"Can Queer Pedagogy Be Articulated from a Position of Radical Democracy?":
The Spatial Performance of Democracy in Cyberspace[*]

Yin-Kun Chang

Ph. D Candidate in Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Abstract

This paper poses the question: can queer pedagogy be articulated from within a framework of radical democracy? I explore the presence of radical democracy in the educational field so as to increase its usefulness to queer pedagogy. I also demonstrate that the concept and practice of radical democracy brings a number of advantages to queer pedagogy, such as the democratization of knowledge and desire, which will help to foment a new social movement by developing a democratic imagination. In other words, radical democracy is both an attempt to redefine the democratic agency of deliberation and reflection, as well as a modus operandi of social participation at large. Radical democracy is especially relevant to the critical prospects of queer pedagogy because deliberation and reflection in radical democracy are beneficial to the shape of collective identity and transformative agency in participatory societies. In addition, this paper considers how radical democracy fulfills the conditions of

spatial performance on the Internet: in chat rooms and through websites, BBS's, MUD's, and so on. This notion of spatial performance is built on concepts of performance and tacit/strategy set out by Butler and de Certeau. Finally, this paper considers that queer pedagogy is a long revolution, indeed one without end, and that spatial performance in cyberspace is the initial revolutionary act. The democratic imagination is both a means by which the oppressed come to know their oppression, and the vehicle through which they struggle to find tactics for change.

Key words: queer pedagogy, radical democracy, spatial performance, critical pedagogy

The term radical democracy has a set of positive connotations: it is associated with the new social movements of the seventies and eighties, in particular feminism, gay and lesbian rights, environmentalism, and multiculturalism; it suggests a politics oriented more toward cultural than toward political or economic struggle; and it is associated with decentralization and has vaguely anarchist, or at least anti-bureaucratic, overtones. It suggests grassroots politics, diversity, playful political practice that is not bound by rigid structures but is continually in the process of transformation. (Epstein, 1996: 128).

From a materialist perspective, we can argue that objective conceptions of time and space are necessarily created through material practices and processes which serve to reproduce social life... It is a fundamental axiom of my enquiry that time and space cannot be understood independently of social action (Harvey, 1990: 204).

I. The Unmentionable and the Invisible in Educational Institutions

As issues of multicultural education gradually begin to occupy a legitimate position in educational discourse, more and more studies have focused on the oppressed and on uneven experiences among different races, classes and genders. But queer[1] issues are still unmentionable and invisible in educational institutions most of the time. Queer teachers and students are both rendered invisible (through non-recognition) and simultaneously subject to negative stereotyping (by mis-recognition). According to my past interviewing and observing of queer teachers in Taiwan, as well as to relevant literature reviews all over the world,

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[1] "Queer" bears with it a very complex meaning. In a general definition, this includes anyone who differs from heterosexual norms. Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgendered people, and sexual "aberrants" of all sorts with hybrid identities of class, race, and ethnicity may be called queer.

negative sociocultural images marginalize queers as deviant, ugly and threatening, thus legitimating acts of violence[2] against them on campus. Not only are their values, perspectives and lives rendered invisible by the real worlds of the dominant group, which permeate cultural and institutional norms; this invisibility further causes members of oppressed groups to view themselves through the lens of supposed normality. No matter where it takes place, the educational experiences of those who are gay, lesbian or bisexual indicate that schools are lonely and isolating places, contributing to depression, extreme self-criticism, fear of rejection, and harassment. There is very little academic evidence in support of teachers and students who are queer. That is, school is still a non-democratic place for sexual minorities.

This isolated situation within multicultural education offers a strong analogy to the metaphor of the closet proposed by Sedgwick (1990). This concept points out marginalized situations in queers' everyday lives, particularly in education, which is a relatively conservative field in societies. There is no denying that subjectivity in schooling and curriculum still stands by heterosexism, and that this emphasis on heteronormative subjectivities results in homophobia. Lorde (1985: 3) describes heterosexism as "a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others, and thereby the right to dominance." In other words, the dominance of heterosexist ideology and culture leads to homophobia, and consequently an unspeakable situation for queer people. Lorde describes homophobia as "a terror surrounding feelings of love for members of the same sex and thereby a hatred of those feelings in others"

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[2] For example, straight students bash queer bodies in Taiwan. We call this subculture on Taiwan's campuses "aluba", that is, a sissy boy who will be punished by separating his legs and bumping his penis into a tree or a building's pillar. In addition, teachers, and students following their example, often devalue sissy boys with negative language and spoken codes indicating that they have a moral disease (Chang, 2002).

(1985: 3-4). Thus, whereas heterosexism relates more to a set of ideologies pervasive throughout a culture, homophobia acts out heterosexist beliefs and attitudes: its purpose is to exclude and eliminate non-heterosexuality. Connell (1995a) pointed out that the domination of women and subordinate men is one of the defining features of hegemonic masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is canonical, and sexuality will be constructed in power relations against a backdrop of homophobia and hegemony. This construction bears on educational settings as well. As Goldberg (1993: 7) said: "Sexuality is never simply a set of acts unconnected to questions of power." Not only queer folks but also straight teachers and students have to question the organization of power with regard to sexual orientation and discourses on sexuality in schooling and in their everyday lives. Rhoads (1994: 30) also stated that power is neither chosen nor avoided by social actors; power is the inevitable by-product of circumstances that bring people into social interaction. Within all power relations, a tension exists between compliance and resistance. Thus, as bell hooks has suggested, the process of "coming to voice" can be an important initial step in instilling a resistant political agency. If, as hooks put it, people can "talk back," they may be moved to challenge other forms of authority (hooks, 1989). Of course, the process of talking back is also a democratic and educational process, because it is based on an absolute freedom, and it can be learned.

In light of the fact that school is still a non-democratic place for queer folks, in this paper I will explore the possibility of this argument: can queer pedagogy be articulated from a position of radical democracy? First, let me briefly define these two important technical terms—queer pedagogy and radical democracy. Queer pedagogy is quite a blurred and constructed concept. What should a queer pedagogy be?[3] Syntactically, the word

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[3] Like most vibrant pedagogical approaches, the pedagogies included under the queer rubric arose in response to certain perceived sociopolitical arrangements or issues. Likewise, an inherent intention within queer pedagogy is to change these arrangements, even though the new configurations cannot be completely foreseen.

queer can refer both to subject and object: teaching queer material and teaching any material form a queer perspective. William Haver (1997) and Deborah Britzman (1998) have been working on a radical formulation of what queer pedagogy can do. For Haver (1997: 291), it is a way of interrupting and makes "strange, queer or even cruel what we had thought to be a world." This pedagogy would seem to be totally distinct from the necessity of teaching as gay men and being out, and the relative merits of these strategies depends on what or whom we are teaching. The best example comes from Frederick Greene's classroom experience. According to Greene, "as teachers of English literature and composition, our job is to encourage and provide opportunities for students to think about and ask questions of the world, of reality, politics, and the possibility of meaning and truth." He holds that teaching is intrinsically political: "to introduce queer theory into the literature or composition classroom is to do a variety of things. It is first of all to immediately and intimately engage our analyses of texts with the political world" (Greene, 1996: 337). Although queer theory represents a powerful force in rethinking homosexuality as

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There are some differences between lesbian/gay pedagogy and queer pedagogy. In my opinion, lesbian/gay pedagogy looks more like a consciousness-raising pedagogy, alerting students to questions of homophobia, creating tolerance of diversity in the classroom, but at the same time scrupulously avoiding recognition of the classroom as an eroticized space. I see queer pedagogy as something more risky and explosive; it requires a radical interrogation of all social analyses, particularly in areas that appear to have little to do with sex. It should favor questions over answers. It should shock and titillate, not just inform. Ultimately, which is preferable would depend on the learning context, the political allegiances of the teacher, and the desired type of interventions. That is, queer pedagogy insists on the importance of sexuality, of definitions and understandings worked through sexuality, as constitutive of everyone and everything. It de-links students from the identities that have been overconsolidated in the world they occupy; it allows for experimental thinking, historicizing, and theorizing the relations between the sex acts they do or imagine doing and the public contexts that might provide less alienated relations to their bodily contexts. But in my conception of queer pedagogy or my past fieldwork experience, to solicit the students to imagine different relations between acts and bodies does not call us to solicit them to the safety of a new identity form. Pedagogy should not be about the reproduction of identities or their representation, but about world-building, or culture-making.

cultural politics, in my opinion, the current configuration of queer theory only sees the applicability of Foucauldian or psychoanalytical criticism, and is consequently blind to other formal possibilities. That is, we have become accustomed to talking sex and thinking sex in increasingly abstract and symbolic ways. This discourse and epistemology is quite far from everyday life and tends to build up universal discussions while ignoring non-discursive matters. Thus, queer theory discourse is alien discourse to the everyday lives of queer folks, and queer pedagogy from this position also lacks a radical political agenda of struggling for democracy. Ideally, queer pedagogy needs to shift its spectrum of identity and performance from affirmation to transformation. Its final goal is liberation from sexually-based definitions rather than liberation *through* such sexual divisions. This shift from affirmation to transformation is both a democratic struggle and a negotiation. Tucker (1997: xvi) argues that democracy requires some negotiation between "I and we," the "one and the many." In my opinion, radical democracy is an attempt to redefine the democratic agency of deliberation and reflection, even as it redefines the modus operandi of participation in general. Radical democracy is especially relevant to the critical prospects of queer pedagogy because deliberation and reflection in radical democracy is useful for queer folks in shaping their collective identity and transformative agency. Thus, in this paper I will explore where to locate radical democracy in the educational field so as to endow queer pedagogy with a radical political agenda. I will also demonstrate that the concept of radical democracy brings some great advantages to queer pedagogy--such as the democratization of knowledge and desire, which indicates a number of methods to develop the democratic imagination.

II. Outlet for the Closet: The Concept of Radical Democracy

Because I hope that the concept of school can be a democratic site for queer folks, let me propose some fundamental questions in the beginning.

What is democracy?[4] What is democratic education? What potential benefits does radical democracy offer to queer pedagogy? In general, radical democracy stresses the primacy of cultural difference. This idea would reconcile current tensions between national and local governance by reorganizing political constituencies in ways typically considered off-limits to politics. Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 176) discussed radical democracy as an alternative outlet for a New Left, and they defined it as follows:

> In the face of the project for the reconstruction of a hierarchic society, the alternative of the left should consist of locating itself fully in the field of the democratic revolution and expanding the chains of equivalents between the different struggles against oppression. It cannot be to renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy. We shall explain the dimensions of this task…but the very fact that it is possible arises out of the fact that the meaning of liberal discourse on individual rights is not definitively fixed; and just as this unfixity permits their articulations with elements of conservative discourses, it also permits different forms of articulation and redefinition which accentuate the democratic moment (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 176).

Laclau and Mouffe articulate some key points, including the importance of discursive communities, democracy as the eruption of action in moments of non-hegemony, and such problems for democracy as the off-limits status that political elites occupy in the traditional definition.

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[4] Habermas (2001: 239-252) divided the concept of democracy into to three categories: liberal democracy (thin democracy), socialist democracy (strong democracy) and deliberative democracy (participatory democracy). Of course, deliberation and participation play key roles in radical democracy. The main idea in this paper—radical democracy—belongs to the participatory type, and this democracy is a powerful tool for oppressed peoples, such as political or sexual minorities, to express their voices.

Thus, radical democracy becomes a powerful way for the Left to challenge these limitations of liberal democracy. What's more, Trend (1996: 15) used Laclau and Mouffe's arguments to explain the goal of radical democracy: "it is not a matter of establishing a mere alliance between given interests but of actually modifying their identity to bring about new political identity." This radical democratic model of the subject has profound implications for political organization, for it shatters convenient distinctions between public and private. This new political identity illuminates a great potential for political minorities such as aboriginal people and sexual minorities to develop their subjectivities, particularly shaping them on a collective basis. In other words, the idea of radical democracy must become a real and radical agency, and radical democratic practices must necessarily to be connected to the real struggles of real people in real relations in real communities. In the following analysis, I will focus on the distinction between liberal and radical democracy first, and on the relationship between education and radical democracy in a later section.

A. Liberal Democracy and Radical Democracy: Position Choice

There are quite diverse theoretical approaches about democracy in a Western context, such as liberal and radical democracy. First, let me clarify the difference between liberal and radical democracy. Liberal democracy, in my mind, outlines some ideal social and political types on an individual level. For instance, Rawls (1993) pointed out three well-recognized qualities within political liberal doctrines: (1) the idea of an overlapping consensus, (2) the priority of right and ideas of good, and (3) the idea of public reason. He writes: "our exercise of political power is fully proper only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may reasonably be expected to endorse

in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason. This is the liberal principle of legitimacy."(1993: 137) In order to create free and equal situations, Rawls (1993: 144) mentions the condition of overlapping consensus to frame a political conception of justice in advance of its execution. Although it purports to represent the outcome of the free exercise of unconstrained human reason under the condition of liberty, liberal political justice still fails to consider equality within the scope of individual differences. Although Rawlsian doctrines affirm political conceptions that start from within their own comprehensive view and that draw on the religious, philosophical, and moral grounds (Rawls, 1993: 147), in reality people who speak freely do not necessarily mean to affirm other points of view, since people may affirm freedom only on the basis of similar backgrounds.[5] Here I don't want to deny the important role of liberal democracy, but for me it falls under the designation of a utopian slogan,[6] and it has only a few implications for queer folks. Liberal

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[5] This argument proposed by liberalism is built on the concept of a "generalized other." This is naïve to my mind because just to focus on the individual implies a faulty of collectiveness of "the public." The term "generalized other" emphasizes that individuals create generalizations from the common elements they find in the attitudes and actions of others. According to G.H. Mead, it is by taking the role of the generalized other that an individual internalizes shared values and thus is able to engage in complex cooperative processes. However, this definition seems just to imply another utopic situation. In fact, Habermas enlarged his view of the communications between the acting individual and members of a generalized other to include "the third perspective." Habermas described the third perspective as one which is located in society itself. It is the perspective from which we, the citizens, collectively and publicly deliberate about what is in the best interest of everyone. It is the perspective that the members of post-traditional societies themselves intuitively assume when the only option left to them in the face of problematic basic moral norms is to fall back upon rational grounds (Habermas, 2001).

[6] A very similar example can be found in the educational field, as in Amy Gutmann's arguments. With regard to the liberal focus on individuals, for instance, she concentrated on this question: what is the democratic ideal that complements democratic education? She thought that a guiding principle of deliberative democracy is reciprocity among free and equal individuals, and that a democracy is deliberative to the extent that citizens and their accountable representatives offer one another a morality of mutual justification. What's more, she declared that "liberal democracy is not opposed to publicly recognizing cultural difference. It is opposed to recognizing the collective rights of cultural groups to engage in practices that oppress anyone,

democracy evolved in direct response to the perceived encroachment of the state on personal liberty. It relies, therefore, on the notion of the autonomous subject within public and private domains, but in reality, it still has some problems, particularly for unmentionable and invisible queer folks.[7]

As a result of the persistent troubles of the liberal democratic model and in direct contrast to its aims, theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe proposed what they termed a "radical democratic" reconceptualization of the citizen, who is unencumbered by essentialist categories of modernist subjectivity. This group-identification model ties its subjects irrevocably to the social, and individuality is also maintained because of the unique mix of associations within each person. In brief, radical democracy means democracy in its essential form, democracy at a grassroots level which empowers its participants. The radical definition of democratic politics goes beyond conventional thinking to engage the far more dynamic domain of cultural representations and social practices. That is, democracy is defined at the level of social formations, political communities, and social practices, which are regulated by principles of social justice, equality and diversity. Thus, radical democracy begins with a radical

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including their own members, in the name of cultural difference. Liberal democracy recognizes the rights of individuals to engage in cultural practices that offend other individuals with different cultural identities, as long as the practices do not violate anyone's rights" (Guttmann, 1999: 305). But in this way, liberal democracy becomes impossible to apply to queerness; queer people are silenced and invisible folks in most situations.

[7] In liberal democracy, the concept of citizenship represents the individual's position as an equal. I believe queer citizenship is very important, but this liberal goal needs a radical agenda. Weeks (1995: 116-118) proposed "the moment of citizenship" and put it thus: "The early gay liberation movements both gave rise to an emancipatory project and to a more vigorous campaign for legal and social rights for lesbians and gays, just as women's liberation propelled a more radical claim to achieving, finally, the rights of women. This apparent divide between an emancipatory politics and a liberal rights agenda remains controversial and contested in all the countries where radical sexual politics have developed, yet in historical perspective it is likely that each moment is necessary to the other. Without radicalized agenda, the politicization of sexuality would have proved difficult."

critique of current forms of representation—those forms that limit the populace's decision-making capacities to choices over who will govern. For example, the issue of queerness represents strongly ironic meanings and contains within it accusations of discriminatory identification against heterosexism. Radical democrats argue that traditional democracy has failed to deliver on its promises of equality and civic participation for reasons of these representational assumptions. First, radical democrats claim that the democratic principle underlines critiques of capitalism and, secondly, they assert that the creation of an egalitarian society will entail extending these democratic principles into ever-expanding areas of everyday life. Moreover, Epstein (1996: 128) also argued for a conception of radical democracy associated with new social movements[8] in which

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[8] What I mean by "new social movements" has much to do with post-1960s organizing efforts, for it is out of these that feminism, environmentalism, gay liberation, and the antinuclear movements emerged. A common denominator of all of them would be their differentiation from class struggle. Epstein compared old and new social movements. The old social movements were those organized around class, especially the working class; they were concerned with political power and economic redistribution. On the contrary, the new social movements were organized not around class but other kinds of identities; these movements were not interested primarily in political power or in economic restructuring; rather, they were interested in cultural change, in the transformation of values and everyday life (Epstein, 1996: 128). In addition, Gusfield (1994: 66) called these transformations "fluid movements." If we can imagine the interaction between homosexual and heterosexual persons prior to the emergence of the gay rights movement, we may posit a conventionalized set of norms to which people adhere or behave in idiosyncratic, individualistic forms. But, once the movement is set in motion, behavior can no longer be conventionalized. Instead, behaviors are undertaken with the recognition that alternatives are both possible and socially legitimated at some level. Thus, homosexuals attempt to change discriminatory laws but also become open about their identities. Consequently, interaction between homosexuals and heterosexuals takes on a new tone. That interaction need not be direct or face-to-face; it may exist in the imaginative rehearsals of action that are fostered by vicarious experience, such as by reading, watching news or dramatic presentations, or on the Internet, as will be discussed in this paper. The conventional norms of deviance that have guided both homosexuals and heterosexual have come to be doubted and their acceptance has been made problematic. However, Touraine (2001: 49) pointed out two dangers that threaten the formation of new social movements: the lapse into violence, and extreme dependency on outside support. In brief, new social movements define a shift from classic struggles to new ones, and Touraine (2001: 51) outlined the positive goals of today's

every position was constructed and negotiated anew, and in which no connection between class location and political position was assumed.

From a historical perspective, radical democratic politics is a social movement new to the 1960s and 1970s, two decades that provided a political space in which to react against right wing policy. Social movement allowed this new form of democracy to incubate and develop its political agenda.[9] That is, radical democracy is a bottom-up movement which provides the driving force for change, and it has the following three characteristics: enhancing democracy at the grass roots, empowering silenced individuals, and creating new forms of solidarity. When education can be articulated in line with radical democratic principles, it will promote radical potentials for students and teachers. These principles make possible new forms of cultural politics within pedagogy, and they aim to extend the critical capabilities of students and teachers to engage with social and cultural issues. To my mind, a radical democratic pedagogy also transforms the cultural configuration of thought and action in each individual, as each one is influenced more or less by the action of every other.

Laclau and Mouffe considered that political movements are the best

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social movement—the defense of the cultural and social rights of individuals and minorities. The general principle on which all social movements are now based is the right of cultural equality. However, Butler (2000a: 272-273) disagrees with Laclau's idea of new social movement, and she would be reluctant to identify that task with a transcendental analysis of the a priori conditions of political articulation itself (across all time and place). She comments, "It still seems to me to be quite difficult to read social movements; what interpretative practice is necessary, especially when those movements may not be indisputably new, when there is a question of whether they share a structure, and how any common structure or common constituting condition can be known?"

[9] This political agenda met with opinions from C. Wright Mills. Miller (1987: 87) said that Mills's project fosters a "free and knowledgeable public" and his essay eloquently expressed his desire to conduct research with democratic relevance. His belief is that feelings of personal frustration and powerlessness ought to be connected to public issues, and this has become one basis for the characteristic notion of the New Left that *The personal is political.*"

example of democratic practices. They claim that "democratic practice—the terrain of hegemonic recomposition—carries a potential for the democratic expansion and deepening of socialist political practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 58). To put it differently, democracy depends on the process of real participation. In light of a radical democratic concentration on reflection and deliberation, the articulation of the public sphere[10]—set out by Habermas (1989) in *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*—is quite important to this discussion. Radical democracy needs to create new political spaces for dialogue and debate, and the public sphere is a significant mechanism of democratic formulation. Thus, democratic education is conducive to active participation in public life. However, participation in the public sphere must be built on the basis of equality, and the concept of the public sphere has rightly been criticized for its patriarchal and heterosexual bias. For instance, Fraser (1990: 63) criticized the limits of Habermas' public sphere: in the dominant society, social inequality is assumed not to affect discussions about or deliberation within the public sphere. In its Habermasian conception, the public sphere is an arena of debate practically monopolized by men, whose political, economic and social superiority is reproduced in public discourse and media representation. Fraser suggested that there never was a public sphere that retained autonomy from state and civil society, because unequally empowered participants in the public sphere share in legitimating the illusion that decisions were made among equally empowered participants. This effect regulated the successful bracketing of inequalities and the consequent achievement of equality among speakers.

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[10] In Western philosophy, there are three different conceptions about the public sphere. The view of public space common to the traditional republican or civic virtue is described as an agnostic one, and the thought of Arendt is the main point of reference here. The second conception is provided by the liberal tradition beginning with Kant. This is named the legalistic model of public space. The final model is the one implicit in Habermas's work which envisages a democratic socialist's restructuring of late-capitalist societies, and is named "discursive public space" (Benhabib, 1998).

Fraser further argued that the goal of a democratic society is not to glorify the charade of setting aside real differences, but rather to accept the validity of the varied means by which diverse people express themselves on their own terms. This constitutes the normative framework for recognizing the limitations of a singular category--the public sphere--while acknowledging that in practice there are multiple public spheres. Thus, Fraser proposed the concept of the "counter-public" in a feminist context, with its variegated array of journals, bookstores, publishing companies, film and video distribution networks, lecture series, research centers, academic programs, conferences, conventions, festivals, and local meeting places as "imagined communities"--the term proposed by Benedict Anderson. Within these kinds of counter-publics, feminist women have invented new terms for describing social reality, including "sexism," "sexual harassment," and "marital, date and acquaintance rape."(Fraser, 1990: 67) Although Fraser focused on women and not queer issues, I think queer folks use counter-publics in a similar way.

Through activities in these counter-publics, marginalized groups, for our current purposes queer teachers and students, can participate in the societal definition of social issues, and can then influence decisions. Participation may create new understandings of how society should be organized and operated. By participation in counter-publics, people can challenge the anti-participatory tendencies of liberal democracy. In spite of the fact that counter-publics in educational fields are increasingly present in all kinds of formations, participants from subordinate social groups are still usually silenced in them. Social inequality is not set aside so easily in the public sphere. Thus, the perpetual goal of radical democracy is to reconstruct power relations and to redistribute power from elites to various local publics. Radical democracy thus creates conditions for marginalized groups to invest in the debates over the meaning and nature of education as both discourse and critical practice. Then, how can the concept of radical

democracy be fulfilled in reality? Dewey (1927: 153-154) believes that communication is what holds a democratic community together.[11] The process by which people discuss their individual and group desires, their needs and prospective actions, allows them to discover their shared interests in the consequences of their actions. This critical deliberation will create the ability to act on collective goals, and this process of communication and deliberation constitutes a democratic public. Of course, since this process can also be realized in educational institutions, the same governing principles transfer to the educational setting as well.

Because face-to-face communication can be very difficult among queer folks, especially for young queers, various media such as the Internet and queer magazines replace face-to-face communication in facilitating democratic deliberation and action. On the Internet in particular, individuals constantly read and interpret communications to themselves and to others. Individuals construct their identities, doing so in relation to ongoing dialogues, not as acts of pure consciousness. Such activity connotes a "democratization" of subject constitution, because the acts of discourse are not limited to one-way address and not constrained by the gender or sex-orientation traces inscribed in face-to-face communications. The magic of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural acts, symbolizations in all forms, in the hands of participants. Thus, debates about social reality can lead to identifying their problems and sources, developing possible solutions, and working for change. As Dewey suggests:

> *Ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are*
> *but   soliloquy,   and   soliloquy   is   but   broken   and   imperfect*

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[11] Iris Young (1997) extended this idea, arguing that difference may be utilized as a resource for democratic communication. Differences in group perspectives form as a resource for enlarging the understanding of every person, so that each can take account of others' perspectives.

thought…Publication is partial and the public which results is partially informed and formed until the meaning it purveys passes from mouth to mouth. There is no limit to the liberal expansion and confirmation of limited personal intellectual endowment which may proceed from the flow of social intelligence when that circulates by word of mouth from one to another in the communications of local community (Dewey, 1927: 218-219).[12]

In other words, radical democracy needs to create discursive conditions in which even the most normalized forms of subjugation can be viewed as illegitimate, and in which the elimination of subordination can be imagined. Laclau and Mouffe called the process of creating discursive conditions a "new political space" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 122). In my opinion, one significant hope for creating a new political space lies in education.

B. The Relationship Between Education and Radical Democracy: The Democratic Imagination

Following the discussion above, the field of radical democracy not only functions in institutional education, it also includes broader fields in everyday life. Trend (1997: 148-149) said radical democracy means admitting that many areas that claim neutrality in our lives are in fact sites

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[12] Although John Dewey is always labeled as a pragmatist and Habermas belongs to the neo-Marxist tradition, in my opinion, Habermas's ideas of ideal speech situations and communicative action are clearly informed, at least in part, by Dewey. This thinking also echoes Richard Bernstein's argument. Bernstein (1986: 91) points out that Habermas would feel comfortable with the appellation "pragmatic." Habermas's credit is that he has been one of the few German philosophers who (along with Apel) has been able to appreciate the vitality, esprit, and relevance of what is best in the American pragmatic tradition. Habermas has creatively drawn on the work of Pierce and Mead in developing his own understanding of communicative action, discourse, and rationality, but the American pragmatist with whom Habermas shares the deepest affinity is John Dewey. Habermas pursues what Dewey took to be the aim of the reconstruction of philosophy, which enables us to cope with the concrete "problems of men" in their sociopolitical context.

of profound ideological struggle. For instance, television newscasts, school curricula, computer programs, scientific breakthroughs, great works of literature—these are not objective phenomena that somehow exist outside the realm of ideology; they are forms of representation invested with specific interests in every manifestation. Through these texts, dominance strives to replicate itself, often disguising its actions in the process. In this case, a prominent form of this disguised domination is the silence of queer people who have not discovered an active method of participation. Indeed, democracy is a process that depends on participation, which is defined by the willingness to engage and believe that the actions and voices of individuals can have an effect on a collective totality. In part this constitutes an exercise in political imagination; in part it is a consequence of an active citizenry convinced that its constituents are their own rulers.

Touraine (1997: 143-147) further discussed the relationship between education and democracy. He thought democratic action meant resisting the growth of a mass society by extending decision-making sites and processes in such a way that the impersonal constraints on action come into close contact with individual projects and preferences. To these ends, education is necessary to cultivate democratic impetus. Touraine believed that, on the one hand, education should develop reason and the capacity for rational action; on the other, it should develop individual creativity and the recognition of Others as subjects. Touraine thought that education operates under three equally important goals: (1) to maintain the central position that the acquisition of knowledge holds in education; (2) to develop the capacity for rational thought; and (3) to understand and acknowledge others—both individuals and collectivities—as subjects. Together, these three criteria develop both a critical spirit of innovation and an awareness of one's own particularity, which is a product of individual history as well as culture memory. Thus, education should be based on a curriculum that promotes the ability to think rationally, to

express oneself, and to recognize oneself and Others as subjects. Touraine didn't emphasize the real content of such a curriculum, but Giroux suggested that the relation between critical pedagogy and radical democracy might fill in Touraine's blank page. Giroux considered that (1) educators and students need a critical perspective on an anti-political-correctness view of teaching, knowledge, and standards; and (2) they need access to elements of a critical pedagogy that would challenge and pose alternatives to ideological and pedagogical assumptions. These elements inform the reactionary attack on academics whose classroom practices are often summarily dismissed as merely a species of political correctness (Giroux, 1996: 181). In other words, democracy creates a radical position to facilitate practices through education.

Among various theoretical works in educational discourse, critical pedagogy and radical democracy occupy a relationship defined as elective affinity.[13] Critical pedagogy draws upon various theories, including Gramsci's work on the concept of hegemony, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the work of Paulo Freire in extending critical theory to the practice of developmental education, and more recently, the contemporary theoretical contributions of feminism, cultural studies, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and post-modernism. In other words, critical pedagogy has located itself in a dialectical relationship among such overdetermined influences as capitalism, sexism, racism, homophobia, and the relative autonomy of the individual's subjectivity. Although much of the vocabulary of "empowerment," "dialogue," and "voices" has centered the lexicon of critical pedagogy, we must keep in mind that the real praxis

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[13] When two systems of thought overlap with one another or contain ideas that are similar or which resonate together, they are said to have elective affinity. I have argued elsewhere (Chang, 2001: 153-155) that a site of resistance in critical pedagogy is the performance of radical democracy, and I thought that the core ideas of critical pedagogy—making the "political more pedagogical" and "the pedagogical more political"—both represent notes of reflection and deliberation in radical democracy.

of these principles is what is critical. As Apple reminded us: "unfortunately, all too many 'critical theorists' in education have forgotten about the necessity of such action. Theory rules with little correction from the realities of real institutions in real communities in real struggle. For all too many of these people, realities had become a 'text,' a subject for deconstruction, but with little concrete action in solidarity with the oppressed" (Apple, 2002: ix-x). In brief, if the idea of radical democracy ignores material conditions in reality, then it is only a slogan that will meet the same logical end as liberal democratic slogans.

Radical democracy in education requires both material social equality and multicultural recognition, and this is particularly the case for sexual minorities. Thus, radical democracy is also in Freire's term a "democracy of the oppressed" because a democracy of the oppressed emphasizes transformative structure and agency at both a critical and an ethically hopeful level. This kind of democratic education exemplifies a viewpoint of opposition and a commitment to collective empowerment. Thus, what radical democracy offers for the oppressed is to develop "the democratic imagination." This rests on three criteria: (1) students must experience a democratic environment and spirit instead of the basic and fixed content of traditional curricula. Since a prescriptive approach merely replaces one framework for seeing the democracy with another, democratic education would thus move away from saying that students need certain values and norms. (2) Students must reflect and deliberate on their cultural or social order/justice/equality in everyday life instead of thinking only at an abstracted or metaphysical level. Democratic education should begin with content close to students' experiences, rather than with over-academic or abstracted elements. And (3) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the current doxa instead of allowing the passive instillation characteristic of "banking education" (Freire, 1970/1993). Thus, this kind of democratic education for the

oppressed carries with it some key tenets both for the oppressor and the oppressed. First, it requires that students experience and reflect on the political issues of their everyday lives. Second, students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, morals, and institutions that produce, reproduce, and maintain social inequality. Finally and most importantly, democratic education does not imply that it is enough for students just to learn basic contents such as justice, democracy, equality, and so on, which lack real praxis; rather, they must develop their own visions of the world and enact them.

In my thinking about realizing radical democracy in institutional roles, whether in the classroom or in other contexts for schooling, the democratic imagination works to develop a concept of dignity, which will replace the honor code for sexual minorities. The honor code is a troublesome internal model for regulation; by contrast, dignity implies that identity is essentially independent of institutional roles. Thus, democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders (Taylor, 1994). I agree that democracy is based on a politics of mutual recognition, but we need to go beyond a dichotomous trap in which sexualities mean the complexes of male/female or heterosexual/homosexual, and consider that sexualities also include all kinds of sexualities such as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, fetishist, and so on. In addition, when queer pedagogy can be articulated by using the concept of radical democracy, its model of education enables the democratization of desire and knowledge. For instance, Connell (1995b) maintained that the goal of radical sexual politics is to create democracies of pleasure. He considered it meaningful to speak of "sexual liberation" when oppression is functioned in sexual and social relations between groups of people. What liberation then means is that the

oppressed gain power over their own lives, where that power was formerly exercised by other groups. In other words, democratizing the social relations of sexuality is, in principle, no more mysterious than democratizing any other complex of social relations and social practices, such as the awareness of sexuality, sexual desire, gender difference, and other forms of oppression. The democratization of desire, therefore, means expanded educational access and inquiry to all the means of sexual/desired expression, mediated and otherwise, especially acknowledging the autonomy of the body and desire instead of concentrating on abstracted principles like justice; subsequently, this democratization invokes the emergence of a more diverse and pluralistic sexual culture in the educational field. For instance, talking about all kinds of love is closer to everyday life than any abstracted knowledge. As bell hooks said: "Love…is an important source of empowerment when we struggle to confront issues of sex, race, and class" (Quoted in Sandoval, 2000: 139), and Freire also wrote: "Love is an act of courage, not fear…a commitment to others…[and] to the cause of liberation" (Freire, 1970/1993: 78). With a feminist voice, we may maintain that the personal is political. What's more, a democratization of knowledge means that all teachers and students trace how the need to achieve an open sharing of knowledge creates an impetus among sexual orientations of all kinds for non-discrimination around educational environments. The starting point would explore alternative conceptions of knowledge, including what kinds of knowledge are considered legitimate, or those not publicly and privately divided as irreconcilable knowledge outside the mainstream discourse. In empirical studies, McKay (1999: 143-144) pointed out some principles of a democratic philosophy of sexual education through her teaching, and these included that (1) it begins not with truth statements about the nature of human sexuality, but with a commitment to promote the values of democracy; (2) it does not suggest that there is a single moral ideal of human sexual conduct--rather, it acknowledges and affirms the existence

of a diversity of sexual moral truths; (3) students are encouraged to reflect upon their own values and those of others in the context of the overlapping consensus of a democratic society. If her arguments are applicable to the democratic imagination in education, then it is necessary to develop diverse knowledge and to relinquish morals that constrain desire and pleasure. My hope is that the democratic imagination plays the role of facilitating a self-cultivation of body and mind. As Ellswoth (1997: 46) noted, "acts and moments of desire, fear, horror, pleasure, power, and unintelligibility are exactly what most educators sweat over trying to prevent, foreclose, deny, ignore, close down." In other words, we need honestly face all kinds of desire and sexuality instead of making believe that heterosexuality is an absolute paradigm.

A teacher's role in this radical democratic mode of sexual or gender education seems like that of an "intellectual craftsman" who shapes his material through the method of "problem-posing"—the term proposed by Freire—to help students develop their own agency. Problem-posing focuses on power relations in the classroom, and teachers use students' thought and speech as the base for developing critical understandings of personal experience, unequal conditions in society, and existing knowledge. Teachers have to present knowledge in any form as a problem for mutual inquiry. That is, problem-posing goes deeply into any issue or knowledge to indicate its social and personal dimensions. Freire emphasized problem-posing as a democratic way for students to take part in contentions over knowledge (Freire, 1970/1993: 72-73). The problems involved in categorical knowledge, such as those tied up in sexual education, need to be noticed and discussed, as in the example of Cornbleth & Waugh (1995: 200), who mentioned the concept of dialogue among difference. They envisioned how the dialogue among differences encompasses different ideas, interpretations, and perspectives as well as diverse participants. This dialogue also delimits its conversation through

its many voices, some contesting, some cohering, and all demanding and deserving attention. In addition, participants in a dialogue among differences listen and try to understand one another without denying or suppressing each other's otherness. The final goal of the democratic imagination is like the notion of "conscientizacao" presented by Freire, which is the process that invites learners to engage the world and others critically through *reading the word and the world.* As Freire and Macedo (1987: 29) always maintained, "critical pedagogy is the act of reading the word and the world by taking the measure of the world's indwelling in us as we are constructed as ethical and political subjects." In my view, reading the word and the world means both critical cognition and radical action.

But how can teachers and students read word and world? I always keep Derrida's thinking in my mind—"there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida, 1974: 158)—and, if we want to master the context/world, the only thing we can do is just to begin with reading text/word. I would like to supplement Derrida's argument in this way: text does not indicate a static subject; instead text means the dynamics of social construction. Thus, we must continually notice the form of the text and the possible formations of textuality without ever being given a definition directly. For example, Gordon used the ideas of Paul Ricoeur and Clifford Geertz to develop the notion of education as a "text," and he analyzes the "hidden curriculum" as a text that can be read (Gordon, 1988). If teachers and students regard some social events such as discrimination toward queer folks as one social text, they can discuss all possible formations and developments from different standpoints. Thus, a text is something in which one can read and observe social phenomena and in which one can also subsequently reflect, deliberate and redefine all possible meanings of these social phenomena. A social phenomenon becomes what I call a text based on its readers and their attitudes and standpoints, so it presents no wonder that every social

phenomenon, such as the stigma against queerness, can be understood as a readable text. Critical educators must recognize that there are multiple paths for reading and writing; hence, there are possibilities for multiple and nonlinear forms of learning and teaching interactions.

To sum up, when educational structures, contents, and intentions can be articulated from a standpoint that addresses the tenets of radical democracy, education can challenge existing social facts by means of a dialectical relationship between the students and their educational materials, and meaning will be made as a product of dialogue between and among individuals. The reciprocal dialogue among teachers and students helps us to recognize, understand, and criticize current social inequalities, and finally, to transform them. For me, students' reflections and deliberations must operate in some intermediary spaces[14]; and the most radical implications about cultural politics derive from praxis in this space—that is, we have to look for the location where queer pedagogy can function.

III. Spatial Performance and Cyberdemocracy: Resistance or Domination?

According to Laclau and Mouffe's ideas, radical democracy should be seen as an opportunity for the creation of new political spaces. In an expanded view of democracy's many subjects, the very definition of political space becomes broadened to include a new range of sites beyond the conventional jurisdiction of state institutions, and this space expands to encompass the far more dynamic domain of cultural representation and

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[14] Durkheim (1957) believed that to do democracy, political actions must establish these secondary organs, i.e., intermediation, which will release the individual from the state and vice versa, and release the individual, too, from a task for which he is not fitted. In other words, intermediation maintains the very important function of creating collective action.

social practice. For me, "new political space" refers not merely to certain locations, such as educational institutions; it is not confined to the space of places. On the contrary, I agree with the argument that space designates "flows" as proposed by Castells, who argues that education implicates spatial flows more than local places (Castells, 1996: 378). The school, after all, is part of a larger society, and understanding hegemonic mechanisms in school requires one to examine the relationship between schools, other social institutions, and cultural ideas. Castells defined that relational space as the expression of society, in terms of spatial forms and processes which are formed by the dynamics of larger social structures. This relational model includes contradictory trends derived from conflicts and strategies between social actors playing out their opposing interests and values (Castells, 1996: 410). In other words, this new political space is also a site of struggle and resistance.

A. Spatial Performance and Cyberspace: the Internet as a New Political Space

I mentioned earlier to closeted situation of queers in school. What kinds of mechanisms might make queer voices and perspectives visible in their current unspeakable situations? Beane and Apple (1995: 9-19) emphasized that a democratic school depends on democratic structures and processes, as well as a democratic curriculum. Particularly, a democratic curriculum underlines students' and teachers' access to a wide range of information, and it considers the rights of those who subscribe to varied opinions to have their viewpoints heard. Indeed, how can teachers and students get access to information and freely exchange their opinions? In my mind, cyberspace[15] has great potential as a mobilizing agent as it

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[15] Rheingold (1994: 5) defines cyberspace as "the name…for the conceptual space where words, human relationships, data, wealth, and power are manifested by people

loosens social control, widens the field of participation and increases expectations. In short, I regard cyberspace as a potential intermediation between queer and straight people.

Moreover, Warschauer (1999: 11-12) pointed out the advantage of electronic literacy: the decentered, multimedia character of new electronic media facilitates reading and writing processes that are more democratic, learner-centered, holistic, and natural than the processes involved in working with precomputer, linear texts. Thus, hypertext facilitates a critical and dynamic approach to literacy that is an extension of the best traditions of the print world and finally fulfills the visions of critical literacy, reconfiguring the text, author, and readers. Warschauer (1999: 157-159) stressed that computer-mediated communication provides students important additional opportunities for expression and reflection, and for reading the word and world in individualized ways. However, Regan (1994) found some limits to the networked composition classroom in her rhetoric and composition class, i.e., that lesbian and gay writers feel alienated in the classroom; and alienated students are less likely to be empowered to write, whether or not the subject matter covers lesbian and gay topics. In addition, she also emphasized the risk of self-disclosure at

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using CMC [computer –mediation – communication] technology." In addition, he considered that the political significance of computer networking lies in its capacity to challenge the existing political hierarchy's monopoly on powerful communications media, and perhaps thus to revitalize citizen-based democracy (1994: 14). That is, cyberspace is the electronic agora, and the most positive channel in my opinion. Sunstein (2001: 170) used www.deliberativedemocracy.com as a case to show the possibility of spaces where people with different views can meet and exchange reasons and have a chance to understand, at least a bit, the point of view of those who disagree with them. The hope is that citizen engagement, mutual understanding, and better thinking will emerge as a result. The other case study came from SexEd.com, where Bay-Cheng (2001) considered how the Internet is emerging as a unique and critical site of sexuality education. Her work analyzed the values and norms transmitted to adolescents via 52 sexuality education web sites, drawing parallels to its school-based counterpart and interrogating the reliance of all forms of sexuality education on a problem-focused, gendered, and narrowly-bounded discourse of adolescent sexuality.

the same time teachers encourage all students to contribute to conversations. However, we must remember that sometimes self-disclosure is similar to so-called confessional talk. Electronic literacy offers more space for queer people to develop their own voices for solidarity, but it does not mean that cyberspace is an absolutely cozy space for queer folks, nor that it does away with power relationships. After all, self-disclosure and confession always carry with them unverifiable fears.

I regard roles that fulfill radical democracy by acting on the Internet, chat rooms, websites, BBS's, MUD's, [16] and so on as spatial performances.[17] The notion of the spatial performance in my discussion is built on the ideas of Butler and de Certeau. First, Butler (1990: 136) examined the relationship between identity and performance as follows:

Acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that

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[16] MUD stands for Multi-User Dungeon, or Multi-User Dimension, or Mauve Ugly Ducks. The term MUD originally referred to a particular game. The point of the game was to gain points until you achieved the rank of wizard, at which point you gained certain powers over mortals (Jordan, 1999: 60-62).

[17] Carlson (2001: 305) used the term "cyborg queer" to discuss the performance of identity in a transglobal age. The cyborg is a metaphor for shape-shifting subjects who exist at the boundaries and interfaces between outside and inside, between subjectivity, body, and technology, able to adapt to a heterogeneous and rapidly changing environment. The term cyborg was originally used in this context by from Donna Haraway. She presented the cyborg as a condensed image of both imagination and material reality; the cyborg is a creature in a postgender world and resists all seductions to organic wholeness. Haraway's conception of a cyborg politics which exploits the possibilities of a decentred, borderline identity has affinities with the tactics of transgressive reading and a commitment to hybridity elsewhere. In other words, she said: "We are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs." (Haraway, 1991: 150). In short, feminist thinking about cyborg subjectivites thus offers some of the most productive and creative choreography with/among/through cyborg learning in performing, as Haraway (1991) calls it, the "spiral dance."

they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other means (Butler, 1990: 136).

In other words, gender ought not to be constructed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, as Butler (1990: 140) pointed out, gender is an identity constructed through a stylized repetition of acts. That is, the effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, it must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. Thus, when queer identities are performed over the Internet, I consider that this is one spatial performance that reinforces queer identity, and this space, at least, offers a relative space of autonomy for sexual minorities to facilitate their social performances of identity and resist hegemony.[18] In addition, I have found (Chang, 2003) that gay teachers have a great deal at stake in developing a "euphemistic" strategy to resist heterosexism in their fieldwork. Euphemistic actions belong to the category of "tactic" as proposed by de Certeau. De certeau (1984: 37) discussed the dichotomy of strategies and tactics as follows:

A tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No determination of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it

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[18] Butler combines both Gramscian and Foucauldan approaches into her debate for performativity. She considers that hegemony emphasizes the ways in which power operates to form our everyday understanding of social relations, and to orchestrate the ways in which we consent to (and reproduce) those tacit and covert relations of power. Butler writes, "The theory of performativity is not far from the theory of hegemony in this respect: both emphasize the way in which the social world is made—and new social possibilities emerge—at various levels of social action through collaborative relations with power." (Butler, 2000b: 14)

is a maneuver within the enemy's field of vision… in short, a tactic is an art of the weak (de Certeau, 1984: 37).

Tactically speaking, sexual minorities can use the Internet as a new political space. As I mentioned earlier, this usage of space also meets the criteria for Fraser's concept of the counter-publics, with the effect of reinforcing queer identities through reflection and deliberation in this space of flows.

What's more, although fostering subjectivity is very important for action, we need to recall a consideration of the context for each performative act—that is, performativity functions in space. Space, according to de Certeau (1984: 117), is a dynamic network of pathways — "composed of intersections of mobile elements" and "actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it." It seems place is a static order, and space is a dynamic instantiation of a particular order, which entails a certain degree of freedom of movement. Thus, he continues, the street is a place that "is transformed into a space by walkers." Similarly, a written text is a place constituted by a system of signs but a space produced by readers, for whom the activity of reading activates those signs and conveys a meaning mediated and, in important ways, written through the reader's interpretive frame. By analogy, technology can explain a democratic space for authorship in the same way. That is, technology plays an important role in facilitating radical democracy, insofar as it provides more opportunities for viewers to exchange messages and engage in social transformation. Cyberspace offers autonomy and equal capacity for its users, and they can express their opinions easily, in the manner of the author as producer. In educational research, Goldfarb (2002) followed this idea to analyze the student as producer based on technology and computer interactivity. The *Rainbow Curriculum*[19] was one of his analytical cases,

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[19] In 1990, the New York City Public Schools published a kindergarten guide, the first of an anticipated series of curriculum guides for a new, multicultural curriculum

and he thought of video and computer media as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate or encourage student involvement in debates about sexuality. Thus, cyberspace is a transformative structure within which queer folks produce their own voices and react against heterosexual hegemony with greater ease and effectiveness.

B. Cyberdemocracy Brings Impacts to Queer Pedagogy: Some Possibilities in Reality

Trend (2001: 12) proposed the new notion of democracy in cyberspace—namely, cyberdemocracy. Chat rooms and other Internet-based forms of communication and information trading have great potential to enrich democratic processes and increase participation. Although cyberdemocracy and radical democracy do not have completely the same implications, in my opinion, the political nature of the Internet in relation to the concept of the public sphere is particularly appropriate due to the spatial metaphor associated with the term public sphere. Valovic (2000: 123) also named participation and telecommunication in cyberspace in similar terms of electronic democracy, which is opposed to the current constitutionally based form of representative democracy. Central to the discourse of cyberdemocracy or electronic democracy is a view of the Internet as a community—as a virtual place where people meet, chat, conduct business, or develop a sense of togetherness. Achieving

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entitled *Children Of the Rainbow* that was to focus on teaching and learning issues reflective of changing societal and demographic compositions nationally, and, particularly, in New York City. Known as the Rainbow curriculum, this guide was unremarkable until key actors discovered brief sections alluding to lesbian and gay family. For instance, one section noted, "The issues surrounding family may be very sensitive for children. Teachers should be aware of varied family structures, including two-parent or single-parent households, gay or lesbian parents, divorced parents, adoptive parents, and guardians or foster parents. Children must be taught to acknowledge the positive aspects of each type of household and the importance of love and care in   family living" (quoted in Irvine, 1994: 232ff).

cyberdemocracy comes to mean activating mechanisms of collective agency that encourage people to act politically online. That is, cyberspace creates the possibility of democracy through a public intelligence apparatus—and this democratic space produces a dimension of symbolic challenge where conflicting forms of behavior are directed against the processes by which dominant cultural codes are formed. It is through action itself that dominant power and signs are challenged. For example, the UK Citizens' On-line Democracy (UKCOD) group sets as its objective to bring politicians together with the public around a virtual table. It facilitated the first UK on-line discussion between politicians in the run-up to the 1997 general election (Tumber, 2001: 23). Similarly, for sex minorities, cyberspace is at least a battlefield, communication location, and community. However, cyberdemocracy also has some limits. Trend (2001: 150-151) mentioned that the most damaging impediments to a genuine cyberdemocracy could be summarized in three categories: objectification, rationalization, and commidification. Objectification can be described as the process through which people come to be seen as passive and manipulable objects, i.e. as sex victims, rather than active and autonomous subjects. Rationalization is the process often associated with modernism, structuralism, and functionalism that imposes bureaucratic regulation, surveillance, and measurement on human activity for the purpose of increasing efficiency. Commodification foregrounds valuation and exchange as elements of objectification and rationalization. Thus, new technology in cyberspace may simultaneously hold progressive and retrogressive positions in relation to cyberdemocracy. As Gramsci reminds us, there will be elements of both "good sense" and "bad sense" in our complex ideological experiences.

Most important of all, cyberdemocracy needs practical principles. Lanksher, Peters and Knobel (1996: 180, 184) proposed practical developments such as "network learning in the classroom" and

"transforming social practices and relations in cyberspace." In my opinion, spatial performances can be divided into both macro and micro levels. Networked learning in the classroom is a micro spatial performance. In practical examples, Alexander (1997) examined ways that issues of sexual orientation can be taught successfully in the computer-assisted composition classroom. He shows how both gay and straight students can benefit from online and networked discussions of sexual orientation. He suggests that computerized learning spaces offer possibilities for open discussion not available in conventional classrooms. In addition, Craig, Harris and Smith (1998: 136-137) discussed the politics of queerness and religion through chat rooms in a computer-based classroom. They examined how the students were primed for conflict by the recent discussion about religions and homosexuality. (A similar case occurred in Regan's class, and as I mentioned before, her class discussions were conducted in the networked [computer-based] classroom. This classroom is now commonly called an "electronic blackboard" in educational fields.) Importantly, the bitterness of the chat room interaction was reactivated in the virtual setting, and this is, in fact, the best starting point to reflect on the queer situation and the implications of the closet for both teachers and students in the offline classroom.

Transforming social practices and relations in cyberspace is a macro spatial performance of such practical developments in cyberdemocracy. In my mind, online education outside formal schooling can offer this function. In empirical studies, Woodland (1999) conducted a web-based survey of 75 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students about their online experiences as LGBT people. He reported that online resources were most useful for obtaining basic information, for offering the ability to express oneself on LGBT issues and as an LGBT person, and for connecting with a larger LGBT community. Moreover, Koch and Schockman (1998) maintained that we need to democratize internet access

in the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community, and they considered talk to operate politically following Richard Davis's argument about the political functions of the Internet. According to Davis, the Internet offers: (1) access to political information and news; (2) linkage between the governed and those who govern; (3) a forum for political discourse; and (4) public opinion measurement providing reaction to events and decisions. The authors used a queer cyber-center as a case study to explore how it is possible to conduct queer pedagogy in cyberspace. More examples of similar interventions on both micro and macro levels occur in everyday life, and we need continued ethnographic investigation of cyberspace in order to dig up these possibilities. No matter what forms "network learning in the classroom" and "transforming social practices and relations in cyberspace" take, cyberspace offers the opportunity of encoding and decoding identity for both queer and straight people. This model is based on the idea that producers encode meanings in texts, while audience members decode texts to create meaning (Hall, 1984). In other words, cyberspace brings intertexuality to each group of producers and audiences in order for them to reflect on and deliberate on one another's queer issues.[20]

C. Meta-reflection about Technology: Liberation or Domination for Queers?

Many critics attribute too much power to the technology itself, treating it as an implacable external force that autonomously drives the rest of society in one direction or another, and they do not acknowledge

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[20] The term "intertextuality" indicates that a text is not a self-contained or autonomous entity, but is produced from other texts. The interpretation that a particular reader generates from a text will then depend on the recognition of the relationship of the given text to other texts. That is, intertextuality may be understood as the thesis that no text exists outside its continuing interpretation and reinterpretation. There can then never be a definitive reading of a text, for each reading generates a new text, which itself becomes part of the frame within which the original text is interpreted (Kristeva, 1986).

enough of the social context of its use. Such technological determinism ascribes agency to technology rather than to people; it naturalizes technological change, implying inevitability and cloaking the social processes actually accountable for the path taken. Bromley (1998: 14-15) states that information is no substitute for the ideas that enable an understanding of the social world. Nor does it suffice to enable knowledge to affect the constructed world; that capacity depends more on organized action than on information. He argued that "the formula information = knowledge = power = democracy lacks any real substance. At each point the mistake comes in the conviction that computerization will inevitably move society toward the good life. And no one will have to raise a finger."[21] In my opinion, it is crucial to put cyberspace into hegemonic consideration; since technology is not neutral but fundamentally biased toward a particular hegemony, all action undertaken within its framework tends to reproduce that hegemony. In other words, technological developments alone cannot account for changing conceptions of literacy. Rather, we must also take into account the borders among social, economic, and political contexts.

In this essay, I have considered that we still need to reflect and deliberate on these open questions about technology: whether it is possible for a technology to create new political structures or a new understanding of political life without changing the fundamental power structures and social organizations in which the technology operates. Does the Internet have the capability to change the way people conceive of their relations to one another? If so, is it ever possible for such new understandings to

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[21] Castells (2001: 156) also has a very similar and powerful opinion about this formula: "the Internet does have a significant role in the new political dynamics, characterized by what I have called informational politics. But in a world of widespread crisis of political legitimacy, and citizens' disaffection vis-à-vis their representatives, the interactive, multi-directional channel of communication provided by the internet finds few active takers on both sides of the link…The internet cannot provide a technological fix to the crisis of democracy."

escape the historical and cultural baggage from which they emerge? Or is it more likely that what most new technologies offer is an improved way of addressing the world as it exists? In spite of the fact that sometimes the limits of technology are stronger than its functions, and that technology itself is already a hegemonic production, I think spatial performance in cyberspace for queer folks is, at least, a practical hope. As Raymond Williams (1987: 19-21) asserted, "the practice of possibility"—that is, the practice of fighting against domination—has always been entered into, or sometimes deflected, by these and other kinds of more particular bonds. His assertion of possibility is a definition of practical hope in my mind, and all such possibilities come from real actions.

IV. Coda: The Democracy of the Oppressed moves from Reaction to Proaction

This paper attempted to answer these specific questions: can queer pedagogy be articulated from the position of radical democracy? Within the educational field, where might radical democracy locate and facilitate a queer pedagogy? Radical democracy represents an opening and a space of possibility, rather than a gesture that attempts to totalize what queer pedagogy is and how to operate queer pedagogy in reality. In this paper, I would go beyond two prior perspectives which have reacted to this question: both the liberation sloganeering and the nostalgic sense for an intact world fail to engage real action. Radical democracy, on the other hand—the democracy of the oppressed—shifts from reaction to proaction. It opens spaces, occupies them, and changes its forms without notice or agenda. Just as importantly, in arguing against the notion of a fixed or universal subject, the project of a radical democracy is, by definition, never complete. In other words, queer pedagogy is a long revolution without end, and spatial performance in cyberspace is the initial

revolutionary act. I maintain in this paper that queer pedagogy needs to develop a democratic imagination, including the democratization of desire and knowledge. In my hope, queer pedagogy needs more critical recognition and a strong praxis, so that it does not become merely one course, subject or lesson. The democratic imagination is both a means by which the oppressed come to know their oppression, and the vehicle through which they struggle to find methods for change.

In this paper, I propose that this ideal type of "spatial performance of democracy in cyberspace" will be the one of possible political agendas for current text-centered or discourse-centered queer pedagogy. I do believe that the Internet can play a role in promoting democratic participation, and I agree at a normative level that the Internet has great potential to overcome some of the shortcomings of the closet situation and offers an alternative space for transformation. However, this does not mean that queer pedagogy can or should only function in cyberspace; indeed, we constantly run up against the limits of cyberspace. For example, the role of the Internet in promoting active and informed citizenship is sometimes minimal. In fact, many queer folks who use the Internet frequently for entertainment purposes are less likely to feel galvanized about their potential role in the democratic process and also knew less about facts relevant to current queer liberation politics. But in my hope, the struggle for democracy is never completed—one of the tasks of queer pedagogy is to challenge the hegemonic educational setting as democratic performance no matter what its macro or micro levels, and concrete location or cyberspace.

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酷兒教育學要如何才能和基進民主的立場串鏈？

以在虛擬空間中民主的空間展演為例

張盈堃

University of Wisconsin-Madison 課程與教學系博士候選人

　　這篇論文主要關切「酷兒教育學是否能夠與基進民主的概念進行串鏈？」這個問題。作為研究者，我一方面探索在教育場域中基進民主的位置，以致可以促成應用至酷兒教育學。另一方面，我也舉出實踐基進民主對酷兒教育學所帶來的許多優勢，像是知識與慾望的民主化，這是藉由發展民主的想像力所興起新社會運動。換句話說，基進民主是兼具再定義切磋琢磨與反省的民主施為，以及社會參與的行為模塑。我認為基進民主特別是相關於酷兒教育學的批判面向，正在於基進民主中的切磋琢磨與反省，有助於型塑集體的認同與轉化性的施為。此外，這篇文章將基進民主這個概念應用至在網際網路的空間展演上。有關空間展演的概念，主要是建立在 Butler 與 de Certeau 的理論討論上。最後，這篇文章考慮酷兒教育學是個漫長的革命，的確這場革命是永無止盡的，並且在網際網路中的空間展演是場初步的革命行動。簡言之，民主的想像力是一種讓受到壓迫者認知到他們受到壓迫的工具，而且也是一種發現改變的策略。