

# Stuart Hall and Education: Being Critical of Critical Pedagogy

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Stuart Hall's theoretical contributions and their implications for teaching and learning. Hall's seminal theoretical contributions are far reaching and have implications on various levels and in relation to several issues. Not in all instances are the links between Hall's theoretical contributions and educational practice explicit, but it is equally clear that such links can be made.

In *Teaching Race* (1976), Hall makes such links to teaching and learning clear and explicit. However, *Teaching Race* which was first published in the 1970s only drew on the socially constructed nature of knowledge and social experience and their implications for teaching and learning, and did not explore such teaching and learning in relation to notions of relationality and articulation, which Hall later elaborated upon.

Using the ideas present in *Teaching Race*, this chapter explores the importance of social constructedness as a powerful pedagogical tool which not only promotes the notion of critical pedagogy but also extends it. This chapter, thus, builds on the idea of a social constructivist pedagogy, links it to

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Hall's later explications of relationality, intersectionality and articulation to demonstrate the tremendous generative potential of Hall's theories in informing pedagogical practice.

As will be seen in this chapter, the arguments provided by Hall in relation to these concepts also usefully provide a way of being critical about critical pedagogy. In this way, they also provide a more defensible pedagogy that may significantly contribute to social justice.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, the idea of a social constructivist account of pedagogy is outlined and, in particular, Hall's consistent rejection of reductionism, especially within classical Marxism, and, as a consequence, within traditional forms of critical pedagogy, is highlighted. The notions social constructivism, classical and post-Marxism, and critical pedagogy are also explained in the first section of this chapter. In looking at "race" Hall shows how reality and people's experiences cannot simply and only be reduced to the economic base. The importance of enhancing forms of thinking that do not lead to reductionist understandings is highlighted.

In the second section of this chapter the links between social constructivist pedagogies and the importance of developing relational thinking is explored. Hall's (1992) view of relational thinking and relationality encompasses both the dimensions of the intricate interplay between macro-sociological and micro-sociological forces in their construction of social experience, as well as the importance of recognizing that human identities cannot be artificially reified into singular "essences," or one single identity. Thinking relationally entails seeing the ways in which identities within the same individual intersect with each other and how they construct human beings and experiences in complex and multiply varying ways. Allowing students to understand such relational ways of thinking not only enhances their own understanding of social reality, but also equips them with ways to view the complexities of their own, and others', identities. The importance of these potential pedagogical effects is also shown to develop heightened social awareness.

Social constructivism, relational thinking and intersectionality are then discussed in relation to Hall's theory of articulation (Hall 1996) in the third section of this chapter. The theory of articulation and its dual meanings are covered in the third section, and emphasis is again placed on the importance of non-reductionist thinking and the need to hold on to the complexities of human life and experience.

Throughout this chapter, the importance of dialogue and avoiding unnecessary (and unhelpful) forms of polarisations are emphasised. Both

dialogue and non-polarised relations among people, especially among students in classrooms, are pointed out to be central for the development of social cohesion and social justice.

## SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

In *Teaching Race*, Hall (1976) notes the importance of using education in order to combat forms of racism and to teach about “race” so that students may have a better understanding of the ways in which racism is constructed. He also notes that exposing students to the ways in which “race” and racism are socially constructed phenomena is a critically important way to demonstrate that “race” and racism are not innate, biologically given or divinely ordained. This is an extremely important point to get across when teaching about “race” and racism since it is a tendency for people to view such phenomena as given, and, as such, as unchangeable. Hall provides three important arguments to show that “race” and racism are not unchangeable. However, before these three arguments of Hall are outlined, it is important to clarify what is meant by social constructivism or socially constructed phenomena.

Social constructivism is an idea that is central to sociological thinking (see also C Wright Mills 2000). It is an idea that suggests not all things are naturally given or divinely ordained. They are instead created or constructed by human beings, hence social (meaning human) constructions. Thus, as opposed to mountains and trees, for example, social, political and economic systems do not naturally occur but are constructed socially by human beings. As social constructions, such constructions also constitute the complexity of social lives, since human beings in societies are impacted by the socially constructed forces in their social worlds and lives. Human beings thus interact in complex ways with such political, economic and socio-cultural constructions to make sense of their lives and exercise their agency in relation to them. This means that rather than being naturally given, societies and the dimensions that constitute them are social, human constructions. This idea of social construction also means that such social constructions are also not divinely ordained. Political, economic and socio-cultural systems in the social constructivist view are not divinely ordained (or naturally given) but are creations of human beings, and are thus social constructions. As social constructions they can also be deconstructed and changed.

In *Teaching Race*, Hall (1976) indicates that before one demonstrates how “race” and racism are socially constructed, it is important to first show why “race” and racism are not naturally given, divinely ordained or innate. Hall provides three arguments to show why “race” and racism are not innate.

First, Hall argues that the notion of “race” itself is one that has not always existed. In this regard he refers to both Shakespeare and Snowden. Shakespeare’s *Othello* is far from the image of a subordinated “black” man, and suggests that Shakespeare did not subscribe to such racist and negative (stereotypical at that) views of “black” people. Hall also shows how Snowden’s archival historical work demonstrates that in early encounters between Africans and Europeans, such encounters were not in a racist mould. Instead, Snowden shows that in such early trade exchanges between Africans (mainly Abyssinians at the time), Greek and Roman texts about such exchanges, are replete with descriptions of Africans in very positive ways—Africans were admired for their strength, tallness and economic prowess. In these ways, then, Hall shows that the assumptions about the innate, naturally given and unchangeable inferiority of “black” people are without historical validity. The assumption, then, that “black” people are naturally inferior and have always been so is not valid.

Hall then also shows that not all people are racist. If “race” and racism were innate and unchangeable it would not be possible for anybody not to be racist. The unchangeability of “race” and racism suggest an ontological condition which, if true, ought to affect all people equally. The fact that not all people are racists (and this includes “black” and “white” people) means that “race” and racism are not ontologically given and unchangeable. If “race” and racism were naturally given, unchangeable and innate, then a Nelson Mandela—an internationally renowned symbol of anti-racism—would not have been possible. The claim, then, that “race” and racism are unchangeable, cannot be resisted and are innate is thus not sustainable.

The third point that Hall makes is that there are many, many people throughout the world and across all ages who are not easily classifiable in any or all of the racial groupings following de Gobineau’s “hierarchy of races” (de Gobineau 1852). De Gobineau suggested that there were three distinct “races” of people—Caucasoid (“white”), Mongoloid (“brown” or as de Gobineau described them “yellow”) and Negroid (“black”). Many so-called “white” people have supposedly “black” features (e.g. curly hair) and many so-called “black” people have supposedly “white” features (e.g. blue eyes).

Hall also indicates that many people who are off springs of mixed “race” couples tend to share features of more than one of these “races.” In this regard, Hall also shows that the classification of people into racialized (racist) groupings is inherently flawed and scientifically invalid.

The above retorts to innatist claims about “race” and racism by Hall provide the beginnings of understanding the social construction of “race” and racism. For Hall, tackling the false assumptions of innatist accounts of “race” and racism is necessary also because one of the most dominant ideological manipulations about “race” and racism is the constant attempt to project them as naturally given, unchangeable and innate. These are done through various state ideological apparatuses, masqueraded in media and reinforced in schools. Two dominant images that are projected, for example, are the projection of all “black” people as criminals, and as another example, all “black” people as incapable and inferior (see also Frederickse 1989 in this regard). For Hall, then, teaching race needs to begin by showing that innatist assumptions about “race” and racism are false.

Once the innatist arguments about “race” and racism are demonstrated to be false, Hall notes that it then becomes necessary to show how “race” and racism are socially constructed. Hall suggests that the socially constructed form of “race” and racism can be shown, and taught, by looking at the historical dimensions of “race” and racism—answering whence it began, the economic level, political level, and socio-cultural level which all contribute to the construction of “race” and racism. In so doing, Hall uses a “sociological imagination” (cf. C Wright Mills 2000) to demonstrate that in teaching “race” and racism, “race” and racism are not “personal troubles” but “public issues” (cf. C Wright Mills 2000).

In practice, a lesson on “race” and racism could, following Hall (1976), be designed as follows:

1. Begin the lesson with an exploration of whether “race” and racism are naturally given or innate. Hall’s three arguments, as outlined above, about why “race” and racism cannot be assumed to be innate can be used to do this.
2. Once it is established that “race” and racism are not innate or naturally given, it then needs to be shown how it is that they have arisen. In other words, the historical origins of “race” and racism need to be covered. Coverage of slavery and colonialism, Hall (1976) indicates, provide ample material to show how superiority got to be associated

- with “white” people and inferiority with “black” people, and to also show how these were projected and assumed to be given naturally or innately.
3. The ways in which economic systems privilege “white” people and disadvantage “black” people can then be explored. Apartheid South Africa, with its Job Reservation Act and Colour Bar laws (see, e.g. Rose and Tunmer 1975), provides rich material for such an exploration, but examples from other countries in the world are not difficult to marshal as illustrative of inequalities between “black” and “white” people in economic systems.
  4. The configurations of political systems which enable “white” people to ensure political power is in their hands can then be investigated. The disenfranchisement of “black” people, the prevention of “black” people being viewed as citizens and from assuming political power can then also be demonstrated. Colonial histories throughout the world provide ample and explicit examples of these. Contemporary political systems throughout the world can also be investigated to show how political systems also construct racial inequalities.
  5. The socio-cultural location and experiences of “white” and “black” people can then also be looked at. Exploring issues like where people live, school, socialise and places they frequent can be explored to show how the arrangements within societies allow for different and differential, largely unequal, social lives to be lived. Again, apartheid South Africa provides a stark example of this given its blatant segregation of people on the basis of “race” on all levels and in particular, in relation to the Group Areas Act under apartheid which ensured that South Africans lived segregated and separate lives.

When one looks at the above outline of what a lesson on “race” and racism could mean in practice, and in relation to Hall’s (1976) suggestions it should be clear that C Wright Mills’ (2000) “sociological imagination” is used. The historical dimension of “race” and racism are covered. The economic, political and socio-cultural levels in societies are also covered to show how such systems construct “race” and racism on macro-sociological levels. For students in a class that covers such a lesson, they are also enabled to learn that “race” and racism are not “personal troubles” (C Wright Mills 2000). They are not just about one’s self. They are not about “me.” Rather, “race” and racism are shown in these ways to be “public troubles” (C Wright Mills

2000). They are “troubles” which go beyond the individual and encompass everybody—they are “public”—and, are complex phenomena that operate on various levels in societies and which have a history.

Hall (1976) also points out that when “race” and racism are approached in the manner that is outlined above then “race” and racism are seen as phenomena that need to be explored collaboratively and which does not need to go into a blaming of one “race” by another, or for it to be viewed as matters of mere personal prejudice. Instead, students are brought through such coverage to understand that “race” and racism are historical social constructions, and as such can be approached rationally and through exploration and dialogue. Hall (1976) indicates that this is one way in which the “emotionally volatile” potential of discussions and explorations of “race” and racism may be managed. It is through making people realise that these are not just personal, individual matters; not about blaming and shaming people, but to understand how the phenomena have been constructed and exploring what could possibly be done about them.

Hall (1976) does not, and neither does this chapter, suggest that doing dialogue about “race” and racism are easy to do in practice. However, exploring “race” and racism as socially constructed phenomena, as opposed to being treated as innate and unchangeable, allows such phenomena to be viewed as issues that can be investigated, explored and discussed. As “tough” topics, it is difficult to deal with “race” and racism rationally, and in dialogue. A social constructivist approach to “race” and racism allows them to be spoken about and has the potential to reduce their “emotionally volatile” effects by bringing them into a discussion that is exploratory in the main, and which opens up possibilities for how such phenomena may be changed in order to construct a more just social order for all.

There are two other aspects to what Hall (1976) suggests in the above. The first is to do with critical pedagogy and the second is to do with Hall’s moving away from the economic reductionism of classical Marxism.

The above discussion on how to approach teaching “race” and racism illustrates the importance of social construction as a mode of conceptualisation that allows for social phenomena, which are assumed to be innate, to be engaged with critically. Such a critical engagement with social reality and its constitutive factors is central to a critical pedagogy itself. As such Hall uses the basic tenets of a critical pedagogy in his account of how to possibly teach “race” and racism.

Critical pedagogy is premised on the view that pedagogies should allow people to explore their lives, worlds and selves in ways that empower them to live better lives. In this view a critical pedagogy does not indoctrinate people, but equips them with the tools to empower themselves and better their lives. It is an education that ought to liberate people, not shackle or oppress them (see Freire 1970). In order to achieve such aims a critical pedagogy exposes people to the ways their societies and levels within them are constructed. It explores and shows how inequalities in societies are constructed with the constant emphasis on how to move towards more socially just social orders for all. This view of critical pedagogy, which has been significantly elaborated upon by Freire (1970) and subsequently used and developed by others (see, e.g. Aronowitz and Giroux 1986; Gibson 1986) has its theoretical emergence within classical Marxism.

Drawing on Marx's XI *Theses on Feuerbach* which stated "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it" (Marx, K and Engels, F, 1886, p. 15), a critical pedagogy emphasizes the need to develop a critical understanding and awareness of things not only for the sake of understanding them or becoming more aware of them but also to use such understandings and awareness to change conditions of inequality, oppression and exploitation. Critical pedagogy, then, is not just critical thinking, but thinking critically about ourselves and world/s in order to change them for a better and more just social order and world/s.

It should be noted that in developing such critical awareness critical pedagogy will explore the forces and levels in societies and how they come into being. Given that its emphasis on changing such social orders, critical pedagogy also assumes that such orders can be changed and are socially constructed—i.e. not naturally given or divinely ordained. It can also be seen that a critical pedagogy will use the "sociological imagination" in ways that will allow people to develop a critical understanding of the different macro-sociological and micro-sociological levels of societies and their histories. It is in these ways, then, that Hall (1976), as he indicates in *Teaching Race*, uses a critical pedagogical approach to exploring the social construction of "race" and racism and ways in which they may be changed for a more just world.

However, Hall is critical of critical pedagogy too. This is because of his anti-reductionist view of "race" and racism. In order to understand this anti-reductionism, it is important to take into account the developments and critiques of Marxism from traditional or classical Marxism to post-Marxism and the influence of the Frankfurt school. It is, however, not



possible to cover these developments fully in this chapter. Briefly, they are to do with debates about the economy or the economic base in society being the determinant of all things in the first and final instances.

Within classical Marxism, and within which critical pedagogy is historically located, capitalism is viewed as the major determinant for the configuration and dynamics in societies. Capitalism as an economic system is viewed as the base for all things, and it determines in the first and final instances how things in societies are ordered. Thus, in response to the question: why does “race” and racism exist? The classical Marxist response would be: because they serve the interests of capitalism. “Race” and racism are, for classical Marxists, about the economic interests that they fulfil (see, e.g. Morrow and Torres 1998).

Critical theorists, who came into existence in their critiques and responses to classical Marxism argued that not all of social reality can be explained only by recourse to the economic base. For the post-Marxist, critical theorists, many of whom were linked to and significantly developed by the Frankfurt school, the economic base is not the essence of all of social reality, and neither is it the sole determinant of the many layers of experiences within social reality, in the first or final instances. For critical theorist, post-Marxists “race” and racism have an (relative) autonomy of its own (see, e.g. Scott and Usher 1996). They are not only economic, but also political and socio-cultural and each of these levels impact “race” and racism in specific ways that cannot be reducible to or explainable in terms of capitalism or reduced to it only (see also Gibson 1986).

The view that all things can be explained economically is an economic reductionist argument which has been characteristic of classical Marxism. Post-Marxist critical theorists argue against such reductionism and recognize that there may be specific issues, forces and experiences which have a dynamic of their own. Hall (1976) uses such a post-Marxist, critical theorist approach in *Teaching Race* by recognizing that “race” and racism are not only explainable economically, but also have political and socio-cultural dimensions as well.

Students exposed to such a non-reductionist, social constructivist account of social reality are also pushed beyond the frames of traditional critical pedagogy which has its historical links within classical Marxism. Students within such a non-reductionist approach are enabled to view the ways in which “race” and racism are socially constructed on various levels of society, and they are also able to see the specificity of “race” and racism, that is as not just superstructural manipulations of false consciousness of capitalism.

The generative potential of Hall's (1976) treatment of "race" and racism as social constructions, in non-reductionist and critical ways is due to his recognition that "race" and racism are not given, innate or divine phenomena. It is also to do with the understanding that as social phenomena "race" and racism can be spoken about, explored and deconstructed. It is also generative because it allows for phenomena, "race" and racism in this instance, to be viewed as being constructed on several levels and in non-reductionist ways.

Such an approach is also pedagogically generative because it can be tailored to suit different levels of education. Socially constructed phenomena, such as "race" and racism, can be taught and approached in these ways from early education through to higher education, tailoring the content for the appropriate educational level and still ensuring that the approach and the dimensions that it covers are maintained. The generative potential of Hall's (1976) approach to "race" and racism is thus pedagogically significant.

### RELATIONALITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Hall's (1976) useful suggestions about *Teaching Race*, however, speak more to what he later described as the "first wave of antiracism." This first wave, Hall indicates is one that saw the development of "old forms" of racism. These old forms of racism, which still persist in many ways are nonetheless in decline. Old forms of racism are explicit and blatant forms of racism. They explicitly exclude, deny, dehumanise and inferiorize "black" people, as they simultaneously and equally blatantly put into place notions of "white" superiority and automatic entitlement. Since the global consensus about "race" being "scientifically false" and indicated as such in UN declarations (see UN 1948), and the recognition of racism as a violation of human rights, such old fashion forms of racism have become, to put it mildly, not so "politically correct." This is not to suggest in any way that old-fashioned forms of racism do not exist anymore. It simply states that old forms of racism are more difficult to express currently, and more importantly, mechanisms to take legal action against such overt forms of racism exist. What Hall notes is that due to such developments, catalyst mainly by anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles (Hall et al. 1992) in the modern era (twentieth century), a "second wave of racism" has now become more prevalent.

The “second wave of racism” is, according to Hall (1992), a subtler, inferential and covert form of racism. It is not obvious and blatant. In this second wave of racism “black” people may experience discrimination not by being excluded, but by what happens to them and how they are treated when included.

However, Hall is also more interested in showing that in this second wave of racism, what he refers to as “new ethnicities” (Hall 1992) emerge. These new ethnicities fracture the solidarity that once existed amongst “black” people in their struggles against (old forms of) racism. “Black” people in this second wave of racism have also asserted various forms of their own identities, identities that go beyond “race.” “Black” people in this second wave are classed, gendered, with various and varying political positions, different religions, different sexual orientations, different ages and with different levels of ability and/or disability, occupying various spaces in society and on differing levels. The idea of a homogenous “black” group, as a collective necessarily in solidarity with each other, is, therefore, not a necessarily given state of affairs. Not all “black” people are the same, and not all “black” people will necessarily respond to the same issues or in the same ways.

Hall et al. (1992) use the example of Judge Clarence Thomas, a “black” USA judge who was accused of sexual harassment by Anita Hill, a “black” woman and junior colleague of Judge Thomas. Hall et al. demonstrate that in this case an automatic solidarity of “black” people could not be assumed and did not happen. What this case showed was that the complex intersection between “race” and gender, and “black” solidarity, and “blackness” were fractured. “Black” people responded to this Judge Thomas case from political positions—Judge Thomas was politically conservative, some “black” people responded on racial grounds—Judge Thomas was a “black” man, some responded on gender grounds—Judge Thomas was a man, others responded on class grounds—Judge Thomas was a privileged judge, and others responded in terms of abuse of power by a senior person in relation to a junior colleague. In addition, Hall et al. also show that not only were “black” responses fractured but also “white” responses were fractured too—for example, “white” conservative women sided with Judge Thomas on political grounds by defending a fellow conservative colleague, other “white” women opposed Judge Thomas on gender grounds emphasizing the sexual harassment of a woman by a man. Hall et al. (1992) show in this example that “Whiteness” and “blackness” were fractured, indicating that an automatic sameness and solidarity on the basis on “race” cannot, and could not, be assumed.

It is this complex assembly of identities which intersect with each other that capture the shift to what Hall et al. also describe as “a politics of difference.” As Hall et al. put it: “This is sometimes described as a shift from a politics of identity to a politics of difference” (Hall et al. 1992, p. 280). This “politics of difference” gives rise to “new ethnicities” in the “second wave” (Hall 1992). A “second wave” is where identities are more complex, where identities intersect with each other (and in the same individual) and where identities fracture and dislocate individuals and groups of people.

The Zuma rape trial in 2006 in South Africa reverberates with the Judge Thomas case discussed above (see *The Guardian* May 2006 for more on the Zuma rape trial). Jacob Zuma, then and current (2016) President of South Africa, was accused by a “black,” HIV positive, South African woman of rape. Although Zuma was acquitted of rape charges, the responses to the Zuma rape trial were almost the same as those of the USA Judge Thomas case. In the Zuma rape trial, “black” and “white” women and men were fractured along “race,” gender, class, political party lines and in differing positions in relation to HIV/AIDS. For example, “black” woman who are supportive of the same political party as Zuma supported him, other “black” woman opposed him on the grounds of gender, others opposed him because they did not support his political party, and others still opposed him on the grounds of a man abusing his power over a woman who was his junior, others still did not support Zuma because of HIV/AIDS. Similar to the Judge Thomas case, the Zuma rape trial also showed the ascendancy of the “politics of difference” and the ways in which identities interconnect with each other and how identities in the “second wave” (Hall 1992 in Rattansi and Donald 1992) are complex and not reducible to single homogenous identities either in individuals or groups of people.

Understanding the shift from the first to the second wave of racism, and from a homogenous “black” subject to one with various and varying forms of identities which go beyond “race” has profound theoretical implications. In the following section, these implications are dealt with in terms of relationality, intersectionality and their significance for teaching and learning.

The fracturing of the “black” subject in the second wave of racism indicates two things. First, it allows inferential forms of racism to come to the fore. “Black” women could be discriminated on the basis of “race” and gender by “white” men and women (with “black” women as their “maids”),

and on the basis of gender by “black” men. This means that experiences of racism will differ from one “black” person to another, and thus old forms of blatant racism which homogenised all “black” people begin to decline. This also points to the ways in which “race” and racism are relational; they relate to different people in different circumstances and which are constituted in varying and complex ways. At the same time, these developments also indicate the importance of recognising the many identities that make up each individual, and the ways in which such identities intersect with each other.

The idea of relational thinking, or relationality, is one which indicates that things and indeed people do not exist in isolation or in a vacuum. This links up directly with the social constructivist approach discussed earlier. In the social constructivist approach, it was noted that history, economy, politics and the socio-cultural interact with each other in the construction of phenomena. Relationality entails a recognition of and engagement with such macro-sociological forces in understanding social reality. However, relationality also includes the recognition and engagement with how the macro-sociological forces relate to the micro-sociological realities of people’s daily and individual lives. On the micro-sociological level, the contexts and spaces people occupy, the types of people they interact with in such spaces, how they make meaning of themselves and others, and how they decide on what actions to take by way of negotiating their existences in such spaces, matter. Relating these micro-sociological dimensions to the macro-sociological forces that simultaneously impact them is key to any mode of relational thinking and relationality.

Understanding one’s individual, local location and how it is influenced by the historical, economic, political and socio-cultural macro-sociological dimensions constitutes the basis of relational thinking and it also prevents one from lapsing into forms of individualism and simultaneously allows one to recognise the specificity of people’s actual experiences and avoids forms of reductionist thinking. This would be the case since in each individual life there is a configuration of specific forces at work, there are specific actors and dynamics at work, and these are informed by particular ways in which such individual circumstances are influenced by macro-sociological factors that may be at work. Assuming that only one singular causal factor allows for such situations to emerge becomes very difficult to sustain. Mono-causal explanations, a hallmark of reductionist thinking, are thus, categorically prevented in relational thinking.

As should be clear from the above discussion on relational thinking, relational thinking is pedagogically very powerful. It allows students to view themselves and others in complex ways. Students are also prevented from lapsing uncritically into forms of individualism and are tasked with exploring the complicated ways in which specific lives and particular people are brought into being and experienced. Students develop a critical awareness of themselves and their worlds through relational thinking, and they also develop theoretically sophisticated, as opposed to common sense, understandings of social reality and lives.

An immediate corollary of the above is that if relational thinking works in non-reductionist ways and does not lapse into mono-causal explanations, then human beings and their identities too need to be viewed in the same way. This means that people are more than being just one thing. People carry within them various and varying forms of identities and these intersect with each other. At the same time such identities are not static. They are dynamic. These identities also do not always sit in harmony with each other and may be in tension and contradict each other. These identities may also change. It is to these forms of identities that Hall (1992) refers to as “new ethnicities,” and which he also describes as the “post-modern subject” (Hall et al. 1992).

In relation to “race,” as also discussed earlier, this means that it is crucial to view “black” (and “white”) people for the complex human beings that they are. They are more than just being “black” (or “white”). Not only are “black” (and “white”) people classed, gendered, etc., but they also experience “race” and racism differently. Variations of “blackness” (as well as “whiteness”) will also need to be recognised. It also points to the possibility that “black” people can be racist as well, and amongst themselves; just as much as “white” people can be more anti-racist than “black” people (see MacDonald Inquiry 1989 also in this regard). The point of importance in this regard is to note that identities intersect with each other and the recognition of such intersectionality is crucial for any understanding of how human lives are lived and the kinds of people they become. Such, intersectionality and relationality of identities were also shown in the Judge Thomas case and Zuma rape trial discussed above.

It is precisely on the grounds of the importance of relationality and intersectionality that Ellsworth’s (1989) experiences of teaching a post-graduate class at Wisconsin-Madison were based. Ellsworth notes that although she tried to use a traditional critical pedagogy approach to her

teaching, she soon realized that both the reductionism and mono-causal explanation of social reality and human identities in traditional critical pedagogy (as reducible to the economic base only) were unsustainable in her teaching. She found that the more one emphasized the Marxist understanding that the mode of production, the economic base of capitalism, was the cause for all of reality the more she could not access and allow students in her class to express their own lived identities.

During the course, students in the class broke up into what Ellsworth describes as “affinity groups,” with these groups and membership to these groups shifting during the course. Students broke themselves into “black” and “white” affinity groups, then into “black and female,” “white and female,” “white and male,” “black and male,” then “lesbians,” then “white lesbians,” then “black lesbians,” then “black, working class lesbians,” “black middle class lesbians” and so on. In other words, Ellsworth’s class fractured, into motley of “new ethnicities” and “difference.”

Ellsworth notes that it was in this pedagogical encounter that she found the reductionism and mono-causality of traditional critical pedagogy, with its basis in classical Marxism, “repressive” and “mythical.” She found it “repressive” because it silenced the complexity of social reality and students own lived identities. It was “mythical” because it failed to recognize the intersectionality of complex human identities and the complexity of social life.

It is Hall’s insistent emphasis on non-reductionist thinking and constant endeavour to work with the complexity of relational and intersecting forces and identities that prevents one, pedagogically, from lapsing into the reductionism of traditional critical pedagogy and its “repressive myths.” Students experiencing such a pedagogy, which exposes them to the complexity of social realities, human identities, and relational and intersectional thinking, develop a far more nuanced understanding of issues and themselves and are equipped to explore their worlds in critical ways. Hall helps with being critical of critical pedagogy, and significantly assists with helping students to think critically in the wider sense. Hall also helps pedagogically to allow students to explore and express their lived identities and experiences, promotes rational and critical dialogues about issues in their joint exploration of the construction of the complexities of social lives and themselves, even if they choose to do so in the Ellsworth-type “affinity groups” which shift and change too.

The ideas of social constructivism, relationality and intersectionality are usefully brought together by Hall is his exposition of the “theory of articulation.” The following section looks specifically at the key features of the theory of articulation as enunciated by Hall (1996).

## THE THEORY OF ARTICULATION

Hall (1996) states:

Articulation has a nice double meaning because “articulate” means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an “articulated” lorry: a lorry where the front and back can but need not necessarily be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. (Hall 1996, p. 141 in Morley and Chen 1996)

There are two important points made in the above quotation from Hall. The first is the idea of “language-ing”; and, the second is the idea of a non-necessary linkage. The latter idea will be dealt with first.

The idea that a “lorry” is connected by a linkage that is not necessary and can be broken is a reference to non-reductionism and non-essentialism. Hall elaborates that

The theory of articulation . . . is that the political connotation of ideological elements has no necessary belongingness, and, thus, we need to think of the contingent, the non-necessary, connection between different practices . . . to break with necessitarian and reductionist logic. (Hall 1996, p. 142 in Morley and Chen 1996)

This idea of non-reductionism has been dealt with throughout this chapter. In relation to social constructivism and in the discussion on *Teaching Race*, it was noted that “race” and racism are social constructions which can be changed. As such there is no necessary connection that compels “race” and racism to always exist. It was also pointed out that “race” and racism are contingent upon a particular set of historical, economic, political and socio-cultural configurations, and whilst they directly affect people’s lives, there is no necessary belongingness for such configurations to exist. It is in recognising the non-necessary belongingness of such configurations that alternatives can be imagined, unequal relations transformed and social justice developed. No situation is allowed to change if such situations are conceived of as necessary (read also innate). As such, non-necessitarian, non-reductionist logic, and one which allows us to think the contingent, is one that is central to any attempt to change existing social orders to ones that are more socially just.



In relation to the idea of “language-ing,” Hall (1996) notes that language is central to any mode of expression. However, in order to ward off any suggestion that Hall may be agreeing with the idea that reality may be collapsed into language and the expressions that emanate from it, Hall is clear that such a move would be tantamount to another form of reductionist thinking. Hall explains that, “It’s a kind of reductionism upwards” (Hall 1996, p. 146).

Hall has been emphatic about this because the reductionism upwards which suggests that reality is language or that language is reality is among one of the trends within postmodern thinking. Such an approach which privileges language as the mono-causal explanation of and for all reality is as reductionist and mono-causal in its explanation as classical Marxism. For classical Marxism it is the economic base, in the first and final instances, that constructs reality; for those who only emphasise language, language is what constructs reality, in the first and final instances. Both tend to veer in the direction of reductionism, and both project what is non-necessary, as necessary, and what is contingent as fixed. Both positions, as Hall indicates, are fundamentally theoretically unsustainable, and both are equally counterfactual. Both are reductionist. The one (classical Marxism) is a reductionism downwards (the economic base), and the other (language) is a reductionism upwards (language-cum-ideology).

The theory of articulation then is about recognising the social construction of reality. Such social constructions bring things into relations with each other, and they also render human identities complex, through multiple possible intersections between different types of identities, even within the same individual. These forms of social constructions and relations are not necessary. They are contingent. They are also in a complex interplay which has no necessary belongingness, and as much as they interplay in such non-necessary ways to construct, they can be deconstructed and changed.

Pedagogically, the theory of articulation reinforces the social construction, relational and intersectional approach to pedagogy as outlined earlier. The theory of articulation, however, importantly makes students aware that the realities they experience and explore, including their own selves, is not necessary but contingent, and that these can, and do, change. For students, as with others, the realization that one need not believe that things are so fixed that they cannot be changed, that we are what we are, and that too cannot be changed, is an extremely powerful realization. It is a realization that things, and we, can and do change. It is a realization that we can do something about things and ourselves; we can exercise our agency to transform our world(s).

How would this then work pedagogically in practice? Assume one were to teach about the *Charlie Hebdo* incident which occurred in Paris, France at the beginning of 2015. The *Charlie Hebdo* case was about the shooting to death of 11 *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists/editors at point-blank range while they were in an editorial meeting at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, and one police officer was also later shot to death outside of the offices by Yemen-linked Al-Qaeda Jihadists. Later a widely televised three-day chase of the perpetrators followed and the perpetrators were killed. The incident caused outrage throughout the world and ushered in among one of the most significant events in the year. Teaching about *Charlie Hebdo* could, using the theory of articulation, entail the following:

1. Viewing the incident in articulated, complex, intersected and multiple ways. It is not only about the killings or only about militant Islamic fundamentalism. It is also about freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and the possible limitations thereof and their links with responsibility; modes of representations and how people get depicted through the images; religions and the constructions of Islamophobia; terror and their use as the only means of expression and power; political and economic systems in the context of a global economy, including relations between France and Syria for example; experiences of minority groups in Europe; traditional forms of citizenship and refugees; nationalism, identity and difference. It is not just about the killings or about militant Islamic fundamentalism.
2. Understanding each of these dimensions in relation to their histories and macro-sociological constructions in terms of the economic, political and socio-cultural levels that constituted them may then be explored.
3. Exploring then the different ways in which identities intersect with each other in each individual and in groups of people may then be looked at. Looking at the various and varying ways in which people in Paris, in France and in the rest of the world reacted to the incident may be part of such an exploration too. Looking then at what makes a Jihadist, how they come into being, what constitutes being French and what is used to construct such an image, French-ness may also be explored. Students can also choose to do such explorations in “affinity groups” with the understanding that other students would also be in such groups, that these groupings may shift and change and that each group will need to substantiate how they see themselves being constituted.

4. Arriving through dialogue at an understanding that *Charlie Hebdo* is a complex phenomenon, it is constructed on several levels in complex ways and not reducible either to a mono-causal explanation or view, can then be used to explore what may be done to change it for a better and more just order for all.

Again, neither is the application of Hall's approach nor is this chapter suggesting that it would be as easy as this. What is being suggested here is that approaching topics such as "race" and racism or *Charlie Hebdo* may be done in productive ways if they are approached as socially constructed, intersecting, relational and articulated phenomena. Such an approach allows for such phenomena to be explored and discussed, and for such phenomena to be viewed as changeable. This is as opposed to approaching such phenomena as matters that cannot be spoken about, cannot be taught, cannot be approached rationally, cannot be dialogued about and about which nothing can be done.

In addition, whilst Hall's approach of articulation (which brings together social constructivism, relationality and intersectionality) is being suggested here as a useful and generative pedagogical approach, as a pedagogical approach, it is also recognized that it is in itself limited. Pedagogies do not transform worlds. A lot more is needed for change to happen. However, what is being suggested here is that Hall's approach when applied to pedagogy does help to allow us and students to view the world and themselves in complex ways, in ways that do not reify them into imagined identities that are reducible to only one thing, and which allow their world and themselves to be understood as complex social constructions that can be deconstructed and transformed.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, then, this chapter has focused on Hall's significant contribution to sociological thinking, and how these may be used to inform pedagogical practice. It has been argued throughout this chapter, that working within socially constructivist, relational, intersectional and articulated forms of thinking and which are framed in non-reductionist and non-necessitarian ways are crucial for any critical pedagogy. In fact, they also allow us to go beyond the historical mono-causal and reductionist tendencies within traditional forms of critical pedagogy by ensuring that the multiplicity, fluidity and dynamism of social life and human identities as experienced and lived are explored.

Equipping any student with a view of themselves and their worlds that is informed by such ideas of social construction, relationality, intersectionality and a non-necessary and non-reductionist framework is of tremendous pedagogical value. Students are not only able to shift from common sense to more theoretically informed, nuanced and sophisticated forms of thinking, they also develop critical awareness of their worlds and themselves. Rational dialogues about such constructions of phenomena are thereby also made possible. Not only are explorations of how such constructions, relationality, intersections and articulation interesting and relevant to students' own experiences, but they also enable students to explore possibilities for change in the process. Cultivating a sense of critical agency among students, and allowing them to explore how change may be possible for a just social order is undoubtedly one of the key aims of education (see also Dewey 1941), as opposed to indoctrination. Stuart Hall's seminal theoretical contributions significantly help with such an aim of education.

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