enlightening ourselves and the victims (those upon whom hurt and harm are inflicted).

Introspective activism is one of the labels Newman (1994) uses to describe our enfeebled efforts. This activism, he argues, comes packaged in statements such as these: "The revolution starts with us. We can begin by cleaning up our back yard. We need to achieve an inner peace if we are to strive for world peace. We must educate ourselves before we can educate others" (1994, p. 103). He adds:

> These are seductive and comforting phrases but they can deflect us from laying blame where it is due, and from taking effective, coordinated action to oppose those who would do us and others harm. We may look outward for a while, we may see problems and be tempted to criticise those responsible for them, but at some crucial moment we retreat, we begin saying the solution is in ourselves. We rattle sabres but then we wander off disconsolately into some kind of personalized reverie or reflective mumbling, disempowered by a liberal humanist hegemony. (p. 103)

A little later, in a critique of peace activists (such as Bhasin, Hall, & Kekkonen) Newman concludes: "Their proposals are often for education and action to mobilise people *for* peace, not *against* the warmongers (p. 107, emphasis in the original). In the next section I extend Newman's argument by taking a closer look at three of adult education's most fashionable theories—Mezirow's *transformational learning*, Marsick's & Watkins' *learning organization*, and Freire's *conscientization*.

Denials, Avoidance, and Platitudes in Adult Education Theories

In terms of relative emphasis, I group adult education literature into three broad foci: business, individual, and community/societal. These foci are not mutually exclusive. Adult educators might tackle business concerns by addressing the concerns of individuals and collectives within that business setting. Likewise, community issues might be partly addressed by dealing with the concerns of individuals and local businesses. These groupings are merely areas of emphasis. The learning organization (e.g., the works of Victoria Marsick and Karen Watkins) typify a business focus. Jack Mezirow's transformational learning exemplifies adult educators' concern for individuals, and the works of Paulo Freire (conscientization) are prototypical of a focus on societal concerns.

I do not wish to trivialize the immense differences among these theorists. They differ not only in the objects of their focus—business, individuals, and society—but in other important philosophical and methodological respects as well. For instance, Watkins' and Marsick's works, rooted in human capital and modernization theories, are very pro-capitalist. Mezirow's work does not overtly support capitalism, but its individualistic sympathies fit snugly within the capitalist political economy. Freire's work is a direct affront to capitalism. However, despite massive philosophical and methodological differences, these theorists are united in this: when it comes to redressing social injustices, they all focus primarily on *enlightening* victims and perpetrators. None of their writings overtly advocate or explicate ways to *coercively restrain* perpetrators. In this section I document this claim by examining how these theorists construe and address injustices they encounter in their practices.

The Business, of Business: A Loving Family Affair

As distinguished proponents of the learning organization, Victoria Marsick and Karen Watkins are well aware of grave plights facing workers in corporate America. They see a culture of disillusionment, fear, disrespect, distrust, resignation, and individualism; CEO's who view companies as portfolios to be "harvested"; and a labor force which is increasingly part-time, temporary, and overtaxed in a society that is increasingly underemployed and unemployed. They lament the feminization of poverty; they bemoan business environments characterized by transnational mergers, hostile takeovers, fierce global competition, downsizing, rightsizing, and re-engineering; and they caution of managers who engage in wage and job discrimination as well as of companies that employ child and scab labor, exploit workers, consumers, the larger public, the physical environment, and so on (Marsick & Watkins, 1994; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Yet, when they offer correctives, Marsick and Watkins seem either to forget or to discount these grave injustices, or they tend to recast them as resulting from failures and mistakes.

In discussing barriers to the learning organization, Marsick and Watkins provide perhaps their clearest insights into how they would address the human plights they encounter. In chapter 11 of *Sculpting the Learning Organization* (Watkins & Marsick, 1993), they identify "truncated learning" as one of three main obstacles to creating a learning organization. This is how they describe truncated learning: "Sometimes an idea begins in one part of the organization, and not all the people necessary for its success are brought on board. Changes may be 'a mile wide and an inch deep'—that is,

cosmetic face-lifting. Little or no real learning takes place" (p. 240). Then they cite as an example of truncated learning, "a carefully crafted quality initiative" that was aborted, presumably because not all persons essential to its success were involved, and because employees "feared that mistakes [with this new system] might cost them their jobs" (p. 241). They noted also that, in the midst of this quality initiative, the company was also downsizing.

In another example Watkins and Marsick (1993) observe truncated learning when a high-technology company attempted to create independent business units, combine sales and services, and push decision making down to the lowest levels of the organization. Here, they describe a very participatory, democratic process in which, presumably, the employees involved were (at the onset) given the requisite authority, information, and resources to effect the changes they deemed necessary. Subsequently, however, the project was precipitously aborted by top management. The authors observe: "key people responsible for the innovation were let go; and the company returned to its old style of doing business" (p. 242). Watkins and Marsick note that these retrogressive steps were taken because "business did not improve as quickly as top management expected it to;…[because] managers were not comfortable with such radically new way of doing things;…and [because many managers] did not want employees to have so much control over their own work and learning"(p. 242).

I fail to see how the label *truncated learning* fits any of the two examples given above. It is not surprising that nowhere in their discussions is a definition given as to what constitutes truncated learning. The closest Marsick and Watkins (1994) come to a definition is to say that "truncated learning…[involves] efforts that never took root because they were interrupted or only partially implemented" (p. 357). What we are *really* dealing with here is ineptitude and/or vice. The decision makers in the two examples cited above are either incompetent, or are choosing to make decisions in their own best interests and at the expense of others. Labeling the phenomenon truncated learning is, at best, euphemistic and, at worst, dishonest. However, by calling the problem truncated learning, Marsick and Watkins (1994) are able to address it as very reconcilable mistakes and failures. Of truncated learning they write:

> Architects of the learning organization hope to thwart this barrier by creating a culture in which *mistakes and failures* are opportunities to learn what does not work. This presumes that employees do not hold grudges about past ghosts and that they now feel reasonably safe from repercussions while they are learning. (p. 357, emphasis added)

There you have it. Gone from the discussion is any talk of willful coercion and exploitation by management, or of any selfish and opportunistic behavior on the part of workers. With a stroke of their pens, Marsick and Watkins reduce incompetence and avarice to mistakes and failures that (supposedly) are painlessly turned into positive learning opportunities for all involved. Using terms like truncated learning to describe the high-handed, self-serving practices of management or the self-preserving behavior of workers may be a shrewd thing to do, but it is a woeful misdirection. It sets up a false world, and gives false and unrealistic hopes, for it assumes that justice could be accomplished by merely enlightening perpetrators and victims—that justice could always be achieved without the need for coercively restraining perpetrators.

Nowhere is this falsehood more manifest, perhaps, than in the definition of learning organization itself. Citing from Senge (1990), Marsick and Watkins (1994) define learning organizations as "organizations that learn continuously and transform themselves" (p. 354) and as places "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (in Marsick & Watkins, 1996, p. 18, as cited in Senge, p. 3). Presumably, then, these organizations embody an entirely democratic ethos: one characterized by non-violent, enlightening discourses in which everyone is treated justly and fairly, and where authority, resources, and rewards are meritocratically established, earned, and distributed. In this workplace utopia, reason and personal integrity are the only sources of appeal needed to establish and secure justice. And, resting confidently on this premise, Marsick and Watkins propose their non-coercive imperatives: management and workers establish, implement, and maintain a shared, harmonious vision; opportunities are created for continuous learning; non-threatening, risk-free inquiry and dialogue are promoted; teams work and learn collaboratively, unselfishly, and interdependently; management unselfishly share their power, resources, and rewards with employees; systems are established to capture and share learning across the rank and file of the organization; and the company plays a very socially responsible role in its community (Marsick & Watkins, 1994, 1996; Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

In sculpting their learning organizations, then, it appears that Marsick and Watkins believe it is okay to treat U.S. corporations as essentially loving families in which everyone wins; as conciliatory spaces where intractable conflicts languish, and win/win possibilities flourish. Marsick and Watkins seem to regard U.S. companies as places in which the common interests of

stakeholders vastly outweigh conflicting ones—workplaces in which people freely share information and resources. In this workplace fairyland, they manage to recast vice as ignorance and mistakes, refashion irreconcilable conflicts as relatively harmless disagreements, and remold enemies into fortuitous, unwitting collaborators. It is okay to be optimistic. However, optimism should not lead us as adult educators into a reckless romanticism which denies the existence of enemies or discounts the harm they inflict (as Watkins & Marsick seem to have done). Instead, it should spur us to seek out our enemies and try to coercively restrain them.

Rousing Transformational Learning Far From the Maddening Crowd

Jack Mezirow has developed the theory of transformational learning. He explains it as:

> the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. (1981, p. 6)

The theory makes the following overt or tactic claims: (a) people are all caught in their own histories and reliving them; (b) people's histories socialize them in ways that are sometimes distorting and constraining how they view of themselves and their relationships; (c) through transformational learning people are likely to overcome their cultural distortions and constraints; (d) this transformed perspective is sufficient to catalyze and bring about emancipatory change.

For Mezirow, then, emancipation, however defined, is hindered by distortions—epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological—in the way people think (1991, ch. 5). And, presumably, our "internalized cultural assumptions and unresolved childhood dilemmas" are responsible for these distortions (Collard & Law, 1989, p. 101). And, ostensibly, through transformation learning we overcome our distortions, thus paving the way to emancipation.

This transformational learning and corresponding emancipation "occurs by elaborating existing meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes, or transforming meaning perspectives" (Mezirow, 1996, p. 163). In transformational learning, learners "acquire communicative competence by becoming more aware and critically reflective of assumptions, more able to freely and fully participate in discourse, and to overcome constraints to taking reflective action" (p. 164). To accomplished this, as people we avoid a "culture of critique"

characterized by "confrontational dialogue" and "win/lose" orientations (p. 169). Instead, we try to "build new understanding," "reach consensus," and "establish solidarity among participants" (p. 170). In the land of transformational learning, participants in discourse: (a) have accurate and complete information; (b) are free of coercion and distorting self deception; (c) weigh evidence and assess as objectively as possible; (d) are open to alternative perspectives; (e) critically reflect upon presuppositions and their consequences; (f) have equal opportunity to participate (including the opportunity to challenge, to question, to refute, and to hear others do the same); and (g) accept informed, objective, and rational consensus as legitimate tests of validity (pp. 170-171).

Mezirow's route to transformation learning and eventual emancipation is entirely free of coercion. Presumably, this is because, for Mezirow, ignorance (distortions), not malevolence or greed, is the culprit behind our lost estate—the real grinch that steals our freedom, dignity, and property. And, apparently, these bedeviling distortions are effectively exorcized under the piercing light of non-coercive, enlightening discourse. In Mezirow's transformational learning wonderland, non-confrontational, dialogic transactions are not only the order of the day, such non-coercive discourse, alone, is sufficient to usher in emancipation.

I am very unfamiliar with this Land of Oz of which Mezirow writes. It is far, far removed from the maddening crowd I encounter every day on the job, in the newspapers, or in my community. Much of the social injustices plaguing my world are committed not by unwitting, ignorant buffoons, encumbered by their distorted assumptions and childhood neuroses. Much of the social maladies I encounter results from the willful and informed actions of individuals and groups. Transformational learning, à la Mezirow, is either occurring in a world far removed from my own realities, or it has little interest in addressing much of the social maladies I encounter in mine.

Truth is, Mezirow's transformational learning occurs only in idealized, hypothetical contexts, framed by his neo-liberal loyalties. Collard and Law (1989), for instance, are quite doubtful about Mezirow's implicit claim that changes in the perspectives of individuals are "both a necessity and sufficient condition for emancipation" (p. 101). The flaw, as they see it, is Mezirow's failure to seriously address "questions of context, ideology, and the radical needs embodied in popular struggles" (p. 105). This failure, Collard and Law argue, stems from the individualism, existentialism, and liberal-conservatism, which undergird Mezirow's theory; and also from the baggage Mezirow inherits from his uncritical cooption of Habermas' theory of communicative competence, with its unsupported "categorically distinct object domains," its

underdeveloped conception of self-reflection, and so on (p. 103). Collard and Law rightly conclude that "the essential liberal democratic character of Mezirow's ideas inevitably suppress the concept of a radical praxis such as that advanced by Freire and other proponents of transformative education" (p. 106).

Clark and Wilson (1991) also point to the de-politicized, decontextual nature of Mezirow's theory. Mezirow, they note, is aware of context, but his theory pays only lip service to it. They explain:

> It is not that Mezirow denies the existence of context; he notes that adult learning takes place in both a social context and in the context of a meaning perspective.... [Mezirow, himself, notes] that transformational learning is not a private affair involving information processing, it is interactive and intersubjective from start to finish.... What [Mezirow] fails to do, however, is maintain the essential link between the meaning of experience and the context in which it arises and by which it is interpreted. (p. 76)

Taking a close look at the original study upon which Mezirow's theory is founded, Clark and Wilson also observe:

> In keeping with the psychological paradigm that governs most American research into the learning process, the focus of [Mezirow's original] study was on the internal experience of the women in these [reentry] programs. This produced a ten-step process of perspective transformation...located entirely within the individual. (p. 77)

And later they write:

> As we see in the original study of the women's reentry programs, the ten-step transformational learning process is conceptualized as a psychological process, located within the women; it is not understood in terms of the social and political contexts in which both the women and their learning is situated. (p. 78)

Clark and Wilson rightly argue that this failure of Mezirow to address the context of learning leads him to make indefensible claims about the universality of his theory (p. 78).

Perhaps, if Mezirow takes seriously the contexts of learning, if he were to eschew some of his neo-liberalism which compels him to focus entirely on the victims, if Mezirow could set his gaze (even momentarily) on the perpetrators of social injustices instead, he might come to realize that emancipation sometimes requires not only enlightening discourse but also a pedagogy of coercive restraint.

Conscientizing Victims and Perpetrators Alike

Freire's *conscientization* is a dialectical convergence of critical reflection and collective action. In this praxis for emancipation, educators immerse themselves in context in order to establish meaningful relationships, build trust, and gain insights into the real concerns of the people they are attempting to serve. Then, through this immersion, they identify generative themes and use them to effect critical dialogue, itself the beginning of a collective struggle to overthrow oppressive and dehumanizing forces (Freire, 1970, 1973, 1995, 1998). Just as Marsick and Watkins see much that is undesirable about business, so too, Freire recognizes a great deal of malevolence in society in general—banking education, corporate capitalism, European imperialism and colonialism, scientism, racism, the Right, and so on. But unlike Watkins and Marsick, Freire does not ignore or discount these ailments. Nonetheless, he fails to *openly* authorize or articulate a pedagogy of coercive restraint.

Although the rhetoric of coercive restraint is ever-present in Freire's writings, he speaks of it only in vague, general terms. As, for instance, when he advocates coercing those who perpetuate injustices in Brazil. On this matter he writes:

> Of course, the element of punishment, penalty, correction...belongs to the pedagogical nature of the political process of which struggle is an expression. It would not be equitable that injustices, abuses, extortion, illicit profits, influence peddling, the use of offices and positions for the satisfaction of personal interests...should go uncorrected, just as it would not be right for any of those who would be judged guilty not to be severely punished, within the limits of the law. (1995, p. 9)

In this passage Freire is clearly advocating coercion, albeit in vague terms and within the limits of the law. He seems to suggest that all of Brazil's laws are just, for he does not allow for any type of civil disobedience. Moreover, his advocacy of coercion is rather vague, offering no specific strategies. Perhaps this move is tactical on Freire's part—not wishing to show his hand to his enemies. Or perhaps, being the gracious facilitator that he is, Freire prefers to allow specific strategies[1] to emerge from specific contexts, rather than to impose them from outside. But Freire (1973) seems to have no difficulty proffering specific *non-coercive* pedagogical strategies. For instance, in his work with Brazilian (low literate) peasants, Freire lays out a

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[1]Strategies are the overall plan or approach one employs in the pursuit of an objective. For instance, in warfare, a general might choose an offensive or defensive strategy as the case warrants. Tactics are instances of a strategy, specific methods employed within given strategies. "Tactics means doing what you can with what you have" (Alinsky, 1971, p. 126).

five-phase set of non-coercive strategies for promoting conscientization: (a) researching the vocabulary of the group with which one is working; (b) selecting generative words from this vocabulary; (c) codification—the representation of typical existential situations of the group with which one is working; (d) elaboration of agendas; and (e) preparation of cards with the breakdown of the "phonemic families" (pp. 49 ff). Once these five phases are completed, *culture circles* are formed and the critical dialogical process begins. Coordinators are trained before they are allowed to engage in dialogical supervision (1973, p. 52).

Freire (1973) provides detailed instructions concerning such things as the sequencing of codified situations, how and when to present materials within each codified situation, and so on. Concerning the sequencing of the process he writes: "The codified situation is projected, together with the first generative word, which graphically represents the oral expression of the object perceived. Debate about its implication follow" (p. 52). Freire continues this level of detailed instructions for the next 32 pages (pp. 53-84). On page 63 for instance, he suggests questions a coordinator might ask to help participants decode the slide depicting "man as a being of relationship"—"Who made the well? Why did he do it? How did he do it? When?" It seems, then, that Freire has no reservations about proffering specific strategies.

Given Freire's acknowledgment that his work involves intensely conflict-ridden situations; given his obvious commitment to eradicating social injustices, everywhere; given his acute awareness that social injustices are human-spawned (by persons he calls oppressors); and given that nowhere in his writings is there even a nascent pedagogy of coercive restraint, I am forced to conclude that Freire must construe his adversaries as misguided foes, not true enemies. Not only that, it also seems safe to conclude (on the basis of the foregoing) that Freire assumes that one could sufficiently stem the tides of violence and injustices perpetrated by misguided foes simply by appealing to their sense of reason and personal integrity. Conscientization, after all, appeals to just (and only) that—reason and personal integrity.

Why does Freire take such romantic posture? The answer, I believe, stems from his construal of malevolence as ignorance and mistakes, not vice. For Freire, it seems, the violence of the oppressor and the resultant mob reaction of the oppressed (massification) are all, finally, attributable to uncriticality—naivete, intransivity, and semi-transivity (Freire 1973, p. 19). Freire—and I might add, most adult educators—seem to accord absolute goodness to free, enlightened humans. Freire and most adult educators seem to accept Carl Rogers' (1983) premise that "the basic nature of the human

being, when functioning freely, is constructive and trustworthy" (Rogers, p. 292). If free human beings are absolutely good, then malevolence must be unnatural, a distortion of human nature—distorted by ignorance and external control. Newman (1994) captures well Freire's romantic sensibilities when he observes that:

> [Freire's reference to] the Right must refer, in part at least, to people who maintain their positions, property and privilege through terror. Yet somehow Freire appears to believe that these oppressors, too, are trapped, and that *it is up to the oppressed* to release them....
>
> Freire, then, appears to maintain a faith in the potential goodness of all people, and he envisages a utopia in which revolutionary leaders, the people, and, presumably, some at least of the former oppressors are liberated and, through a process of cultural synthesis, create a conscientized, post-revolutionary culture." (pp. 35, 36 emphasis in original)

Newman also points out how Freire announces his utopian vision with apocalyptic fervor, but lacking the harsh day of judgement:

> Yet it is—paradoxical though it may seem—precisely in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors that the gesture of love may be found....As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of their oppression. It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught....The contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man [sic] who is neither oppressor nor oppressed—man in the process of liberation. (Freire, 1972, pp. 32-33, as cited in Newman, 1994, p. 33-36)

For Freire, then, the loving, collective struggle of the oppressed eventually restores the humanity of the oppressor. This loving struggle causes the scales which blind oppressors to their harmful deeds to magically fall off, and new men and women emerge—men and women with hearts to do good. Armed with such romantic anthropology and ontology, it is not surprising that Freire has neither developed nor articulated a pedagogy of coercive restraint.

Adult Educator's Aversion to Coercion: A Liberal Humanist Tenet

All three theories discussed above claim to address social injustices of one form or another. Learning organizations hope to make corporations more humane and socially responsible; transformational learning promises to bring

about personal and (eventually) social emancipation; and conscientization seeks to humanize both the oppressed and the oppressor.

It is safe to assume that the authors of these theories are well aware that social injustices are in some ways spawned and perpetrated by human beings. Freire, Marsick, and Watkins, obviously do. Yet none of them saw it fit to advocate or articulate a pedagogy for coercively restraining the perpetrators of injustices. This, I argue, is because of their liberal, humanist loyalties. It appears that these celebrated adult education theorists all believe in the absolute goodness of human beings. They seem to assume that if people were left to grow wild and free their conduct and obligations would always be honorable. With such faith in the goodness of humans, it is easy to believe that people commit social injustices, either because they do not *really* know better, or because they are not *really free* to pursue more honorable paths. Armed with such romantic notions, it is not hard to conclude that people will act right once they are free, critical thinkers. Construing humans in these ways, I beleive, constrained the adult educators discussed above to re-frame their enemies as potential allies and misguided foes; to re-fashion vice as failures and mistakes; and to recast educators' ethical responsibilities in merely epistemic terms. Regarding the learning organization, that epistemic task boils down to nurturing systemic thinkers and actors; with respect to Mezirow's transformational learning, the epistemic task is to change learners' meaning schemes and/or perspectives; and for Freire, the task is the development of critical consciousness.

I maintain, however, that this overly romantic posture is misdirected. True enemies do exist and they injure others not out of ignorance, ineptitude, or neuroses, but freely and knowingly. It seems rather naive (or even arrogant) to assume that any and all acts of injustices are, in some respects, unwitting. Those who do so are assuming that they know more and better than the perpetrators of injustices; and that through their ingenuity and superior moral persuasions they will, eventually, win the perpetrators over to their side. However benevolent this might sound, it is also arrogant! Furthermore, the injuries inflicted by misguided foes are not diminished by their relative ignorance or good intentions. The injured continue to feel the stings of the unwitting perpetrators, while adult educators, oft in vain, attempt to rehabilitate them (the perpetrators). My position is simply: if we adult educators are serious about alleviating social injustices, then, within the limits of our power and resources, we must attempt to coercively restrain the perpetrators, whether the pernicious acts are wittingly or unwittingly committed.

Three Situations Adult Educators Encounter

The situations adult educators encounter in their practice range from amiable to combative. That is why, following Newman (1994), I find it useful to classify social transactions into one of three grouping— *consultations, negotiations*, and *disputes*—depending on the severity of conflict they exhibit. My reason for doing so is to match situations with pedagogical strategies—consultative situations with consultative strategies, and so on.

Consultations

"Consultation is a process whereby two or more parties *whose common interests outweigh any conflicting ones* come together to talk with a view to sharing information and solving problems to their mutual advantage" (Newman, p. 154, emphasis in original). This coming together need not be formalized. Consultations may be quite unplanned. What is important is this: In consultative situations stakeholders treat each other as allies or misguided foes. No enemies exist here. The parties know and trust each other; their common interests vastly outweigh conflicting ones; and interactants work in mutually supportive ways. The injuries inflicted in such situations are unintended, and relatively inconsequential—resulting truly from mistakes, ineptitude, neuroses, and such like. Consultative situations demand consultative strategies and tactics—non-coercive, communicative actions in which information and resources are freely shared between and among stakeholders. There is no need to coercively restrain the perpetrators of injustices in these situations. Because the perpetrators are really misguided foes, it is quite feasible to rehabilitate them by appealing, simply, to their sense of reason and personal integrity.

Adult educators are very cognizant of and adept at using consultative strategies and tactics. For instance, Marsick and Watkins attempt to sculpt learning organizations by employing consultative strategies which establish and sustain a shared vision; promote continuous learning; nurture non-threatening, risk-free inquiry and dialogue; build teams that work and learn collaboratively and interdependently; and so on. Likewise, when Mezirow seeks to promote transformational learning he engages in consultative strategies that avoid confrontational dialogue and win/lose orientations. He tries to build new understanding to help people reach consensus, to establish solidarity among participants, and so on. And Freire's conscientization involves such consultative strategies as researching the vocabulary of the group with which one is working, selecting generative themes, codification, dialogue, and so on.

These authors are not alone. In fact, the pedagogical strategies authorized and employed in the literature and practice of adult education are almost exclusively consultative in nature. Consultative strategies fill the pages of the literature on human resource development and learning organizations (Niemi, 1992; Redding & Catalanello, 1994), program planning (Cervero & Wilson, 1994) and adult literacy (Quigley, 1997). They also drench the pages of theories of teaching, learning and adult development (Brookfield, 1995; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Mezirow, 1991), multicultural education (Cassara, 1990) and feminist pedagogy (Tisdell, 1993). Consultative strategies are appropriate in relatively conflict-free situations. However, in situations of intense conflict the educator, in order to be effective, must either negotiate or engage in dispute.

Negotiations

"Negotiation is a process whereby two or more parties with both common and conflicting interests come together to talk with a view to reaching an agreement" (Newman, 1994, p. 153). Parties in negotiative situations possess common interests sufficient to keep them talking, but their differences are great enough to keep their level of trust relatively low. However high the level of distrust, negotiations assume that "all involved intend reaching some kind of agreement, even if the agreement is minimal and stable....Without this intention of reaching some kind of agreement,...the process is not a negotiation but merely a moment of masquerade..." (*ibid*). While their common interests force them to the talk, "it is the conflicting interests that require [the parties] to go through the difficult and stressful process of negotiation (rather than the more straightforward process of consultation)" (*ibid*).

Negotiative situations are precarious and very indeterminate. Educators may, at once, be dealing with allies, misguided foes, and enemies. Educators may *not* know who all the stakeholders are; if they do, they may not be sure of their interests and allegiances. Moreover, allegiances may shift. Commenting on the precarious nature of negotiative situations Newman (1994) observes:

> In a negotiation the parties talk but do not necessarily share all the information they have, nor follow any set procedures...There will be sudden adjournments, breakdowns in the talks and resumptions. There is no hard and fast agenda.... There will be claims and counter-claims, moments of silence, heated exchanges, and sudden shifts of focus. But because both sides need the other, because they have common interests

as well as the conflicting ones, they will keep at it until some kind of agreement is reached. (p. 154)

This agreement need not be mutually (or equally) beneficial. "One party may lose out badly in the negotiation and another may gain a considerable amount" (p. 153).

Disputes

A dispute arises when talks have broken down; when distrust is open and rampant; when the battle lines are drawn; and when opposing sides seek actively, freely, and knowingly to frustrate each other's causes. In disputes, people are dealing with true enemies. Newman defines a dispute as

a process in which parties whose conflicting interests outweigh any common ones engage with one another, each with a view to winning— that is, furthering its own interests or gaining ascendency for its own viewpoint....Here the parties have different philosophies and policies. Each party regards the others and their policies as a hindrance. There is no desire to reach agreement. (p. 154)

Newman soberly points out that "disputes are worked out through struggle, battle, pistols at dawn, or other forms of ugly and sometimes terminal confrontation" (p. 155)

Strategies Appropriate in Negotiations and Disputes

Where the conflicts are mild (i.e., where common interests abound, and where the injuries are transient and relatively inconsequential) it is reasonable to assume that agreements could be reached by appealing, simply, to reason and personal integrity. In such cases, consultative strategies are sufficient to redress injustices. However, as the level of conflict rises, as common interests wane, as the stakes get higher, and as the injuries persist and heighten, it becomes increasingly necessary to coercively restrain the perpetrators of injustices. Coercion, as I pointed out in the beginning of this article, is the use of physical or moral force to compel someone to act or to assent. However, coercive restraint is *measured* coercion—force sufficient to stop or curb the violence or injustice. The aim is not necessarily to annihilate the perpetrators but rather to incapacitate them, to render them incapable of continuing their pillage.

In this section, I focus on strategies (overall approach) rather that tactics (specific acts which emerge in specific situations) because I believe that tactics should emerge from the particular context and not be imposed from outside. The appropriateness of the coercive strategies adult educators employ should depend on the level of conflict, what is at stake, the power

and resources of those we are seeking to restrain, and our own power and resources. Accordingly, the coercive strategies we use to restrain perpetrators should vary in form and severity. They may be physical or non-physical; mild—intending, for instance, merely to misinform; or severe—intending, for instance, to inhibit, injure, or even kill.[2] On a continuum of severity, coercion may be classified as credible force, intimidation, or manipulation.

Credible Force

Credible force is force (physical, political, military, legal, etc.) sufficient to prevent people from carrying out their wishes. As a form of measured coercion, credible force should be educators' absolute last resort—used only in dispute situations, where negations have broken down, and people's lives and/or well-being are seriously threatened. It is time to use credible force, for instance, when a student gets up in front of a class and starts shooting at his or her class mates. It is time to use credible force when irate enemies "go ballistic" at a public meeting because they cannot have it all their way. But I must caution, if we must use force, then we should make sure it is credible— that is to say, it is force sufficient to neutralize the enemy. If not, then I suggest that we resort to intimidation. Intimidation is far more effective than the use of *non*-credible (i.e, weak and ineffectual) force.

Intimidation

Intimidation is the *threat* (as opposed to *use*) of credible force. This threat may be symbolic (e.g., using threatening words, or tones), or material (the actual show of force). Intimidation is used more often than people are willing to admit. Educators and parents use it frequently to restore order to situations that are about to get out of hand. To illustrate, in his posthumous volume *Pedagogy of Freedom* Freire (1998) tells a story of a young Brazilian professor who had to coercively restrain a disruptive student. According to Freire, the disorderly student (from another class) was standing at the half-open door gesticulating to one of the students in the young professor's classroom. Freire did not say what the professor's restraining actions were, but he certainly endorsed it. In fact, Freire maintained that "not to have intervened [would have] amounted to a demonstration of a lack of real authority, an act of omission in the face of a clearly unacceptable and prejudicial intrusion into [the professor's] teaching space" (pp. 95-96). I believe that the restraining actions of the young professor (which Freire so

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[2]I do advocate killing people as a form of coercive restraint. However, killing is justified only in self-defense, or in defense of people whose lives are seriously threatened. As harsh as this position might seem, the fact is that perpetrators of violence do kill innocent people.

heartedly endorsed) must have entailed at the very least some form of mild intimidation.

Here is another example. Not too long ago, I was co-teaching a graduate course with another colleague. During the semester, my colleague repeatedly attempted (via a consultative approach) to get two students to conduct an assignment according to his stipulation. The students kept dodging him. He finally wrote them a very lengthy response in which he concluded: "Please be advised, this is not a suggestion, it's a requirement." This is a threat if I ever saw one—and a very credible one at that. For my colleague knew that behind his statement was the backing of the entire political, legal, and physical weight of his educational institution. The students knew that too, so they eventually complied. I should hasten to add that it is possible to intimidate without being rude or disrespectful. For instance, during the entire exchange between my colleague and the two students, he maintained a respectful and dialogic posture. After demanding that they redo the assignment as per his specifications, my colleague still left room for them to critique his critique. To the two students he wrote: "I'll try to do a quick review of [your November draft] so you can…critique [my] critique for the December weekend."

Situations such as the two just described occur quite frequently. Colleagues have related to me horror stories of very disruptive racist or sexist students whom they have literally had to shut up. In 1996 I witnessed a situation (in post-apartheid South Africa) in which we (a group of educators) were escorted at gun point from a white farmer's property. Our crime? We were seeking to gain information from his black (low literate) workers concerning their literacy needs so that we might develop relevant programs to meet those needs. Our research endeavor (which was effectively thwarted) happened on a Sunday, the workers' only day off.

I fail to see how justice could have been served in this and similar situations without the use of some form of intimidation. Situations such as this one are becoming quite commonplace. The spate of violent and fatal hate crimes North Americans have been witnessing recently in schools and universities testify to the fact that situations such as I encountered in South Africa may soon repeat itself in North America's otherwise tranquil halls of learning. In these situations of fierce conflict, justice demands that educators (through, at least, some mild form of intimidation) try to restrain the disruptive elements.

Manipulation

To manipulate is to control the action or course of another by cunning, craft, skill, artfulness, dexterity, and so on. People manipulate when—through deception, posturing, fencing, concealment, misinformation, and so forth—they deny others the resources (knowledge, skills, material resources, etc.) they would otherwise use to frustrate our cause. Most people have probably engaged (at one time or another) in some form of manipulation. However, few openly admit that manipulation could ever be ethical. To make such public admission one would have to be an advocate of situational ethics (i.e., one would have to firmly believe that the ends justify the means). In my experience as a teacher, not many people seem willing to make such public admission.

But our reticence concerning the matter in no way detracts from our actions. Which one of us will hesitate to use deception to prevent thugs from killing our loved ones? Which one of us will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, to our enemies when we are quite confident that they will use that knowledge to hurt and harm us? Who among us will provide resources to people we know will use those same resources to hurt our family and friends? If we were honest, we would all admit that we do (or will) manipulate others when the situation demands. My hope is that this discussion might make my readers realize that sometimes it is necessary and okay to manipulate. For if we admit that manipulation is sometimes ethical, we will seek ways to be better at it. And I maintain that we need to perfect our manipulative strategies and tactics if we are going to thwart the perpetrators of injustices. Below I illustrate a situation in which our failure (as educators) to manipulate became quite counter-productive.

In 1996 I was involved in a project aimed, ultimately, at cleaning up and re-developing an area of Chicago's south side. The area had been ravaged by chemical/industrial pollution and urban out-migration. The partners involved in the project included a consortium of community based organizations and non-governmental agencies representing disaffected Chicago south side communities; my university and another university; and a number of federal, state, and local governmental agencies.

According to the grant proposal (which was funded by the United States Department of Education), our task there as educators (there were several of us working on this project) was to assist community groups "to organize and implement a leadership development program...through non-formal adult education to train community citizens...." Very early on, it became clear to us that the community was quite divided. Some groups were interested in

long-term sustainable development; some in short-term employment generation; some merely in stopping the hemorrhage (chemical pollution) that was poisoning their children and devaluing their properties; and still others, merely in increasing their economic and political power base. Added to the confusion were the government agencies who were more intent on controlling the money and decisions than in truly partnering with the communities.

Into this maelstrom I found myself trying to please everyone (I was acting as one of the lead facilitators on this project). My liberal humanist sensibilities prevented me from taking a stance with the group I had come to realize was most committed to the community's long-term interest. Ruth (a pseudonym), the director of the group, urged me to cast my lot with her but I would have none of it. As an "independent facilitator" I was supposed to stay neutral and (through consultations) bring all parties together. To take a stance with Ruth and her group meant that I would have to go "undercover" sometimes; conceal information sometimes; fence, posture, in a word— manipulate. But I was too much of a liberal humanist to engage in such funny stuff. Trying to stay neutral, however, I succeeded only in playing into the hands of the government officials (and their lackeys in the community). They played me like a fiddle, pretending in public to be conciliatory, but wheeling and dealing in private. Ruth knew this and would warn me about how gullible I was. I did not listen to her. By the time I had left the project to take a job in another state, the government officials and their lackeys in the community had seized complete control, and had virtually given the project's oversight to some of the same people who were responsible for the pollution in the first place. Ruth and her group are still struggling with the bastards. To Ruth's credit, she still talks to me and keeps me abreast from time to time of what is going on.

As professors (and graduate students) from a university with a good reputation in the community, we did have some limited power in that situation. But to use it effectively meant that we would have had to be manipulative—something our humanist sensibilities could not stomach at that time. And, because we were morally above such "unethical practices," we were played like fiddles, while the government officials continued their mischief, virtually unchallenged. Ruth laughs at me every now and then when we talk about this on the phone. I can laugh at myself now too. But I hope I learned something: that I ought not (indeed cannot) be neutral; that sometimes I have to take a stand; and that when I take a stand it might mean I have to engage in some form of manipulation—some fencing, posturing,

concealment, maneuvering, misinformation, and even all-out deception as the case demands, if I hope to deal effectively with the perpetrators of injustices.

Concluding Remarks and Way Forward

I began this article with the assumption that social injustices exist partly because of the actions or inactions of human beings. I do not ascribe social injustices, entirely, to the givenness of technological roller coasters euphemistically called market forces, economic cycles, information revolutions, demographic shifts, and so on. I do not deny oppressive socials structures; in fact, one of my goals is to change them. However, to do so requires that I identify the human actors behind these oppressive structures and try to coercively restrain them. It matters little whether oppressive structures are wittingly or unwittingly maintained. Coercive restraint is necessary as long as these oppressive structures continue to do grievous harm. Coercive restraint is measured coercion: force appropriate in form and in severity; force that matches the level of conflict. Adult educators seem hesitant to coerce anyone. This may be because our liberal humanist moorings render all forms and expressions of coercion, ipso facto, evil. I believe that such a romantic orientation is misguided; that indeed, sometimes coercion is our most prudent and ethical response to social injustices. Theses prudent responses, I have argued, range from mild forms of manipulation, through intimidation, to the use of credible force.

The alleviation of social injustices requires more than a pedagogy of coercive restraint. Dykstra and Law (1994) suggest that it demands vision, critical pedagogy, and a pedagogy of mobilization. For a pedagogy of mobilization they identify four moments: (a) organizing and building, (b) continuing participation, (c) political action, and (d) coalition and network building. My pedagogy of coercive restraint is an attempt to flesh out Dykstra and Law's third moment—political action. Their discussion of political action merely hints at what is possible. Appropriating Bailey (1974) they write: "As an educative process [political action] encourages a greater willingness to use conflict and [to] challenge authority" (Dykstra & Law, p. 125; Bailey, p. 17). I interpret this statement as a tacit endorsement of coercive restraint. But the statement reveals nothing about the forms and severity of coercive strategies Dykstra and Law might authorize, and under what conditions. In this essay, I have tried to fill in the blanks by arguing for the use of manipulation, intimidation, and credible force as the level of conflict demands.

Some obvious lines of inquiry are suggested here. First, adult educators need a more thorough-going analysis of the literature to shed better light on

our position(s) regarding the use of coercive restraints as appropriate pedagogical strategies. I suspect that adult educators are tacitly endorsing coercion when they employ terms such as *struggle, resistance,* or *legitimate teacher authority*. Those who choose to undertake such reviews have to read between the lines. Second, we should try to gain a greater appreciation of how rank and file adult educators view this issue. Via carefully crafted ethnographic research, cases studies, and other empirical research we should try to answer such questions as: Under what conditions do rank and file adult educators authorize and use coercive restraint? What forms and severity of coercive measures do adult educators consider appropriate, under what conditions? How do adult educators explain and justify their use of coercive restraint? How do contexts and active positionalities frame the ways in which adult educators understand and employ coercive restraint? The goal, ultimately, is to build a theory that can legitimize and guide our use of coercive restraint. Those of us who are committed to alleviating social injustices could surely use such a theory.

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