A CRITICAL ECOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY FOR EDUCATIONAL INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

In furthering the critical discourse of educational inquiry the
metatheories in the social sciences of Anthony Giddens and Brian
Fay are developed here to question environmental education, but
are of equal relevance to other human development issues-oriented
curriculum. Of particular interest is the foregrounding of
ontological considerations in curriculum inquiry, thus announcing
a point of departure from the usual stress on epistemological
concerns. Concentrating on the day to day actions and
interactions of learners provides the experiential fodder for the
ontological twist proposed for educational inquiry of a critical
nature. This twist, arguably, provides an important avenue for
examining the ethical and political "horizons" currently hazed in
educational discourses by the mood surrounding the
modern:postmodern debate.

    Environmentalism, let alone its institutional applications
such as in education, is eloquent testimony to Clifford Geertz's
observations about the changing fortunes of grand idees.
 For a historical account of environmentalism see Richard Grove,
"The Origins of Environmentalism", Nature, 345 (1990): 11-14.
"Sustainability" is now replacing "ecologism" and

"environmentalism" while "conservation" is used rarely. Geertz
notes that the bursting on the scene of big ideas proposed to
resolve fundamental problems is typically accompanied by those
"sensitive and active" minds who turn to exploiting the idea.
Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Culture (New York: Basic
Books, 1973). According to Geertz the idea becomes less popular
or exhausted as its analysis becomes all too familiar within
existing theoretical frameworks. Some "zealots" persist with the
big idea while "others" devote their energies to the problems
created by the exploitation of the initial idea.

   At about the same time Geertz was commenting on the fate of
important ideas "environmental education" emerged formally in
educational discourses and practices Discourses are "what is said

and written and passes for more or less orderly thought and
exchange of ideas." Discourses, as contextually and culturally
regulated, are relative to time and place. Practices are those
educational activities performed on a regular basis and for the
most part governed formally by rules and regulations and
informally by unstated conventions, expectations, customs, and
habits. Practices, therefore, are conventional but potentially
unstable. Discourses contribute significantly but not totally to
practices. Practices can be partially or fully enacted
discourses but contingently open to teachers' and learners'
dispositions, positioning, circumstances, or "situatedness."
Cleo Cherryholmes, Power and Criticism: Poststructural
Investigations in Education (New York: Teachers College Press,
1988), 2. as the new savior to the fall of "nature studies,"
"conservation education," and the like. While the term nature
studies was widely used in Australian educational circles prior
to the 1970's the idea and practices of "conservation education"
did not enjoy the limelight to the extent it did in the USA.
Given predictions in the late 1970's that environmental education
in the USA would suffer a fate similar to that of conservation
education it is not surprising that Geertz's observations relate
directly to the emergence of a range of different discourses
about environmental education in the early 1980's. These
discourses are examined here. Since the late 1970's the path of
environmental education has been a difficult one, if not an idea
tortured. Discourse genres typically focus on pedagogical,
curriculum, organizational, and research concerns, reflect
technocentric or ecocentric ideologies and tend to be framed in
positivist, interpretivist, or critical paradigms. John Fien,
Education For The Environment: Critical Curriculum Theorising and
Environmental Education (Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press,
1993). Ian Robottom and Paul Hart, Research in Environmental
Education: Engaging the Debate (Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University
Press, 1993). Between these two texts a sound overview of
different perspectives or orientations of environmental education

can be gleaned. The exploitation and fragmentation of an idea, particularly those that are always tested in practices such as curriculum and pedagogical work, is to be expected. Ivor F. Goodson (ed.), Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study (London: The Falmer Press, 1985); Thomas S. Popkewitz, A Political Sociology of Educational Reform (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991). In the wake of apparent unrealized aspirations, unrealistic expectations, definitional problems, and various other contradictions of a moral, social, and political nature the legitimacy and efficacy of environmental education is not challenged directly here. Questions must be asked, however, about the propensity for environmental educators to cogently and coherently advance individual and collective solutions to the problems and issues they purport to deal with.

In North America Bill Pinar and Chet Bowers conclude that despite the great achievements of critical educational theory to understand curriculum as a political text its scholars have neglected the ecological crisis, it being the "central issue" now confronting critical scholarship. William F. Pinar and Chet A. Bowers, "Politics of Curriculum: Origins, Controversies, and Significance of Critical Perspectives" in Review of Research in Education 18, ed. G. Grant (Washington: American Educational Research Association, 1992), 163-190. Meanwhile in Australia there has been a concerted effort over the past fifteen years to develop a critical praxis in environmental education curriculum. In Geertz's terms this discourse may well amount to a reconciliation of the problems created by the fragmentation of

the idea environmental education. The intention in this essay is to pursue recent developments in critical curriculum theorizing signalled
by John Fien. Fien, "Education for the Environment," 87. Fien suggests Anthony Giddens' "theory of structuration" satisfies the criteria for a social action theory appropriate to critical curriculum theorizing and environmental education. Elsewhere, Fien utilizes Fay's account of critical social science to conceptually frame his theorizing about "pathways to sustainability." John Fien (ed.), Environmental Education: A Pathway to Sustainability (Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press, 1993). How Fien appropriates Fay's work has a significant impact on theorizing and practicing environmental education. Some problems will be identified later in context. I will elaborate Fien's proposal and detail how Giddens' and Fay's social theorizing, with detailed appraisals, can advance the critical discourse of educational inquiry, with environmental education exemplified.

Consistent with Giddens' and Fay's respective turns to ontological considerations for explanation in critical social science the twist in curriculum inquiry I pursue here is captured

neatly in Robert Brown's assessments of Max van Manen's contribution to phenomenological research in education. Of particular interest is what he refers to as the "misunderstanding of theory." Robert K. Brown, "Max van Manen and Pedagogical Human Science Research," in Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructed Text, ed. William F. Pinar and William M. Reynolds, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992). 44-63.

Says Brown,

Instead of approaching pedagogical practices directly in the original context of the lived experience, the majority of educational theorists are satisfied with manipulative reconstitutions of experience.

To which Brown adds,

This failure (of practically all modern curriculum theorists) occurs because research into curriculum theory developmentÑ is seen as an epistemological--not ontological--inquiry...Good curriculum theory, or curriculum theory of the good, helpsÑ us as pedagogues build a place, or edifice, for students to experience being-in-the-world in all its dynamic variances.

     The thrust of this inquiry is both simple and complex at the same time. Ontologically speaking, conventional day-to-day actions and interactions comprise "patterns of being" which should be the experiential "fodder" of curriculum and pedagogical practices in human development and issues-related education (such as environmental, health, physical, multicultural, citizenship, drug, technology, and social education). More difficult to grapple withÑ in curriculum inquiry is how those patterns of being are inscribed by dispositions, habits, social arrangements, relations and conditions which are mediated temporally, spatially, and symbolically by various historical, social, material, and cultural realities.   A premise of raising the ante of "original" or "authentic" ontological considerations in curriculum inquiry is that educational "experiences" are all too often contrived instrumentally so as to validate particular interests and disciplinary claims for epistemologically and

methodologically superior vantage points.
   John Dewey crystallizes this point well when he states, "Thus sects arise: schools of opinion. Each selects that set of conditions that appeal to it; and then erects them into a complete and independent truth, instead of treating them as a factor in a problem, needing adjustment." John Dewey, The Child and the Curriculum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956),

3. Richard Kraft, for example, laments the rise in experiential education of instrumental reason and the search for the best technique. Kraft believes there is a "crisis" in the theory and practice of experiential education which, givenÑ the pedagogical importance of experiential approaches to environmental education, exacerbates the difficulties of the idea. Of particular concern for Kraft is the demise of Dewey's progressive democratic social vision and Hahn's moral imperatives. Richard J. Kraft, "Guest Editorial: A Call to Action and Reflection," The Journal of Experiential Education 4, no. 1, (1981): 5-7.

Again, for the purpose of introducing the notion of a critical ontology Brown is useful in articulating the critical component of curriculum inquiry.

His (van Manen's) argument (that phenomenology is a 'philosophy of action' well suited to radically reforming educational practice) is that phenomenology, because of its ontologically oriented methodology, provokes serious and original thinking about the world. It raises radical questions concerning preconceived ideas of what it is to be-in-the-world and what is the nature of truth. A deeper understanding of the lifeworld of the student through phenomenological research precipitates a greater likelihood of one actively articulating questions and dissent concerning ideas and programs that violate the good of the student. (emphasis mine)

The intention of developing Giddens' structuration theory and Fay's metatheory of critical social science is to derive questions for curriculum inquiry in environmental education. Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradictions in Social Analysis (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1979); Anthony Giddens, The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1984); Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Anthony Giddens, Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991): Brian Fay, Social Theory and Political Practice (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975): Brian Fay, Critical Social Science: Liberation and Its Limits (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). It is strategic. By concluding with a seriesÑ of questions that the environmental educator can consider in relation to his or her own curriculum and pedagogical practices the aim is to foreground those original contexts of learners' lives and actions that can be scrutinized individually and collectively for their environmental antecedents and consequences. The set of questions derived have an eye to Van Mannen's "good," that is the nexus of political and ethical consequences of curriculum and pedagogical action. Whilst I will

not concern myself directly with a tension evident in
environmental education discourses, that of the postmodern:modern
debate, the selection of Giddens and Fay appeals to finding a way
through that dilemma. The inclusion of Fay's metatheorizing
seeks to clarify some theoretical exclusions acknowledged by

Giddens in responding to his critics.
Ontology as a key idea in inquiry
      Before proceeding to an account of how Giddens and Fay can
inform curriculum inquiry in environmental education some
clarification of key concepts is required; least of all to
describe the term "ontology" whose meaning in educational
discourses is elusive and rarely explained in contextually
appropriate ways. Additional justifications for including
ontological considerations are also outlined. In short, the
meaning of ontology is deftly characterized by the sayings
"creatures of habit" and "actions speak louder than words." The
inclusion of ontological considerations in curriculum inquiry
proposed here signals a renewed emphasis on the everyday
experiences of individuals and groups. To do so, I believe,
enhances critical curriculum and pedagogical work in issues-
related areas. There can be no doubting the ecological crisis
and other human development related issues are socially embedded
and individually embodied in the integrating conditions of one's
ordinary "being," or existence. That is, environmental problems
and issues reside in the patterns of being in private and public
life. I am reluctant to use the term "ecological crisis" for
reasons which become clearer shortly. The term perpetuates the
idea that environmental problems and issues are removed from
those who create them. "Problems" typically relate to adverse
effects on the environment while "issues" pertain to the
processes enacted between individuals or groups to resolve the
problem. Each of the terms are suggestive of a reactive response
to environmental responsibility and accountability.   Excavating
and educatively exploring those mundane but mediated day-to-day
actions, interactions, social relations and conditionsÑ of
individual and social experience is one way of unearthing the
persistent roots of the ecological crisis. Nevertheless by
prioritizing what it is to "be-in-the-world" associated
existential concepts like "original" and "authentic" must be
treated with some caution if they carry an essential or
foundational view of what it is to be human. And, to rely
primarily on speaking authentically about experiences tends to
devalue the body as a mode of praxis fundamentalÑ to
understanding the politics of identity and reconstitution of
social life.   The outlining of an ontology for curriculum
inquiry presented above locates its contextualized meanings in
the situated, embodied, and embedded actions of individuals and
groups. For example, the eating of an apple, as a conventional

action and event of which more will be said in mobilizing the term "conditions" for curriculum inquiry, might involve the ingestion of certain pesticides and hence, the residue of a high technology industry and its supporting infrastructure. While eating the apple is "basic" the experience is neither original nor authentic, particularly if this action, along with others over time, place, and space, contributes to consequences such as colon cancer. If not already obvious this contextualist perspective of ontology invokes the educational probability of examining various moral, social, and political dimensions of ecological problems and issues.

Furthermore, placing ontological considerations at the forefront of curriculum inquiry has, if the above example holds, the propensity to deal with dualistic thinking and values hierarchies which historically have privileged the mind over and against the body as well as distancing the world (and its ecological crises) from the self. In environmental education, for example, the case for including ontological considerations in curriculum inquiry is heightened by the commentary of its

practitioners. Respectively, C. E. Roth, "The Endangered Phoenix--Lessons from the Firepit," The Journal of Environmental Education 19, no. 3, (1988): 3-9; L. M. Gigliotti, "Environmental Education: What Went Wrong? What Can be Done?" The Journal of Environmental Education 22, no. 1, (1990): 9-12; and L. A. Iozzi, "What Research Says to the Educator. Part two. Environmental Education and the Affective Domain," The Journal of Environmental Education 20, no. 4, (1989): 6-13; A. E. Wals, A. Beringer and W. B. Stapp, "Education in Action: A Community Problem- Solving Program for Schools," The Journal of Environmental Education 21, no. 4, (1990): 13-19. There is a loose consensus that many learners do not understand, or are not prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for environmentally responsible behaviors, or do not understand the consequences of their actions for the environment. Extrapolating these views suggests the syndrome of the ecological crisis existing "out there somewhere" persists--astute teachers and students only have to find it, or be made awareÑ of it, investigate the problem thus fixing it and saving the environment. Whilst this is not necessarily inappropriate an ontological twist is one way of redeeming dualistic thinking and associated values hierarchies--be it the cartesianism implicit in the syndrome mentioned above, or the socially disconnected individualism and unencumbered self-determinism of the disembodied rational and autonomous self. In educational theory and practice the split of curriculum and pedagogy might well be mended.

Curriculum Theorizing and Environmental Education

John Fien's project of developing a critical curriculum theory for the environment concludes with a brief indication of

how Anthony Giddens' "theory of structuration" satisfies a number of problems inherent within the field of environmental education. Elsewhere Peter Dickens attempt to develop a "green social theory" draws heavily on Giddens. Dickens pays particular attention to Giddens account of time-space distanciation which will be considered in elaborating Fien's introduction. Peter Dickens, Society and Nature: Towards a Green Social Theory (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). Initially Fien identifies the importance of unearthing the ideological foundations of environmental education. These are characterized as approaches about, through, and for the environment of which Fien concludes the first two deal inadequately with the structural causes of environmental problems and downplayÑ an activist conception of learner outcomes and roles. Fien's second phase of theorizing links the approaches of "about" and "through" the environment with a technical prescription of curriculum and pedagogical practices. Missing from this technocratic perspective is a political orientation. According to Fien a political orientation includes the development of a "critical environmental consciousness, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, an environmental ethic based upon the values of social and ecological sustainability, and the knowledge, skills, and values of political literacy, and critical praxis. Fien, "Education for the Environment," 75. Finally, Fien concludes that a critical curriculum theory for environmental education needs to be based upon "a language of critique and possibility" rather than the more conventional sociology of curriculum that emphasizes reproduction theory.

What needs to be developed is not so much how Giddens' theory of structuration is an appropriate direction for Fien to conclude with but how Giddens' explanations can be elaborated in curriculum if Fien's theorizing were to satisfy Fay's criteria that critical social science, and hence critical curriculum and

pedagogical inquiry in environmental education, must simultaneously be "scientific, critical, practical, and non idealistic." Fay, "Critical Social Science," 24-26; 36-41; 203-215. In citing page 23 of Fay's account of critical social science Fien refers to theÑ need for critical theories which are scientific, critical, and practical only. Fay's criteria for a "properly critical science" include "non-idealism" because historically it has been disregarded in humanist variants of critical social science; a point which Fay's metatheoretical project consciously seeks to rectify. Fien's omission of the criteria of non-idealism is not explained.

Fay and Giddens as mutual edification

Like Giddens, Brian Fay's metatheoretical focus turns to ontological considerations to supplement what he believes is a "one-sidedness" of numerous versions of critical theory. Fay

claims to "lay bare and to assess the foundations of critical
social science." Of specific concern are the presuppositions
about human nature and society.
In addition Fay's metatheorizing asserts social science should be
scientific, critical, practical, and non-idealistic, atÑ the same
time, if it is to explain, criticize, and empower individuals and
collectivities. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 1.

        In utilizing Giddens and Fay to critically theorize
environmental education the notions of "limits," "one-
sidedness," "practicality" and "non-idealism" are imperatives in
curriculum inquiry overlooked by Fien. As will be developed here
Giddens' theorizing is well suited to conceptually "fitting"
Fay's metatheoretical criteria. But before developing this fit
some important preliminary matters demand explanation.

        In general terms, Fay identifies a "basic" scheme of
critical social science. Upon scrutiny of its ontological
presuppositions the basic scheme is found to lack.   It comprises
four main theories which are complex and systematically
interrelated--theories of false consciousness, crisis, education,
and transformative action which are broken down into ten
subtheories. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 31. According to
Fay, this basic scheme embraces three core ideas where each
regulative ideal represents a particular normative commitment.
These commitments are enlightenment with its valuing of rational
self-clarity, empowerment with its valuing of self-determination,
and emancipation that values collective autonomy, and hence
freedom interpreted as happiness. After discussing the relation
of metatheory and theory Fay supplements the basic scheme with
four additional and equally interrelated theories--the body,
tradition, force, and reflexivity which include another ten sub-
theories. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 213. Fay's practical
and non-idealistic "amended scheme" is derived from the view that
the regulative and normative problem of critical social science
lies in its most basic ontological assumptions. Theories,
therefore, need to be less grandiose and more mundane.
Relatively, normatively and practically they need to be "self-
consciously local, particular, situated, experimental, and
physical" bearing in mind "the inherent limitations of reason" to
unravel the mysteries of the human identity where the ecological
sense of interrelatedness is "explicitly aware of the
unpredictable, fragile, and limited character of human
enterprises."

        Fay's critical "acknowledgement" in his amended scheme of
certain themes of postmodernism have major implications for
theorizing and practising critical environmental education. If
the fit of Giddens' corpus and Fay's metatheoretical "criteria"
(that is a conceptual convergence of Giddens' diagnosis of high

modernity and Fay's eight theories) is acceptable then critical

environmental education theorizing should proceed substantively and normatively along that line. Thus, as with his exclusion of "non-idealism" from the scientific, critical, and practical objectivesÑ of critical social science Fien needs to explain why Fay's theories of body, tradition, force, and reflexivity are not included. Fien, "Introduction," in "A Pathway to Sustainability."

     At this self-evident point of departure in theorizing critical environmental education curriculum it is worth noting Fay's reasons for amending the basic scheme with theories of the body, tradition, force and reflexivity--these being significant to the ontological twist being pursued here. That critical social science be practical and non-idealisticÑ at the same time as being scientific and critical is an imperative of Fay's that demands earnest consideration be given the "audience" of critical theories. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 85. In effect how the recipients of critical social science are "educated" and "empowered" by a critical curriculum and pedagogy is increasingly problematic given Giddens' and Fays' acknowledgements of limits to rationality and change seen within the context of a postmodern crisis in representation. Giddens and Fay have alerted us generally to this phenomena. With regard to more detailed theorizing intellectual interchange and extended forms of the self in a technologically saturated and mediated postmodern society the work of Geoff Sharpe stands as an important addition to what is being discussed here. Geoff Sharpe, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," Arena 99/100, (1992): 188-216; Geoff Sharpe, "Extended Forms of the Social" Arena Journal 1, (1992): 221-237. In a similar vein Don Ihde's work is extremely valuable in
understanding the ontological "priority" in phenomenological descriptions and cultural hermeneutics of technology. Don Ihde, Technics and Praxis (Boston, MA.: Reidel, 1979); Don Ihde, Existential Technics (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983); Don Ihde, TechnologyÑ and The Lifeworld: From Garden to Eden (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1990); Don Ihde. Instrumental Realism: The Interface Between Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Technology (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1991).

     Criticized by Fay for its unattainable utopian agenda and questionable regulative ideals is the ontological presupposition in much critical social science of the activist conception of human being. At issue for Fay is its epistemological and normative privileging of unlimited enlightenment through rational self clarity, unobtainable empowerment through individualistic self-determination, unencumbered emancipation through collective autonomy, and non-problematic ethical equation of freedom and happiness. To achieve the criteria of practicality and non-idealism Fay's tempering of these inherently liberal assumptions, expectations, and regulative and normative commitments dwells on a range of factors mitigating rational change, clarity, and

autonomy. According to Fay there are four limits which warrant consideration--epistemological, therapeutic, ethical, and power. Epistemological limits are those factors which prevent rational analysis from yielding information required respectively for self and social understanding. They are consistent with Giddens' critique of "trickle down" reflexivity. First, according to Fay there are various impediments to self understanding which occlude complete and definitive understandings of the identities of people. Second, determinate judgements about how groups or collectivities should act, attain consensus, or organize themselves is problematic. Of particular educational interest is

Fay's criticisms of Habermas's notion of communicative competence and the ideal speech situation. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 188-191. And by osmotic implication, versions of Action Research, which as a research tool of critical social science, is utilized in educational inquiry and participatory research in environmental education. Robottom & Hart, "Research in Environmental Education," but in particular Ian Robottom, "towards Inquiry-Based Professional Development in Environmental Education," in Environmental Education: Practice and Possibility ed. Ian Robottom (Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press, 1987): 83-120. See also Wals, Beringer and Stapp, "Education in Action," 13-18. Therapeutic limits are those barriers which preclude rational reflection from altering a way of behaving or thinking. According to Fay there are features of human existence which are impervious to rational power as therapy. An acknowledgement of epistemological and therapeutic limits suggests ethical limits to the certainty, perhaps chaos, of predicating self and social determination on rationality, clarity, and autonomy. Finally, the ethics limits imply limits to power if the notion of autonomy and ability to self-determine is found to be wanting, hence the ethical notion of happiness emerging from attained freedom is challenged. The rise of "communitarian" philosophy and social theory in particular, and some versions of feminist and environmental ethics, standÑ in contrast to the classical assumptions of liberal ethical theory. See Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study In Moral Theory (Notre Dame,Ñ IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, Second Edition, 1984); Michael Sandel (ed.), Liberalism and Its Critics (New York: New York University Press, 1984); David Rasmussen (ed.), Universalism vs. Communitarianism: Contemporary Debates in Ethics (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1990); Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics (New York: Routledge, 1992).
    To make sense of these limiting factors Fay supplements the basic scheme of critical social science with explanations of the historically embodied, embedded, and opaque nature of our contingent and contested being- individually, socially, and

culturally. Included, therefore, are theories of the body, tradition, force, and reflexivity.Ñ Of particular educational importance and academic interest is Fay's appreciation of the body as providing a more inclusive but rationally problematic "site" for self-understanding and social explanation. Consistent with Giddens stress on the embodied "knowledgeability" of practical consciousness as distinct from discursive consciousness Fay outlines how direct and indirect somatic learning are constitutive of disposition acquisition and identity formation,Ñ and hence their politics. Thus, for Fay and Giddens an ontological inclusion of the body as an important site of explanation for a full bodied theory of action in social inquiry provides a point of departure from the cognitivismÑ of critical social theory and the "linguistic turn" currently so prominent in academic circles. Giddens maintains the body, as the locus of the acting self and as positioned in time-space, is central to the analysis of action and its intended and unintended consequences for reality. His delineation of the unconscious, practical consciousness, and discursive consciousness places practical consciousness at the forefront of social inquiry. Practical consciousness, as a corollary of embodiment and embeddedness, is definedÑ by Giddens as what actors "know" or "believe" about social conditions, especially their own, but cannot express discursively. Giddens, "The Constitution of Society," 6, 41, 375. The superficiality Fay aligns with the

fullest social explanations resting essentially on the interiorization
of discursive rules or distinctions which lie beneath them is supported by Sharp's concern about the prominence of linguistic models as bridging across situations in poststructural attempts to frame the social. Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social," 229. While interactions of communication, modes of interpretative schemes, and structures of signification are important in Giddens' theorizing elsewhere he has concluded poststructuralism, as a "vaguer appellation" of thought, has been unable to generate satisfactory accounts of human agency. Anthony Giddens, "Structuralism, Post- structuralism and the Production of Culture" in Social Theory Today ed. Anthony Giddens & Jonathan Turner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987): 195-223. Without downplaying
the importance of language and its social constitutions it would appear the adage "actions speak louder than words" is a view Giddens holds to and is subscribed to by Fay.
    The "disciplining" of bodies, both individual and collective, is a phenomena embedded historically by tradition and determinatively by authoritative force. Fay finds it ethically inappropriate that humans can deprive tradition of its power over them, particularly the inherited endowment of bygone days and

ways of life of which many are held to be sacrosanct in the
present and the future. Fay challenges the Cartesian propensity
that ones existence, in toto, can be questioned, that one's
inheritance can be objectified and detached which, for rational
scrutiny, is illusory. Ñ For Fay the disregard of people's
traditions can have terrible consequences in that they belong to
a tradition as much as it belongs to them; that identities are
inextricably tied to cultural traditions and legacies. But in
acknowledging tradition and its embedding/embodying tendencies
Fay, as is Giddens, are not radical or cultural conservatives.
Presumably in reference to "open-ended" Western societies Fay
maintains that being part of a tradition permits affirmation and
rejection of certain aspects of that tradition. Traditions are
cultivated, transmuted, embraced, recombined, and created; they
can not be separated off from those individual and collective
identities whom, according to some critical theories, can elect
to reject or cast off tradition. Traditions, embedded and
embodied in habituated actions, rituals, roles, folklore, myths,
religions and other cultural moraise, including historical
perceptions of the environment provide definite limits to
rational change. Accordingly "progressive" versions of critical
social science, as Fay understands, must incorporate tradition
theoretically, practically, and non-idealistically into its
domain.   Giddens' understanding of tradition is viewed from
within the context of high modernity's disembedding mechanisms.
The increasing irrelevance of time, space, and place in
technologically mediated high modernity effectively "lifts out"
traditional social relations from local communities and their
contexts and "reembeds" or stretches them globally. Individuals
are surely global passengers; the notion of community as has
historically been understood must be held in abeyance, while the
adage "think globally act locally" takes on new, and problematic,
meanings. But surely not as passengers deserving equal blame for
the ecological crisis individually, socially, nationally,
culturally, and geographically as Enzensburger correctly
criticizes in regard to the oft deployed spaceship earth analogy,
used characteristically in education. Ñ Hans Magnus Enzensburger,
Raids and Reconstructions: Essays in Politics, Crime, and Culture
(London: Pluto Press, 1976), 253. Giddens assessment of threats

to traditions contrasts with other views that posit modernity as
progressively refining established and traditional activities in
personal and social actions. According to Giddens' concept of
disembedding the "openness" of high modernity leads to choosing
from a variety of possible futures that are then reorganized as
reflexive knowledge of the present, but is often counterfactual
to tradition. The reflexivityÑ of high modernity "colonizes the
future" for the present, creating a conflict of past, present,
and future that adds to the phenomenal tension of ontological

security and existential anxiety. This tension underscores what Giddens refers to as the "return of the repressed" and the subsequent charge for a morality of authenticity. Giddens' use of these terms indicates a resurgence of interest in reclaiming the moral in response to existential matters rather than permitting the ongoing sequestration of experience. Among other things, the return of the repressed is an aspect of life politics that seeks reflexively to reengage with some past traditions and rituals. Some versions of environmentalism and environmental education espouse a solution of "back to the future" -- a problematic which,Ñ to date, has escaped critical scrutiny, least of all in education theory. Stanley touches on some of the issues in his discussion of curriculum, reconstruction, and possibility when he outlines the transformation/transmission dichotomy. But his views are couched more in questions about the maintenance of selected traditions, a point which Giddens and Fay agree on. William B. Stanley, Curriculum for Utopia: Social Reconstructionism and Critical Pedagogy in the Postmodern Era (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 191. Much on the question of progressive and conservative tendencies can be gained from the exchanges between Maxine Greene and Peter McLaren, on one hand, and Chet Bowers, on the other. Chet A. Bowers, "An Open Letter to Maxine Greene on The problem of Freedom in an Era of Ecological Interdependence," Educational Theory 41, no. 3, (1991): 325-331. ChetÑ A. Bowers, "Some Questions About the Anachronistic Elements in the Giroux-McLaren Theory of a Critical Pedagogy," Curriculum Inquiry 21, no. 2, (1992): 239-251; Chet A. Bowers, "Critical Pedagogy and the Arch of Social dreaming: A Response to the Criticisms of Peter McLaren," Curriculum Inquiry 21, no. 4, (1992): 479-487; Peter McLaren, "The Emptiness of Nothingness: Criticisms as Imperial Anti-Politics," Curriculum Inquiry 21, no. 4, (1992): 459-477. In some educational circles there is support for the idea that lapsed, discarded, or rejected traditions can selectively be redeemed, or appropriated from indigenous cultures, to fix ecological problems of "our" making. This standpoint raises a varietyÑ of moral, social, and political concerns. See for example, McClellan Hall and G. Owen Crouch, "The Use in Experiential Education of Ceremonies and Rituals from Native American Cultures," The Journal of Experiential Education 15, no. 1, (1992): 51-55; Gordon W. A. Oles, "Borrowing Activities from Another Culture: A Native American's Perspective," The Journal of Experiential Education 15, no. 3, (1992): 20-22.   Giddens appreciates the protective "cocoon" of traditions, habits, language, and of small communities that develop ontological security are broken down in the face of increasing existential anxiety arising from the "juggernaut of high modernity." For Giddens, orality and tradition are inextricably connected to one another. But, beyond the "evanescence" of the spoken word high modernity undercuts

traditions, customs, and other established patterns of social activity and relations. Notably, however, Giddens states that tradition, not habit, does have remnants of a binding normative

and authoritative character that often resist the technical powers of high modernity. According to Giddens there are residues of morality within the fixity of traditions that provide some coordination of the past and the present. Giddens, "Modernity and Self-Identity," 145, 202.

What becomes apparent in Fay and Giddens assertions of the historical embodiment and embeddedness of individuals and collectivities is the contingent nature of what it is to be human and what the conditions of existence have been, are, and will be. The epistemological, therapeutic, ethical, and force limits Fay attaches to the activist conception of human beings with its valuing of rational self-clarity and collective autonomy, and the inevitabilityÑ of happiness, demands reconsideration of the practicality and ideals of critical theories. Fay concludes that its fundamental values are inadequate to serve as regulative ideals from which judgements about social arrangements and progress can be made let alone how such ideals can be instantiated in social practices. Fay, "Critical Social Science," 166. The opacity, rather than transparency, of social life and the construction of a unified self or social narrative all point to the indeterminacy of the "new" social sciences mentioned earlier by Bohman. The "anticipatory narratives" Fay proposes are to be constructed on the basis of hoping people pragmatically interpret "patterns" of actions in making practically wise decisions with appropriate consequences. The established idea of a "genuine narrative" with its aggregating of discrete and identifiable intentions into a non-contingent prescription and prediction of social life is rejected by Fay. MacIntyre's notion of a "narrative concept of selfhood" where narratives are embedded in narratives is an important adumbration of Fay's concept of narrativity. MacIntyre, "After Virtue," 204-225. Fay's supplementation of the basis scheme of critical social science with theories of the body, tradition, force and reflexivity posit a different character and aspirations for critical theories, including those of education and curriculum. If Fay's metatheoretical argumentation is acceptable, partially or wholly, resulting theories will need to be self- conscious, local, particular, situated, experimental, and physical. Seen within Fay's metatheoretical framework, and with clarification, Giddens' explanations of high modernity and theory of structuration underwrite a more detailed, but sensitizing, theorizing of environmental education curriculum--scientifically, critically, practically, and non- idealistically, at the same time.

A Matrix of Giddens' and Fay's Major Concepts

GIDDENS' (1984, 90, 91)FAY (1987)CONCEPT

PRINCIPLE/THEORY/METATHEORYREGULATIVE-Sequestration of experience
DIMENSIONPROPOSITIONCRITERIAAND-Commonsense
NORMATIVE
VALUES

Existential anxietySelfFalse ConsciousnessHappiness as-Multilayered
democratic
-disembedding mechanismsRisk Societyfreedomparticipation
-reflexive modernity-Post-scarcity system
-Demilitarization
-Humanization of technology

-Growth of totalitarianSelfCrisisEnlightenment-New knowledge
powerRisk Society-Life politics
-Collapse of economic-Politicization of local/global
growth mechanisms-emancipatory politics
-Nuclear warfare of large-
scale war
-Ecological decay/disaster

Ontological securityActionEducationRational-New knowledge
Social movementsSocial Changeself-clarity,-Free speech/democratic
collective movements
autonomy,-Labor movements
empowerment-Peace movements
-Ecological movements

-Social integrationDialectic ofTransformative ActionActivity,-
Unconsciousness/practical
-Social movementscontrolself- consciousness
Action determination,-Mutual knowledge
Social changecollective
autonomy,

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liberation

Ontological securityActionBodyEmbodiment,-Practical consciousness/
SelfEmbeddedness, unconsciousness
Opacity-Mutual knowledge
Rational-Contextualization
disagreement-Societal totalities
-Allocative Resources

Ontological securitySelfTraditionTradition/-Recursivity
Time-spaceEmbeddedness-Structure(s)
-Authoritative resources
-Dialectic of control

Existential anxietyActionForceMonadic-Recursivity
-time space distanciationSocietyHistoricity/-Diachrony
Embeddedness-Structure(s)

Existential anxietySelfReflexivityHistorical
-disembedding mechanismsSociety andopacity,
socialRational
 changecontradiction
Double
hermeneutic

    With regard to specifying the further relation of Fay's
metatheorizing to a critical theory of environmental education
Fien has outlined some of key ideas in relation to the basis
scheme which I supplement according to Fay's amended scheme.

A Conceptual Matrix for Critical Environmental Education

THEORY AND SUB-THEORIESCRITICAL THEORY FOR EDUCATIONA CRITICAL ONTOLOGY FOR
FOR SUSTAINABILITYEDUCATIONAL INQUIRY

.OJ OFF
1. A theory of false consciousness whichDemonstratesAccepts interpretively
and engages
(i) demonstrates the ways in which the(i) the ways in which the social and
selfreflexively
self understandings of a group of peopleunderstanding of a society fails to
account(i) the fallibility of mutual knowledge and
are false (in the sense of failing to accountfor root causes of
environmental problemscommonsense, and hence problematizes
for the life experiences of the members ofor provide for the social and
environmentalreification.
the group), or incoherent (becauseneeds and interests of all its members

(theScrutinizes
internally contradictory), or both-Ideology-skill of ideology critique).
(ii) the conventions, or rules and
critique.Explainsresources, of actions, social interactions
(ii) explains how the members of this(ii) how the members of a society came
toand relations which learners draw upon
group came to have these self-have these misunderstandings and howand
reconstitute knowingly and
misunderstandings, and how they arethey are maintained through the process
ofunknowingly; and reveals
maintained;"hegemony"; and provides(iii) how learners are capable, are
social
(iii) contrasts them with an alternative(iii) a vision of an alternative
world viewtheorists, and involved in constructing a
self-understanding, showing how thisand a new set of social and self-
narrative concept of selfhood.
alternative is superior.understandings.

2. A theory of crisis whichUnderstandingAcknowledges
(iv) spells out what a social crisis is;(i) the scope of the environmental
crisis;(i) lived individual, social, and
(v) indicates how a particular society is in(ii) the root causes of the
environmentalenvironmental experience is increasingly
such a crisis. This would requirecrisis and how they cannot be
alleviatedfragmented and mediated externally,
examination of the felt dissatisfactions ofeffectively given the basic
organizationalprimarily through technological means
a group of people and showing both thatstructures of our society; andand
intellectual expertise
they threaten social cohesion and that they(iii) the historical development
of the
can not be alleviated given the basicenvironmental crisis in terms of the
organization of the society and the self-structural bases of society and of
understandings of its members;individual and group false consciousness.
(vi) provides a historical account of the
development of this crisis partly in terms
of the false consciousness of the members
of the group and partly in terms of the
structural bases of the society.

3. A theory of education whichOffersProblematizes with new knowledge
(vii) offers an account of the conditions(i) an account of the forms of(i)
the technological and intellectual
necessary and sufficient for the sort ofenvironmental education necessary
for theextension of the embodied and embedded
enlightenment envisioned by the theory;sort of enlightenment envisioned by
theself,
(viii) shows that given the current socialtheory; and shows(ii) accepts the
importance of language
situation these conditions are satisfied.(ii) how the pedagogical practices

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in theseand communicative action but treats
forms of environmental education can becautiously the notion that language is the
implemented.construction of reality; and hence (iii)
seeks to understand somatic knowledge,
embodied actions and their consequences.

4. A theory of transformative action whichOutlinesIdentifies and assesses
(ix) isolates those aspects of society which(i) a strategy for altering
those aspects of(i) the moral, social, and political
must be altered if the social crisis is to besocial structure which causes
theimplications of individual, social, and
resolved and the dissatisfactions of itsenvironmental crisis and trapped
society'senvironmental actions and their
members lessened;members in self-defeating patters of beliefconsequences,
(x) details a plan of action indicating theand behavior; and
detailsJustifies socially
people who are to be the "carriers" of the(ii) a strategic plan through
which society's(ii) the individual and collective course(s)
anticipated social transformation and atmembers can become agents of self-
andof actions assessed; and accepts
least some general idea of how they mightsocial transformation.(iii)
responsibility and accountability for
do this.individual and collective actions taken, or
not taken.

5 A theory of the body whichRenders
(xi) develops an explicit account of the(i) the body as a site of
qualitatively

nature and role of inherited dispositionsdifferent understanding and
explanation in
and somatic knowledge;that its mode of being is organic,
(xii) formulates a theory of body therapy;habituated, and corporeally
penetrated and
(xiii) spells out the limits which inheritedextended.
dispositions and somatic knowledge placeAppreciates
on liberation.(ii) that as a mode of praxis with socio-
environmental consequences somatic
knowledge is partial and incomplete; yet
acknowledges
(iii) that as a positioned and localized site
of praxis and disclosure a body's being
and sharing-in-the-world is organically,
habitually, and corporeally dynamic, and
hence both capable and changeable, but
confined.

6. A theory of tradition whichAccepts

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(xiv) identifies which parts of a particular(i) the dispositional
inheritance, bonds,
tradition are, at any given time,and legacies of previous patterns and
changeable;conventions of family, community, and
(xv) identifies which parts of a particularcultural life; while
acknowledging
tradition are, at any given time, not(ii) their hold is not always
immutable but
changeable or worthy of change.selective.

7. A theory of force whichAppreciates, understands, or accepts
(xvi) develops an account of the(i) the weight of intellectual, bodily,
conditions and use of force in particularsocial, political, cultural, and
ecological
socio-political settings;influences; but recognizes
(xvii) explicitly recognizes the limits to(ii) the individual and
collective capability
the effectiveness of a critical theory in theto make a difference, even if
it is partial,
face of certain kinds of force.limited, or constrained.

8. A theory of reflexivity whichEngenders
(xviii) gives an explanation of its own(i) a personal and collective
reflexivity
historical emergence, and in this portraysthat, morally, politically and
ecologically,
itself as a necessarily one-sidedengages a dialectic of individual and
construction in a particular historicalsocially embodied actions,
interactions,
setting;and relations with local and historical
(xix) explicitly eschews transcendentalcircumstance and situations.
aspirations regarding the experience of all
humans (those who might be oppressed),
and gives up any pretensions to capture
the "essence" of liberation;
(xx) offers an account of the ways in
which it is inherently and essentially
contextual, partial, local, and hypothetical.

The socially theoretical work of Giddens and Fay point to four
overarching points that need to be made about curriculum inquiry
in environmental education. First, the strategy of questioning
existing discourses and practices is general and offered only as
a "sensistizer" for the environmental educator to consider in
relation to his or her own educational situation. The strategy

is sufficiently generic to be adopted by different educators working in a range of settings--urban, regional, and rural. Elaboration of the questions in specific contexts is required for curriculum and pedagogical development. Second, different

aspects of the questioning strategy can be emphasized according to the experiences and capabilities of teachers and learners. Third, the questions make no claims on preferred pedagogical practices. Given the nature of this inquiry it seems to me that teachers and students are in the best position to adjudicate those issues given the different educational circumstances in which they operate. Finally, the fine line between the questioning strategy being educative or instrumentalist is justified by the objective that theorizing be practical; that the deployment of Giddens and Fay identified by Fien for theorizing critical environmental education be consistent with their respective theorizing; and that the self-professed verdict of environmental education reveals a constancy of concern about unrealistic expectations, unrealized aspirations, and disparate epistemological commitments. While it is not appropriate to question the legitimacy of the big idea of environmental education there is no doubt it is fragmenting in the manner Geertz alerts us to. The concerted pursuit in Australia of a critical praxis for environmental education is one area of exploitation that, in this inquiry, culminates reflexively in a strategy of questioning existing critical discourses and practices.
 There is general agreement in critical perspectives of environmental education that curriculum ideally be interdisciplinary, or ecological, in its content and methods. Disciplinary knowledge can be brought to bear on problem-oriented approaches to resolving and acting upon local, community-focussed environmental issues. Experientially driven pedagogies, underpinned by a strong role for perceptual and valuing activities, is a constant. Practices and theories aim to be socially critical. That is individual and collective change and action arising from environmental education needs to be deliberated and justifiable according to broader historical, social, material, economic, and, more recently, cultural contexts. As already indicated these contexts are encapsulated in the term sustainability. This loose consensus marks out the conventional "contours" of critical environmental education. The re-theorizing I now conclude with builds on these contours, for it is appropriate to do so, but modifies and tempers the certainty, educationally, morally, and politically, that the ideas are enacted or fulfilled.
Re-theorizing critical environmental education
        Theorizing an ontologically driven critical environmental education curriculum rests largely on establishing the corporeal

body as a site of disclosure for the ecological crisis--revealing but limited, personal in the first instance but social over time and space. The question "how is the ecological crisis embodied?" invites numerous possibilities for environmental educators. To be sure, in acting as the focal point of a sensitizing focus for curriculum inquiry and enactment numerous perspectives of an "embodied crisis" are anticipated. Moreover, different crises are implied in contextualist ethics, be they the relational type which are in ascendancy or the ascetic type which are in decline. By ascetic I mean those environmental ethics whose historical, social, material, and political matrices have dwelt on overconsumption and its accompanying infrastructure as the cause of the ecological crisis. Its practical message of conservation is marginallized in contemporary ethical discourses which focus abstractly on person-environment and culture-nature relations of which there is a nagging negativity epitomized in the use of the term "ecological crisis." What provides positive or negative valency in relational ethics is all too often unclear beyond the

aesthetic self-interest of participant relators. Stated more blandly it is hard to discern in relational ethics what moral and political "gain" there is for nature/environment. An interweaving of the two types is a challenge for environmental ethics and for critical environmental education, neither of which can be addressed adequately here. Crises of care, self-realization and biocentric equality, ecology, technology, mother earth, animals, the social, the cultural, and others will differ for educators influenced by the thoughts of ecofeminists, deep ecologists, Leopoldians, Gaians, animal liberationists, and social ecologists. Put another way the embodied crisis might be tackled by asking "in individuals' lived experience what can be disclosed about the residues, deposits, or sediments of environmental problems and issues?"

The concern of establishing embodiment leads to the question of how it occurs. The pathways of the crises into and out of the body demands elaboration of the connections of various individual and social "patterns of being" to their timings, settings, and signs. Embodied action is a crucial site for curriculum and pedagogical inquiry. Numerous opportunities again exist to investigate, compare, and contrast among individuals and groups those historically, materially, technologically, and culturally mediated habits and routines of daily life at home, school, classroom, neighborhood, work and play that sustain ecological problems and issues.

The embodied and embedded nature of the ecological crisis can be amplified by considering the "conventions" of personal actions as well as the social interactions and expectations of a symbolic, physical, geographical, and economic nature. Language, its use, print and electronic media, social images and

symbols, and various other traditions, rules, and norms would
appear to be appropriate venues for examining various pathways of
the ecological crisis.

Having considered the influence of some or all of the
embodied and embedded crises, perhaps individually and
collectively the appropriateness of change, as a deliberated
possibility, can be assessed. "What pathways might be changed so
that the ecological crisis into and out of the body can be
reduced?

But, morally and politically the extent of desirable change
will need to be adjudicated in light of the further question of
"what are the consequences for self, others, and the environment,
and for the pathways of the ecological crisis if the routines and
conventions of interactions and relations of individuals, the
group, and the community are changed knowingly? And, on the
basis of theorizing Giddens and Fay for environmental education
what also demands consideration is how "knowledgeable" responses
to the preceding question might be obtained. As an aside one
aspect of environmental education that needs further
consideration can be framed in the further question "what
justifications might be offered to those who are effected by the
direct and indirect consequences of actions taken socially and
environmentally in environmental education?"

This ongoing question foregrounds two major problematics for
curriculum inquiry raised by Giddens and Fay. The first is to
consider the boundedness of morally relevant and politically
effective actions--what is doable and achievable, and what hubris
of self is socially and environmentally defeating? Actions must
also be personal if the syndrome of the "environmental problem
out there somewhere" perpetuates a group exuberance, or
evangelism, for "fixing" up the problems of others, thus
displacing personal responsibility and ethical accountability

while exacerbating the problems of collective autonomy.
Irrespective of the probability that "big" environmental problems
and issues might be inaccessible, or non-understandable within
the limited confines of environmental education curriculum, the
second worry is, if socially critical actions are "successful" or
"unsuccessful," those others have to "wear" the consequences of
those actions. How those inevitably effected by environmental
education are invited, or engaged, in the curriculum processes
becomes a more pressing issue for curriculum inquiry.

The extent, obvious breadth, and implications of this
questioning strategy for curriculum theorizing is not meant to
dissuade the task of developing a critical praxis for
environmental education. For, it seems to me, that some or a lot
of these sensitizing questions and probes can be addressed
thematically--be it through an examination of chewing gum and its
contexts of agency and structure or an investigation of the

Greenhouse effect and its contexts of structure and agency. The
moral and political implications of the questioning strategy
might be perplexing but a way to deal with them is summed up
neatly in Seyla Benhabib's notion of an enlarged mentality. Says
Benhabib, "(t)he more we can identify the different viewpoints
from which a situation can be interpreted and construed the more
we will have sensitivity to the particularities of the
perspectives involved." Benhabib, "Situating the Self," 54. See
also my "Enlarged Thinking, Moral Considerability, and Ecological
Feminism" where I attempt to tease out Benhabib's notion of moral
judgement for a practical ethics that conjoins a somatic embodied
sensitivity and rational sensibility.
A final note
     Re-theorizing critical curriculum inquiry into environmental
education according to Giddens' and Fay's critical ontologies has
been textualized by the discourses of environmental education.
Other "issues oriented" approaches to curriculum and pedagogy
such as multicultural, social, citizenship, and physical
education, to name a few candidates, are well placed to consider
and assess the ontological turn pursued here. How those
curriculum discourses might then be textualized for curriculum
inquiry according to their specific needs, interests, and
experiential fodder remains a question to be taken up at another
time.
     Finally, the mood of the postmodern:modern debate has
created both a sense of uncertainty and a reason for many
theorists and practitioners of critical persuasions to reinstate
the ethical and the political as a priority concern. To the
extent that mood is opaque critical theorists of education appear
to be grappling with ways through it. The reflexivity of social
theory and educational inquiry in curriculum theorizing and
pedagogical practices continues to challenge educators of all ilk
to be relatively clear about the practical, moral and political
consequences of their discourses. Not to deal earnestly with
their implications, it seems to me, is tantamount to a "lack"
which circumvents the aspirations of critical discourses and
practices. Whilst it is unreasonable to expect solutions will
easily emerge,
nor will Giddens and Fay dissuade educators from their fixed
positions, or elicit consensus, it is possible the ontological
line for inquiry pursued here can foreground those ethical and
political horizons which, with ongoing debate, remain a vexing
concern but which can further the project of critical inquiry in
education.