

be
res
ize
dir
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Eac
trat

cultural difference as central to the relationship of schooling and citizenship (Giroux, 1992). In the first instance, this means dismantling and deconstructing the legacy of nativism and racial chauvinism that has defined the rhetoric of school reform for the last decade. The Reagan and Bush era witnessed a full-fledged attack on the rights of minorities, civil rights legislation, affirmative action, and the legitimization of curriculum reforms pandering to Eurocentric interests. Teachers can affirm their commitment to democratic public life and cultural democracy by struggling in and outside of their classrooms in solidarity with others to reverse these policies in order to make schools more attentive to the cultural resources that students bring to the public schools. At one level, this means working to develop legislation that protects the civil rights of all groups. Equally important is the need for teachers to take the lead in encouraging programs that open school curricula to the narratives of cultural difference, without falling into the trap of merely romanticizing the experience of "Otherness." At stake here is the development of an educational policy that asserts public education as part of a broader ethical and political discourse, one that both challenges and transforms those curricula reforms of the last decade that are profoundly racist in context and content. In part, this suggests changing the terms of the debate regarding the relationship between schooling and national identity, moving away from an assimilationist ethic and the profoundly Eurocentric fantasies of a common culture to one which links national identity to diverse traditions and histories.

In short, as public intellectuals, teachers need to address the imperatives of citizenship. In part, this means addressing how schools can create the conditions for students to be social agents willing to struggle for expanding the critical public cultures that make a democracy viable. Consequently, any notion of pedagogy must be seen as a form of cultural politics, that is, a politic that highlights the role of education, as it takes place in a variety of public sites, to open up rather than

close down the possibilities for keeping justice and hope alive at a time of shrinking possibilities.

NOTES

1. This is particularly true with respect to those mainstream reformers arguing for national standards and testing. In this discourse, students are always on the receiving end of the learning experience. It is as if the histories, experiences, and communities that shape their identities and sense of place are irrelevant to what is taught and how it is taught. See, for example, Hirsch (1987); Finn, Jr. and Ravitch (1987); for an alternative to this position, see Apple (1993); Giroux (1988b); Giroux (1993). For an examination of schools that view teachers as more than clerks and technicians, see Wood (1993).
2. I have taken up this issue more extensively in Giroux (1988a), and Aronowitz and Giroux (1993).
3. For a trenchant analysis of the political correctness movement, see Aronowitz (1993), especially Chapter 1.
4. I take this issue up in Giroux (1988a).

REFERENCES

- Apple, M. (1993). *Official knowledge*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Apple, M., & Christian-Smith, L. K. (Eds.). (1992). *The politics of the textbook*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Aronowitz, S. (1993). *Roll over Beethoven: The return of cultural strife*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Aronowitz, S. (1994). A different perspective on educational inequality. *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 135-151.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1993). *Education still under siege*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Baldwin, J. (1988). A talk to teachers. In Simonson & Waler (Eds.), *Multicultural literacy: Opening the American mind* (pp. 3-12). Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press.
- Finn, C., Jr., & Ravitch, D. (1987). *What our 17-year olds know*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.