The Devils in Curriculum Studies:
Multitude and Multiplicity

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> Political action aimed at transformation and liberation today can only be conducted on the basis of the multitude. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 99)

> The threat to political order is perhaps even more clear: political thought since the time of the ancients has been based on the distinctions among the one, the few and the many. The indefinite number of the multitude threatens all these principles or order. Such trickery is the devil's work. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 139)

How do we face the persistent movement in the present historical moment toward Empire and the curriculum of Empire? Hardt and Negri discuss the definition of Empire.

> Empire is materializing before our very eyes. Over the past several decades, as colonial regimes were overthrown and then precipitously after the Soviet barriers to the capitalist world market finally collapsed, we have witnessed an irresistible and irreversible globalization of economic and cultural exchanges. Along with the global market and global circuits of production has emerged a global order, a new logic and structure of rule-in short, a new form of sovereignty. Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world. (Hardt & Negri, 2000)

As Empire develops out goes national sovereignty, in comes supranational governance, controlled by a network of economic (IMF), political (the United Nations), and military (American) interests, whose decisions affect all of the Earth's billions. This investigation will discuss the possibility of instances of freedom in the time of Empire. It will do so by considering the concepts of multitude and multiplicity. These two terms are not to be treated as synonymous. Multitude refers to the larger global political matter of resistance to Empire and multiplicity refers to one context within that larger framework. So, the multitude can act with multiplicities and the manner in which they do demonstrate that it may be still possible to work toward the reconstruction of schools and society within this postmodern era.

Multitude

The text, *Multitude* (2004), might be described as a hand book for those who view democracy as a yet unfinished project, one that might still be pursued in ways that work through institutions to create a mode of social organization that is based neither on imperial sovereignty nor on anarchy. The concept of the "multitude" is Hardt and Negri's way of identifying the possibility of such a project, and their way of not falling on either side of the unity/plurality binary. Rather, the multitude is an "irreducible multiplicity" not merely caught in postmodern fragmentation nor automatically enlisted as members of a cohesive proletariat, but bearing a "subjectivity that emerges from this dynamic of singularity and commonality." This singularity and commonality is addressed with many examples within their text one analogy is the description of the multitude as devils in the novel *Devils* by Dostoevsky. The analysis of Dostoevsky's novel variously translated as either *Devils* or *The Possessed* (1871) assists in the understanding of the many and the one, the commonality and the singularity. Hardt and Negri refer to this novel in one section of the text as a technique for understanding multitude. It is rather ironic I suppose that they would choose a novel that has been classified as reactionary—against radicals in a society, but Dostoevsky cautions against radicals and their foibles in many of his works and most times these radicals do not fare well. At the center of all Dostoevsky's writing is the problem of freedom. What is permitted and what is not permitted is a question that he dramatizes again and again, and we can regard the development of his work as a dramatic testing of the limits of freedom and a progressive refinement of what he meant by the concept of freedom. Revolutionaries, however, do not always end up with freedom; they may end up dead as in the case of *The Devils.*

In the *Devils*, Dostoevsky adapts the idea of a revolutionary group from a case that occurred in 1869. He combines the Nechayev case and his own beliefs in order to create the central plot of the *Devils*. Nechayev was a Russian revolutionary figure, influenced by the Nihilist movement and anarchism, and known for his single-minded pursuit of revolution by any means necessary, including political violence. He died in a Russian prison in 1882. In the novel, Dostoevsky depicts an ultra secret pseudo revolutionary political organization that desires to overthrow the government and undermine the Russian church and is bent on mindless destruction and includes members of the village's best families. The extremists hope to replace themselves at the helm of the country by displacing those who are currently in power. The strengths of the group are their ability to remain clandestine, their intelligence, and their ability to commit horrific crimes with little remorse. However, the entire group by the end of the novel have committed suicide, been killed by their own comrades, or are safely away in prison or exile. In effect it is Dostoevsky writing a reactionary novel against atheism and social revolution. In fact, he is in some ways, discussing the multitude by his use of the title, *Devils*

What is so fearsome about the multitude is its indefinite number, at the same time

many and one. If there were only one unified conspiracy against the old social order, like Dostoevsky imagines, then it could be known, confronted and defeated. Or if instead there were many separate, isolated social threats, they too could be managed. The multitude, however, is legion; it is composed of innumerable elements that remain different, one from the other, and yet communicate, collaborate and act in common. Now that is really demonic.

Implicit in his plural use of the word devils is the often cited biblical story of the possessed man in the Gospel of Luke and the reference to Legion. In the parable/story Jesus travels to and meets a man who is possessed by demons, a demoniac. The man had been seized many times by demons and was bound, but would escape the bonds and be driven into the desert by the demons. Jesus comes upon him.

And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. (Luke 8:30)

Jesus takes the demons out of the man allows them to go into a herd of swine and the herd falls off a cliff into a lake and is drown.

Multitude as legion refers to the concept of the many in the one or the one and many. This is a manner in which to begin to conceive of multitude.

Why is Legion the demonic's name? Because he has such a powerful destructive force? Because the multitude inside him can act together? Perhaps, the real threat of this demonic multitude is more metaphysical: since it is at once singular and plural, it destroys numerical distinction itself. The threat to political order is perhaps even more clear: political thought since the time of the ancients has been based on the distinctions among the one, the few and the many. The demonic multitude violates all such numerical distinctions. It is both one and many. The indefinite number of the multitude threatens the principle of order. Such trickery is the devil's work. (Hardt &Negri, 2004, p. 139)

But what contributes to forming this multitude—devils? One of the most intriguing and important concepts concerning the formation of the multitude within the Hardt and Negri text is the notion of immaterial labor. In the industrial or Fordist economy the majority of labor accomplished was material labor, which is labor that consisted of producing material products. In the late 20th century and early 21st century we have moved to a post-industrial or post-Fordist economy.

Since the late 1970s the political economy of global capitalism has radically altered conditions of life. The decentralization of production to all corners of the planet's geography has led to the disappearance of good jobs in the metropoles of the United States and other industrially developed societies, not only in low-and intermediate technology industries, but also in high-tech sectors, The tale of losses in textiles, garments, steel, and other major production industries is by now commonplace. (Dolby & Dimitriadis, 2004, p. x)

This material labor is contrasted to "immaterial labor". Immaterial labor is a concept apparently similar to concepts such as "knowledge economy," service economy, or

"symbolic-analytic" work. What Hardt and Negri add to these previous concepts is the refusal to separate the economic, the political, and the social. Their conceptualization delineates immaterial labor in two principal forms:

> The first form refers to labor that is primarily intellectual or linguistic, such as problem solving, symbolic and analytical tasks, and linguistic expressions. This kind of immaterial labor produces ideas, symbols codes, texts, linguistic figures, images and other such products. We call the principle form of immaterial labor affective labor... Affective labor, then, is labor that produces or manipulates affects such as feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion. One can recognize affective labor in the work of legal assistants, flight attendants, and fast food workers (service with a smile). (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 108)

They claim that immaterial labor must be understood as a form of "biopolitical labor" that, in addition to producing "knowledge, information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional response," creates social life itself. The lived reality of labor and the abstract reality of globalization are thus kept in close relation through the multitude's creation of "tighter articulations between the social and the political. The possibilities of the common (the many) are most visible in the realm of immaterial labor, the most paradigmatic example given being communication.

> The common does not refer to traditional notions of either community or the public; it is based on *communication* among singularities and emerges through the collaborative social processes of production. Whereas the individual dissolves in the unity of community, singualrities are not diminished but express themselves freely in the common. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 204)

If one focuses, as Hardt and Negri do, on the role of immaterial labor, the common does not operate according to the logic of scarcity, opening the possibility of mass participation in political power exercised through the biopolitical force of immaterial labor. "The term *biopolitical* thus indicates that the traditional distinctions between the economic, the political, the social and the cultural become increasingly blurred" (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p.109).

According to Hardt and Negri's book *Empire*, "Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it—every individual embraces and reactivates this power of his or her own accord. Its primary task is to administer life. Biopower thus refers to a situation in which what is directly at stake in power is the production and reproduction of life itself"(24). Biopolitical power is expressed as a control that extends through the depths of consciousness and bodies of the population and across the entirety of social relations. Biopower is a form of power that is exercised on the body and it carries a specifically anatomical and biological aspect. It is exercised over members of a population so that their sexuality and individuality are constituted in certain ways that are connected with issues of national policy, including the machinery of production. In this way populations can be adjusted in accordance with economic processes. Hardt and

Negri posit that biopower is a mode of governance exercised in Empire. An example of this is the control of life at the molecular level made possible by the sequencing of the Human Genome and recombinant genetics. A consequence of Assisted Reproductive Technologies is that the human body, particularly the female body has become a pre-eminent laboratory for a lucrative pharmaceutical industry.

In global capitalism, we live in a society Deleuze calls control society rather than the society of discipline as Foucault would have it.

> Disciplinary society is that society in which social command is constructed through a diffuse network of apparatuses that produce and regulate customs, habits, and productive practices. Putting society to work and ensuring obedience to its rule and its mechanisms of inclusion and/or exclusion are accomplished through disciplinary institutions (the prison, the factory, the asylum, the hospital, the university, the school, and so forth) that structure the social terrain and present logics adequate to the "reason" of discipline. Disciplinary power rules in effect by structuring the parameters and limits of thought and practice, sanctioning and prescribing normal and/or deviant behavior. (Hardt & Negri, 2004)

In the society of control, as discussed by Deleuze, biopolitical power comprises the whole of society; it produces the social body, and our individual bodies.

> In disciplinary societies you are always starting all over again (as you went from school to barracks, from barracks to factory), while in control societies you never finish anything—business, training, and military service being coexisting metastable states of a single modulation, a sort of universal transmutation. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 179)

Biopolitical power is the ground of all productivity and therefore the ground of life. Within the society of control "power is exercised through machines that directly organize the brains (in communication systems, information networks, etc.) and bodies (through welfare systems, monitored activities, etc.) toward a state of autonomous alienation from the sense of life and desire for creativity" (23). Under global capital, Biopower mostly creates wealth and power for others and is not under individual control.

How do we participate in Biopower? How does it manifest or express itself in our everyday lives? Our labor and what we do for a "living"—whether manual or bodily (agricultural, factory), mental/intellectual (knowledge work, immaterial labor), and affective (emotional, service, maintenance of self, family, community)—can be said to be a product or expression of Biopower. In the all-encompassing biopolitical system of Empire productive labor has changed. It has become "intellectual, immaterial and communicative"—even manual and service labor now depend on networked communications and information because the marketing decision comes first and production follows. Hardt and Negri do not see biopower as simply being exerted over the population. Biopolitics enables the multitude as well.

> The multitude is a diffuse set of singularities that produce a common life; it is a kind of social flesh that organizes itself into a new social body. This is what defines

biopolitics. The common is at once an artificial result and constitutive basis, is what configures the mobile and flexible substance of the multitude. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 349)

How could and does the multitude operate within this milieu?

Multiplicity and Nomad Thought

Rather than analyzing the world into discrete components, reducing their manyness to the ONE of identity, and ordering them by rank, it sums up a set of disparate circumstances in a shattering blow. It synthesizes a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pxiii)

Deleuze, Guattari, and Serres discuss notions of multiplicity. Indeed, if Deleuze is anything it is the perennial advocate of multiplicity. Multiplicity gives us a glimpse into the possibilities of curriculum studies in this time of capture. Multiplicity operates for the multitude it is not the multitude but multitude operating. The one and the many and the one with the many.

Serres is also an advocate of multiplicity. In *Genesis* (1995), Serres discusses the notion of multiplicity.

I am trying here to raise the brackets and parentheses, syntheses, whereby we shove multiplicities under unities that is the object of this book: the multiple. Can I possibly speak of multiplicity itself without ever availing myself of the concept? (Serres, 1995a, p. 4)

Serres focuses on the passages between the 'hard' sciences and the social sciences. In *Conversations on Science, Culture and Time* (1995), Serres discusses his background and the manner in which he has attempted these passages.

I had become a half-caste or a quadroon, commingling the liberal arts student with the math student, pouring differential equations into Greek exercises and vice versa. Cross-breeding—that's my cultural idea. Black and white, science and humanities, monotheism and polytheism—with no reciprocal hatred, for the peacemaking that I wish for and practice. (Serres & Latour, 1995b, p. 28)

Serres' works deal in a sustained fashion with one of the most pressing contemporary issues—namely the reformulating of the once great and now weatherworn Enlightenment divisions between self and collective, society and nature, the scientific and the literary, myth and politics. In an age where the rhetoric of interdisciplinarity is commonplace, it still shocks us to encounter work where the deliberate crossing (and re-crossing) of disciplinary boundaries is seriously put into practice. A typical Serres text will, for example, move from information theory to myth by way of examples drawn from literature or art. Or else bring the ancient and the modern world into juxtaposition through detailed exegesis of Lucretius or Liebniz. In Serres' work philosophy is made to inhabit hard science as myth is brought to life within social science. Jules Verne

intermingles with Plato and Thales. Don Juan and La Fontaine rub shoulders with Descartes.

This may at first sound like the very worst kind of postmodern carnival, that post-toastyism, yet Serres' border crossings are always rigorously structured. He proceeds from the notion that disciplinary and conceptual divisions, although complex and provisional, may be analyzed by exploring potential channels or 'passages' that run between them—the excluded middle. Communication runs through these passages, but does so only at the risk of potential distortion, in the course of which the message becomes transformed. What eventually passes over a division, then, is often very different from what was initially sent. To this end, Serres dubs the particular division between science and the humanities as the 'Northwest Passage,' referring to the twisting and convoluted coastlines that separate the great Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Serres' point is that it is possible to traverse such a divide, but only by undertaking the most testing of journeys, one which will involve much doubling back and complex navigation (Brown, 2002)

> The multiple as such, unhewn and little unified, is not an epistemological monster, but on the contrary the ordinary lot of situations, including that of the ordinary scholar, regular knowledge, everyday work, in short our common object. (Serres, 1995a, p. 5)

Serres discusses the notion that he has tried to remain "on the bridge between two shores" (Serres, 1995b, p. 28). Gilles Deleuze in his work with Felix Guattari and in his individual work is also concerned with notions of multiplicity. Deleuze in conversations with Parnet in *Dialogues* (1977) echoes Serres concept of passages. He uses the concept of line(s) of flight.

> This is why it is always possible to undo dualisms from the inside, by tracing the line of flight which passes between two terms or the two sets, the narrow stream which belongs neither to the one or the other, but draws both into a non-parallel evolution, into a heterochronous becoming. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977, p. 35)

In *What is Philosophy* (1994), Deleuze and Guattari discuss the lines between philosophy and science.

> Although scientific types of multiplicity are themselves extremely diverse, they do not include the properly philosophical multiplicities which Bergson claimed a particular status defined by duration, multiplicity of fusion, which expressed the inseparability of variations, in contrast to multiplicities of space, number, and time which ordered mixtures and referred to the variable or to independent variables. It is true that this very opposition, between scientific and philosophical, discursive and intuitive, and extensional and intensive multiplicities, is also appropriate for judging the correspondence between science and philosophy, their possible collaboration and the inspiration of one by the other. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, P. 127)

Culture studies, curriculum studies, and teachers in the field could engage in work that dwelt in multiplicity. The clearest conceptualization of multiplicity is

perhaps, Deleuze's concept of the AND, and Deleuze and Guattari's notions of rhizomatics. Although I have written about the AND in other texts (Reynolds & Webber, 2004; Reynolds, 2004) it is directly relevant to this discussion. This multiplicity thinking can be applied to notion of the multitude because it clarifies lines of flight or the passages between. It hinges on Deleuze's arguing for the priority of the conjunction AND over the verb *to be*, multiplicity within duality. It is an instance of multidisciplinarity that can be discovered and created within disciplinarity.

> AND is neither one thing or the other, it is always in-between, between two things; it's the borderline, there is always a border, a line of flight or flow, only we don't see it because it is the least perceptible of all things. And, yet it's along this line of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take shape. The strong people aren't the ones on one side or the other, power lies on the border. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 45)

The devilish multitude could dwell in within the context of the conjunction. Teachers moving from the quarrel over testing (perhaps, a losing battle) to as Pinar advocates working to have education confront information.

> But, as curriculum theorists have long appreciated, the exchange and acquisition of information is not education. Being informed is not equivalent to erudition. Information must be tempered with intellectual judgment, critical thinking, ethics, and self-reflexivity. The complicated conversation that is the curriculum requires interdisciplinarity, intellectuality, erudition, and self-reflexivity. This is not a prescription for high test scores, but a common faith in the possibility of self-realization and democratization, twin projects of social and subjective reconstruction. (Pinar, 2004, p. 8)

Teachers and students developing lines of flight in their own individual practice and teachers using cultural studies in their practice and people writing in curriculum studies about fusion cuisine and philosophy, and vampires and Deleuze, and the holocaust and curriculum, and horror films and identity formation, and Harry Potter and children's literature and cyborgs and curriculum and Star Trek and education and McDonalds and kids and violence and flagpoles and, and, and…

There can be no doubt that what enables multiplicity in the notion of cultural curriculum studies for example is that philosophy, cinema, art, science and curriculum studies all share in the activity of creation. Creativity serves as the basis of their potential interaction. Deleuze asks then 'what is it to have an idea in something,' an idea in cinema, an idea in philosophy, an idea in science. It is, of course, to think of something new, something original, to create, and it is in name of this creation that we speak. This speech, Deleuze is quick to insist, is not simple communication, which he views with suspicion and distrust. To communicate is to convey information, and information is defined as a set of order-words, of words which code some vested interest, and which perform an act of repression. 'When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe.' Information, on Deleuze's account, is the mechanism by means

of which repressive power is exercised in societies of control. Instead of the spaces of confinement of disciplinary societies, we are now bombarded with information, which enacts an even more insidious control over the way we lead our lives.

Deleuze is interested to discover how such control might be resisted, how we might overcome the stifling stratification of received information. He finds that the creative act can function as just such an act of resistance. He insists that 'having an idea is not on the order of communication' (17), it cannot be reduced to the transmission of information because it surpasses or goes beyond that information. Having an idea is to introduce the non-stratified into the strata, which contain us. For Deleuze, what is interesting and remarkable in the work of those he calls 'the great filmmakers' for example is that once in a while we see an act of resistance take shape, a uniquely cinematic idea which casts asunder the order which seeks to control and stratify it. Deleuze gives the example of a particular cinematographic technique, which can be described as the dislocation of sight and sound, which occurs when the sounds we hear unexpectedly fail to cohere with the images we see. Deleuze explains the effect of this as follows: 'It is extraordinary in that it provides a veritable transformation of elements at the level of cinema, a cycle that in one stroke makes cinema resonate with a qualitative physics of elements.' The unexpected, the extraordinary, the remarkable, these are the characteristics of the idea, and their effect is to loosen the grip of the system of control, even if only for a time. Then it can be pursued again and again and again.

Multitude, Multiplicity, and Curriculum Studies

What Julie Webber and I proposed in *Expanding Curriculum Theory* (2004) was that the curriculum studies field dwells in lines of flight research, research that demonstrated the possibilities of multiplicity. Certainly as I have discussed previously cultural curriculum studies moves toward that. I would, however, have those involved in education and curriculum studies consider that although there are many singularities in lines of flight thinking and working there also could be the one in the many.

Frequently as a curriculum studies professor I am asked by my graduate students, but, what can we do? I frequently respond to make small changes gradually in their own practice, but given the current historical situation in an Age of Fundamentalism (Reynolds, 2005) that may not be enough. That is, to only work within the various line of flight singularities/multiplicities. There are individual teachers, professors and others involved in education working in "nightmare" (Pinar, 2004) conditions and that work can become isolating and demoralizing. Scripted lessons for public school teachers and professors, prepackaged power point presentations, high stakes testing, reductions in academic freedom, mandated state-wide objectives, NCATE syllabi, *No Child Left Behind* legislation, state determined performance objectives, faith-based initiatives, intelligent design and on and on are all factors and conditions of this educational nightmare. Has it ever been this noxious

in education? I am doubtful that it has been. I wrote about the terrible state of education during the Reagan administration but that conservative time was merely a precursor and foreshadower to the current "compassionate conservative" environment. So, we can create concepts and work as singularities in our individual environments and that work is being done.

But, there could be action as a troubling Legion. I am not referring to the Marxist concept of the proletariat in this time of the post-industrial and its immaterial labor force moves beyond that conceptualization toward the multitude. That is, there could be various and sundry singularities despite their differences working together for particular instances or issues and then returning to their work as singularities. In *Multitude* Hardt and Negri use the protest in Seattle, Washington in November, 1999, as an example of this type of convergence. They call the protest the first global protest. It was significant and the protest did gain important media coverage. Hardt and Negri, however, state that there was another more significant aspect to this protest.

> The real importance of Seattle was to provide a 'convergence center' for all grievances against a global system. Old oppositions between protest groups seemed suddenly to melt away. During the protests for example, the two most prominent groups were the environmentalists and the trade unions and to the surprise of most commentators, these two groups, which were thought to have contradictory interests, actually supported each other. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 288/289)

The protest against the World Trade Organization is one example of the multitude operating. Working together despite some deeply felt differences against a far more daunting menace. Another example of this type of convergence of the multitude was the antiwar protest in Washington, D.C. on September 24, 2005. This event also manifested the characteristics of the multitude. The two major organizations that were behind the event were the United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) and the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (Answer). These two groups have in the past been contentious. Despite the disagreements between the two organizations the protest was accomplished. There were traces of the multitude within the protest.

> At least 100,000, probably more— did attend. They traveled from places as divergent as Louisville, Kentucky, and Orange County, California. The march included many more families with children than usual and was more racially diverse. Plenty of clean-cut suburbanites turned out, some still proudly carrying a torch for the Kerry or Dean campaign. For the first time in history, a labor delegation assembled at the AFL-CIO headquarters, where it joined the march a sizable and vocal crew. (Featherstone, 2005, p. 6)

In the case of the antiwar protest you had at least two important and perhaps unlikely convergences occurring simultaneously. One other example of this type of movement, a movement toward democracy is the use of the internet and media, by those of the multitude. Initiated during the WTO Summit in Seattle in 1999, the Indymedia experiment grows out of the tradition of free radio stations and public access television.

Since that time the network of media centers has expanded to dozens of cities on six continents. The Indymedia slogan—'Don't hate the Media, become the media"—calls for not only breaking the information monopoly of the corporate media but also becoming actively involved in the production and distribution of information. Anyone can submit a story on an Indymedia Web site. Both of these elements—equal access and active expression—are central to any project of democratizing communication and information. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 305)

There are numerous examples of this type of convergence, but the point may be for those of involved in education and curriculum studies that perhaps as well as lines of flight research and practice there could be opportunities for moments of convergence. That there could be moments of multitude for those in curriculum and education working along lines of flight to converge in their divergence. I do not have a prescription for what issues, formations, or movements could coalesce a convergence, but, it might be possible to have divergent multiplicities that come together as a multitude. It might be a way to bridge that long perceived gap between public school teachers and curriculum studies scholars. It might be a way in which curriculum studies could be connected with other social movements. It might be a way for us to see how power can operate in an alternative manner. The times, indeed, demand it.

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