Paulo Freire, postmodernism and the utopian imagination: A Blochian Reading

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Description
"This essay is a critical reading of the work of the radical Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Highlighted in this reading is a discussion of Freire's concept of utopia as a crucial - yet generally overlooked - aspect of his pedagogy of liberation. We have been impressed by how much Freire’s explicit and implicit indebtedness to a concept of utopia resembles the more nuanced and formally developed philosophy of utopia developed by Ernst Bloch. We think the comparison is both significant and instructive. We also believe that Freire’s project of liberation can be more fully appreciated and deepened by rereading his work through a conceptual framework more directly linked to Bloch's monumental work on the utopian politics of hope. Our purpose here is fundamentally pedagogical. We have discerned in the work of these two dialecticians of the concrete a complimentary project of liberation that offers an unusually rich ground for self and social transformation. We also believe there are significant cultural, political, and theoretical aspects of postmodern social theory which can extend and deepen the emancipatory aspects of hope in the work of Freire and Bloch."

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Comments
In Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (Eds.), Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch. Dr. McLaren's chapter begins on page 138. This text is only partially available through the link provided; some pages are not included. Please visit your local library or purchase the book through the "Buy This Book" link above to read the full text.

Recommended Citation
Freire was working with illiterate and oppressed workers, people without much formal education. These were adults who needed to learn fundamentals like reading and writing and needed to understand their own social and cultural reality. But what about kids in formal education? I can maybe see critical pedagogy in an English or history or philosophy class.

Likewise, a rejection of metanarratives means that postmodernism and critical pedagogy don’t get along very well because of the latter’s dependence on Marxist historical materialism. Basically, if you are beholden to postmodern and or poststructuralist theories, then you’ll have to find a highly modified version of critical pedagogy that Freire may even disavow. Not saying you can’t mix postmodernism and critical pedagogy. Paulo Reglus Neves Freire was a Brazilian educator whose revolutionary pedagogical theory influenced educational and social movements throughout the world and whose philosophical writings influenced academic disciplines that include theology, sociology, anthropology, applied linguistics, pedagogy, and cultural studies. This humility makes possible a condition of reciprocal trust and communication between the educator, who also learns, and the student, who also teaches.