importance of community). In fact such inclusion is crucial. While McIlroy and Westwood situate Williams in the context of his work as an adult educator, they also stress that this is only part of the picture. Raymond Williams saw education in terms of its broader social implications. Education was an aspect of culture and an informed, critical culture was central to the "long revolution" that would, he believed, help create a more humane and genuinely democratic society.

There are lessons here as well. Currently in Canada we face a situation in which publicly funded cultural institutions (schools, universities, libraries, publishing and broadcasting, to name only a few), are being either privatized or starved to death. The next time we hear (yet another) politician assert that there is simply no more money, we may want to recall the words of Raymond Williams:

> Any existing economic system is the expression of real preferences... [attention] must be turned to these actual preferences and not to an arbitrary argument in terms of total production, which obscures the real choices we are making or underwriting (p. 240).

Arguments for fiscal restraint may conceal choices that are actually ideological and adult educators, among others, need to challenge the underlying assumptions of these arguments. As McIlroy and Westwood remind us:

> Adult education, too, has felt the winds of privatisation, commercialisation and the market economy. The emphasis is not on the public education Williams espoused—despite the crying need for it—but on education seen as a consumption good or help up the vocational ladder. Courses about work proliferate, but are centred on professional techniques, not the social and personal meanings of work. His "Industrial Trainers" are in the saddle; his "Old Humanists" and "Public Educators" are embattled. But they are still battling; [and] a glance at the curriculum of adult education shows that the game is far from up! (p. 19)

In some ways, the "long revolution" that Raymond Williams spoke of has never seemed farther away. But *Border Country* reminds us that we are not without "resources of hope". This is Raymond Williams' legacy to adult education.

**Patricia Hughes-Fuller**
University of Alberta

## *BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF DIFFERENCE.*

William G. Tierney (1993). Toronto: OISE Press

Tierney's book positioning higher education in the twenty-first century is part of the *Critical Studies in Education and Culture Series* edited by Henry A. Giroux and Paulo Freire. In introducing this work, Giroux says, "For Tierney, theory is...a borderland where conversations begin, differences confront each other, hopes are initiated, and social struggles are waged" (p. ix). With these

words Giroux has framed Tierney's journey into uncertainty in which this Penn State academic asks all of us who have a stake in higher education to "create a politics of difference that places every institutional member in a new location with regard to cultural identity" (p. 148). Tierney states his purpose is to develop the ideas of critical postmodernism as a framework for an elemental analysis of postsecondary education. He begins his task by examining "five axes of contention that underscore the differences between postmodernism and critical theory" (p. 4). He builds his "theoretical scaffolding" (p. 3) emphasizing that "critical theory's advocacy for empowerment needs to be fused with the postmodern notion of difference" (p. 10). Essentially, Tierney seeks to incorporate postmodern notions of multivocality and difference into structures built by critical theory to enhance empowerment and democracy.

Tierney uses critical postmodernism as a "paradigm to critique and to think about organizational life" (p. 90). On a base level, I find myself comforted, even seduced, by his way of thinking about what universities could be like. I agree that we must work to decenter norms in order to make visible "identities and voices that have been silenced and dispossessed" (p. 41). I like his framework that uses difference as an organizing concept. I concur, "An educational process concerned with empowerment needs to engage students so that they are able to learn about themselves by coming to terms with the 'Other', with those who may be quite different" (p. 41). However his preoccupation with hope and agape (selfless love)—ethereal terms he does not satisfactorily define—eroded my initial feelings of joy and contentment. His words, tempered as they are by his idealism, create a picture of higher education in the next century that treats the realities of the past like blurred negatives cast in a box in the attic. Consequently, he fails to adequately address his central question, "How do we create understandings across differences so that we are able to acknowledge and honor one another, rather than bring into question one another's legitimacy?" (p. 27). His critique fills me with thoughts of what can be, rather than with thoughts of what we can do. At the end of his book, I still wonder how I can translate dialogue into action.

This translation is the central struggle, and Tierney knows it. He says a critical postmodernist must "enable individuals to utilize their voices in defining communal values" (p. 76). He highlights that a community of difference is "in constant negotiation, dialogue, and reformulation" (p. 140). Yet, while Tierney leads me to envision a community of difference as a dynamic social entity, he does not posit how I am to move from awareness through dialogue to action that challenges the power of the norm. It may be as he concludes, "Critical postmodernism leaves us perhaps with as many questions as it answers, and it should" (p. 158).

Tierney is substantive in other ways though. He provides contrasting descriptions of several American colleges and universities, outlining and analyzing a collage of problems. He presents the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals; he lets them speak about their fears, their exclusion, and the ways in which they have been silenced and dispossessed. He lets them

tell their own stories in a way that invites the reader to listen, to reflect, and to understand. However, Tierney only presents those I have come to call the mainstream marginalized—gay men, lesbians, Native Americans, and women. All groups have made inroads in developing voices and fighting the power of the norm. I acknowledge that their struggles continue. However in limiting his discussion to these groups, Tierney does not acknowledge the dynamics of marginalization in the North American context, a dynamics that has created the new marginalized. Many immigrant groups fall into this category. Declining economic conditions and the rise of right wing conservatism have manifested in a critique of immigration that has forced many Asians, Eastern Europeans, and others to the fringe of North American consciousness. It is no longer enough for any author to acknowledge the subjugation of the traditionally marginalized; co-existence in a critical postmodern sense requires that we be aware of the dynamics of marginalization that create new silent voices. Such awareness is crucial to any reconfiguration of norms required to reposition all who are marginalized.

As a critical postmodernist, Tierney calls on us to focus "on the structural relations of power in an organization and on how reality is constructed" (p. 102). I found Tierney's own focus aberrant in this regard. Firstly, his earlier noted preoccupation with ideals of hope and agape seems to distance Tierney from any real consideration of how reality is constructed. He himself states, "The concept of hope is helpful in providing meaning and a basis for action, but it neither tells us how to act, nor how to communicate across differences; it also suggests commonalities where none may be possible" (p. 23). Secondly, while he allows us to hear the voices and the experiences of the marginalized, he fails to present us with sufficient critique of the privileged in his discussions of identity and difference. He should have included more than a tangential discussion of the roles of the State and the New Right in influencing directions taken by postsecondary institutions. He should have focused more clearly on the structural relations of power in organizations as pat of a process of clarifying how we are to move from awareness to action in the reconfiguration of norms. Has it ever been enough to hope? Can Tierney really expect that those at the center will universally operate from a belief in agape? Why in 1994 must we still cling to deals? Why have we not been able to build his communities of difference? Why is there still so much injustice? Why are there so many people in need? Why do we have the new marginalized in democracies like Canada and the United States? Perhaps Tierney would have done better to spend more time explaining these realities, rather than promoting his ideals.

Tierney has left me with many questions to answer and with the desire to explore the depths of critical postmodernism. On this level he has succeeded as a critical postmodern writer. I still believe that his challenges to recognize difference, engage in dialogue, and honor difference provide in fine modus operandi for those of us who wish to build communities of difference. However, Tierney leaves us with so many processual questions. How do we build a community of difference? Substantially, Tierney has not answered this question.

I wish he had grounded his idealism in practical discussion designed to help elucidate how we might create postsecondary institutions founded on agape. At this point he has left me wondering how to translate awareness into action. For now, building a community of difference will remain transcendent in my lived experience.

**Andre P. Grace**
Dalhousie University