Voices from the Field

The Re-Politicization of Media Literacy Education

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Media Literacy Education and Politics

Despite the efforts made by the media literacy movement in the U.S. to institute media education as a means of addressing social issues, there still exists the potential for a more politically empowering media literacy education. While media literacy scholars and practitioners' avoidance of adopting particular political or social agendas is understandable, others have noted that while an apolitical media literacy curriculum might be easier to pitch to schools and parents, this approach is ultimately inadequate at addressing problems that plague modern society (Lewis and Jhally 1998; Kellner and Share 2005, 2007). This paper argues that by reexamining the foundational philosophies of Plato and John Dewey, tracing the development of their ideas in contemporary social theory and media scholarship, and identifying their application in media literacy scholarship, we may be able to create a media literacy education that more effectively confronts injustice and promotes social change. I call this process the 're-politicization of media literacy education' because I argue that at the heart of the philosophies of Plato and Dewey, from which current approaches to media education commonly draw, is a commitment to the creation of a just society through critical civic engagement.

Plato

The writings of Plato, describing the dialogues engaged in by the Greek philosopher Socrates, account for some of the most foundational theoretical principles underlying Western thought in general, and the fields of communication and education in particular. To distill the entirety of Plato's philosophical work into a few key concepts is inevitably inadequate. But for the purposes of this paper, I have identified some salient themes from some of Plato's most well-known writings in an effort to identify how his discussions of communication and education correspond with issues of political participation. I argue that utilizing Plato's discussions of (1) communication media enabling (or disabling) philosophical discourse and (2) communication as a potential means of oppression and education as a means of overcoming that oppression, as theoretical foundations for contemporary media studies and media literacy scholarship may increase the efficacy of media education in encouraging and preparing communities to engage in social change efforts.

Probably most evident in the content of Socrates' dialogue with Phaedrus—but demonstrated in the conversation format of all of Plato's writings—is his valuing of oral over written communication. Citing Egyptian mythology, Socrates debates Phaedrus on the potential dangers of replacing dialectic with rhetoric:

> I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer. (Plato 47)

At the heart of Plato's argument is the limiting nature of a static statement—in speech or in writing—on the potential for arriving at truth. This, then accounts for the organization of Socrates' philosophical arguments, contrived as they sometimes may seem, in the form of dialogues. Among Socrates'—and Plato's by implication—apprehensions about the adoption of written communication is that it "will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters

and not remember of themselves" (Plato 46). And this argument provides a foundation for contemporary discussions of communication media. In abandoning oral for written culture, Plato fears that the most effective means, in his opinion, of acquiring knowledge and arriving at truth will be lost. And it is this pursuit of truth at the core of any human activity—poetry, oration, and probably most importantly, legislation—that ultimately provides it with any value.

Now this celebration of particular modes of communication is something that can also be found in contemporary discussions of mass media. Neil Postman and Marshall McLuhan, both prominent media scholars, share a similar position as that voiced by Socrates in his discussion with Phaedrus. They attempt to identify how emerging communication technologies, specifically that of television, may influence human comprehension, philosophical discourse, and social and political participation. Interestingly though, the traditional means of communication that they defend is the very written culture that Socrates attacks. McLuhan's emphasis of the medium as the message is evident in his own analysis of Plato's writing:

> Socrates stood on the border between that oral world and the visual and literate culture. But he wrote nothing. The Middle Ages regarded Plato as the mere scribe or amanuensis of Socrates. And Aquinas considered that neither Socrates nor Our Lord committed their teaching to writing because the kind of interplay of minds that is in teaching is not possible by means of writing. (McLuhan 1962, 23)

Here McLuhan discusses the historical debate, from Socrates to Aquinas, over the value of literacy. Now ultimately, while encouraging awareness of the medium's importance, McLuhan—most especially in his discussion of the 'global village'—champions contemporary communication technology as a means of enabling social cohesion and global peace. Postman, while also citing Plato in his discussion of the role of the medium in cognition, culture, and society, comes to the opposite conclusion. He argues that because of the popularization of televisual communication,

> Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death. (Postman 1985, 3-4)

Postman clearly values written over televisual communication and is fearful that such a shift in the dominant mode of mass communication will negatively effect every aspect of our society. And due to Postman's alarmism (and Plato's before that), this technological determinist argument has gained popularity.

It is no wonder, then, that among the first efforts to promote media literacy was what is now commonly designated as the 'protectionist approach.' Scholars like Bob McCannon, Erica Austin and Kristine Johnson, Smita Banerjee and Kathryn Greene, Sahara Byrne, and Bruce Pinkleton are influenced by Postman to create media education curriculums with the objective of mitigating the perceived negative effects of media consumption on (particularly children's) attitudes and behaviors. These initiatives stress a media effects paradigm that positions consumers as passive victims of violent, consumerist or otherwise socially undesirable media and positions education as the primary measure to prevent antisocial behaviors, rabid consumption and the loss of traditionally held values. Now while the motives for and efficacy of such media literacy initiatives are up for debate, I argue that it is evident that the politics of both Plato and Postman's arguments are underemphasized. Rather than understanding media as (in part) constituting culture and society, the protectionist approach views media as antagonistic to 'literary culture' or 'traditional values.' And because of this flawed understanding, emphasis is placed on the perceived negative effects of media on individual attitudes and behaviors rather than the complexities of media's relationship with social institutions, relations and practices (including politics). So, a re-politicized media literacy education would not only recognize the role of the medium in the nature and content of communication, but would also confront how this then determines the nature and content of social relations, political perspectives and practices.

Plato's most commonly recognized philosophical argument is perhaps that of the allegory of the cave. In a few words, Plato's allegory consists of a number of prisoners chained down in a dark cave and forced to view the shadows of figures on the cave wall.

> They've been there since childhood, fixed in the same place, with their necks and legs fettered, able to see only in front of them, because their bonds prevent them from turning their heads around. (Plato, in Cohen 504)

If a prisoner were to escape his bondage, he would struggle accepting the reality of his new environment, but newly enlightened, would be obligated to lead his former fellow captives to freedom. Plato's narrative of slavery may function as a metaphor in which the mass is ignorant of the truth and the escaped prisoner (the philosopher) is compelled to lead the quest for truth. Now, undoubtedly the means of imprisonment are symbolic of many aspects of society that inhibit philosophical discourse, but I argue that among these is that of mass communication. This indictment of communication to the masses helps contextualize a statement made by Socrates in his discussion with Gorgias: "What cosmetics is to gymnastics, sophistry is to legislation, and what pastry baking is to medicine, oratory is to justice" (Plato, in Richter 184) Here, Plato emphasizes the role of oratory in falsely contributing to social justice.

The argument that mass communication—whether it be oration, print, or film—inhibits justice is further developed by a number of social theorists and media scholars, but probably most notably by the Frankfurt School. Including a number of German critical theorists, the Frankfurt School engages in a Marxian cultural critique that holds as one of its primary theses the argument that the growth of capitalism has made possible the complete cooptation and commoditization of culture for the purpose of perpetuating oppressive ideology among the public. And despite the obvious disparity between the philosophical perspectives of Plato and the Frankfurt School, this 'culture industry'—first identified in Horkheimer and Adorno's work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—interestingly resembles the enslavement in Plato's cave. Like Plato's allegory, the culture industry thesis emphasizes the social construction of false consciousness as a means of perpetuating injustice. And like Plato's philosopher who endeavors to liberate the captives by "go[ing] down again to the prisoners in the cave and share their labors and honors," the intellectual is obligated to work toward the "awakening of the subject" (Plato, in Cohen 509; Horkeimer and Adorno 1967, 5).

The correlation I make between that of Plato's cave and culture industry is, admittedly, forced to some extent. But I argue that the correlations between the discussions of education—in Plato's allegory of the cave and the work of the Frankfurt School—legitimize such a comparison. After sharing his allegory, Plato expounds upon the application of the narrative in the construction of the Republic, and interestingly, he identifies education as the means by which the deliverance and subsequent governance of the cave-dwellers will be accomplished. He writes

> The power to learn is present in everyone's soul and that the instrument with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole body...Then education is the craft concerned with doing this very thing, this turning around. (Plato, in Cohen 508)

Education, then, requires the philosopher to facilitate a reawakening of critical thought and a shifting of perspective in the public. Now, this conception of education as the means of escape from mental slavery is, almost eerily, echoed in the work of the Frankfurt School. Quoting Rudolf Borchardt, Walter Benjamin articulates his own conception of revolutionary pedagogy: "To educate the image-making medium within us, raising it to a stereoscopic and dimensional seeing into the depths of historical shadows" (Rudolf Borchardt, in Benjamin 1999, 458). Then, Benjamin's work—representative here of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School—shares Plato's vision for education, even to the extent of employing the same metaphorical language. And it is by this education that both Plato and Benjamin see the establishment of a just society:

> Thus, for you and for us, the city will be governed, not like the majority of cities nowadays, by people who fight over shadows and struggle against one another in order to rule—as if that were a great good—but by people who are awake rather than dreaming… (Plato, in Cohen 509)

Now, I argue that media literacy scholarship—in its emphasis of the cultivation of critical analytical skills applied to media institutions, texts, and audiences—commonly draws upon the culture industry thesis, but does so often without citing the work of the Frankfurt School. Interestingly though, Plato's allegory of the cave is commonly used in media literacy curriculums, and it is no wonder—the visual of a crowd watching flickering images of a supposed reality on the wall of a dark room almost exactly prefigures the contemporary cinematic experience. Issues of power, ownership, ideology, and citizenship—evident in both Plato and the Frankfurt School—comprise part of the media analysis emphasized in many media literacy initiatives. Renee Hobbs, Paul Mihailidis, and Henry Jenkins, among oth-

ers, have recently published reports that emphasize the potential for media literacy to function as a means of civic education and encourage active citizenship among young people (Hobbs 2010; Mihailidis 2009; Jenkins et al. 2006). But arguably the work that most effectively draws upon the work of these philosophical discussions of power, communication and education is that of Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share. They respond ambivalently to the uncritical and depoliticized character of today's media literacy movements and seek to establish a critical media literacy that emphasizes more than conscious consumption or cookie-cutter citizenship.

> Critical media literacy offers the tools and framework to help students become subjects in the process of deconstructing injustices, expressing their own voices, and struggling to create a better society. (Kellner and Share 2005, 19-20)

A re-politicized media literacy education goes beyond deconstructing texts and, as stated by Kellner and Share, "deconstructs injustice." It would not only encourage civic engagement but informed social activism. And a re-politicized media literacy education would not only pay attention to issues of power between media producers and consumers, but would also encourage the development of critical consciousness and engagement in transformative politics.

John Dewey

Drawing upon some of the educational philosophy introduced by Plato, John Dewey—possibly the most influential American educator and social theorist—also makes substantive arguments about the role of education in political participation. I have identified a few fundamental principles in Dewey's philosophy of education that are particularly relevant to this project. First, according to Dewey, democracy will only be effectively realized if education—in both form and content—is conscious of its role in preparing individuals for political participation. In fact, according to Dewey, this relationship between democracy and education is almost self-evident. In his book *Democracy and Education*, he writes:

> The devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact. The superficial explanation is that a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated. (Dewey 1916, 101)

Democracy's success relies on the citizenry's ability to determine the public interest, select those that govern and determine policies that will realize this interest, and then live in accordance with this interest. But Dewey extends his argument further, noting that it is insufficient to come to any consensus; rather, the public interest must necessarily be 'good.' And education's role is the transmission of this 'best interest' to future generations.

> As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible not to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society. The school is its chief agency for the accomplishment of this end. (24)

So, an essential part of Dewey's education would not only include the dissemination of information—perhaps that of public discourse or parliamentary procedure, economic relations or international regulations—that would enable individuals to participate in democracy as informed citizens, but also the moral instruction of beings—perhaps that of recognizing and challenging injustice.

If Dewey is the first among the most influential philosophers of education, Paulo Freire cannot be far behind. And interestingly, Freire—a Brazilian educator and social activist—is able to take some of the principles that Dewey introduces and apply them in a radically different context. Like Dewey, Freire sees 'critical pedagogy'—that is education with the aim of social justice—as essential to effective democracy. Most significantly in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire emphasizes the development of 'conscientizacao,' roughly translated as 'critical consciousness,' as one of the primary objectives of education. He writes

> The central problem is this: How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?...The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. (Freire 1970, 48)

Like Dewey, Freire recognizes the necessity of an education that prepares its students to realize the public good, in this case, the humanization of all members of society. And explicit within Freire's education is the idea that in order to achieve such humanization, students must participate in transformative social change.

In their development of 'conscientizacao,' they "must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (49). Critical pedagogy, then, enlightens its students to the inequities of the society in which they live, enables them to envision a society free of those inequities, and encourages them to participate in the achievement of such society.

Influenced by both the work of Dewey and Freire, contemporary media literacy scholarship does, to some extent, recognize the role of media education in political preparation. In the National Association of Media Literacy Education's "Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States," this correlation is made clear: "Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society" (NAMLE 2007, 5) By encouraging students to "question textual authority and use reasoning to reach autonomous decisions," media literacy movements like NAMLE intend to use media analysis and production as a playground for developing skills that may later be applied in the students' civic engagement. Ultimately though, I argue that this approach is insufficient in realizing Dewey's "better future society" in that it shies away from the development of a true conscientizacao. Media literacy education may function as a means of preparing students for citizenship, but not necessarily for mobilizing them to challenge injustice or inequality. In her famed essay on the "7 Great Debates of the Media Literacy Movement," Renee Hobbs makes this clear:

> This agenda is radical enough, without adding additional baggage associated with other explicitly formulated political or social change objectives…Additional political or social change goals may be unlikely to be accepted in the decentralized, politically divided, and community-centered context of mainstream public education. (Hobbs 1998, 23)

Hobbs, representative here of popular media literacy movements in the U.S., is reluctant to fully employ the philosophies of education forwarded by Dewey and Freire for fear that an explicitly political education would may alienate potential sponsors, practitioners, and participants with diverse political orientations. Now, I argue that while a re-politicized media literacy education may avoid partisan politics, it would definitely not shun its potential in preparing students for meaningful political participation. And a re-politicized media literacy education would not only recognize the connection between successful democracy and political and moral education, but it would also draw attention to the responsibility of that education to address injustice and inequality.

Lastly, Dewey's discussions of education emphasize not only the transmission of values—like that of overcoming oppression—but perhaps more importantly, stress the importance of an active learning process as the means of effectively achieving that end. Not only must students learn principles that will guide their participation in democracy, but they must also learn those principles in ways that will prepare them for such participation. So among other things, Dewey stresses the importance of an active learning process. The traditional model of education of inscribing information and values on the blank slates of the students' minds is insufficient: "This static, cold-storage ideal of knowledge is inimical to educational development," (Dewey 1916, 186). For students to learn to govern themselves in a democracy, they must participate in the learning process—evaluate information, make arguments, and come to conclusions—and the passive role of students in traditional education does not allow for such participation. The result is, then, that students in the classroom and citizens in society are incapable of independently arriving at solutions to problems.

> Most objectionable of all is the probability that others, the book or the teacher, will supply solutions ready-made, instead of giving material that the student has to adapt and apply to the question in hand for himself. (185)

Here, Dewey underlines not only the content of education but also its form in contributing to the success of democracy.

This concept of active learning is further developed in the 'democratic education' and 'critical pedagogy' of Freire and later Stanley Arnowitz and Henry Giroux. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire emphasizes a reorganization of traditional relations between teachers and students. Rather than passive students being force-fed information and values from an authoritarian schoolmaster, Freire argues for the development of "teacher-students" and "student-teachers." In this reconceptualization of the classroom,

> The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (Freire 1970, 80)

Democratic education uses the classroom as a microcosm for society, and encourages interactions among students and teachers that mirror ideal relations among the public and governmental authorities.

This revision of traditional education is further developed in the work of Arnowitz and Giroux. In *Postmodern Education*, they heavily emphasize the role of not only rethinking relations in the classroom, giving the students more of a voice in their own learning, but also legitimizing the knowledge that traditional education has excluded but on which the students are often experts. Oftentimes, Arnowitz and Giroux argue, the authority in schools is comprised of not solely the teacher, but also the canon of knowledge that traditional education holds up as legitimate. In response to this anti-democratic hierarchy of knowledge, they argue that

> popular knowledge, even if it does not possess the same apparatus of inquiry that has marked legitimate academic knowledge, is nevertheless a form of intellectual knowledge. Jazz buffs, rock music fans, and those who closely follow various professional and college sports are required to abstract from the particular to find commensurable and incommensurable features of various genres within their fields. The degrees of specialization that mark the discourses of popular culture are no more parochial than those of academic disciplines. (Arnowitz and Giroux 1991, 18)

They do not argue for a replacement of so-called 'legitimate' intellectual knowledge with trivia, but they encourage educators to simply acknowledge the students' knowledge of popular culture as not wholly inconsequential. A postmodern education would then confront the anti-democratic consequences of learning that discourages active participation of students, of rigid authoritarian relations that place teachers in domination over their students, and of the hierarchy of canonical thought over popular culture.

Efforts have been made among contemporary media literacy initiatives to institute educational reform and rethink the form and content of education to meet the needs of a successful democratic society. Curricula that emphasize media analysis and production are designed to empower students, encouraging them to evaluate the media they consume using the critical capacities they develop and then to participate in the creation of media according to the principles that they have determined to be important (some great examples include the Educational Video Center in New York City, the Youth as

Public Intellectuals project in San Francisco, the Social Justice Education Project in Tucson, and national and international efforts like Youth Radio and the Global Action Project). The fact that classrooms in which media literacy is being taught often resemble workshops is also not incidental. Here, students engaged in media production are more self-directed, and the teacher functions to facilitate learning and growth. And lastly, the fact that media literacy takes on the task of making sense of the mass media perfectly corresponds with the legitimization of popular culture as worthy of analysis.

A particular example of this effort is found in Henry Jenkins' scholarship on fandom and political participation. Jenkins (2006, Jenkins et al. 2006) argues that in fan communities, individuals are motivated by their love of a particular piece of popular culture to engage in public discourse, create communities that bridge individual differences, and often use these communities to organize efforts for social change. And regardless of the fact that they center on *Harry Potter* or *Star Trek*, these communities are a place in which new models of social interaction and political participation may develop. I think that this understanding of fan communities as 'cultural public spheres' in which people's engagement in popular culture may potentially generate new political perspectives and practices is promising. A re-politicized media literacy education would not only encourage active learning and restructure classroom relations, but it would also value popular culture as a site of developing new methods of political participation.

Application

As previously mentioned, a few media literacy scholars have recently made efforts to emphasize media literacy education's potential for civic education. By acknowledging the efforts of these scholars, conceiving a media literacy education with Plato, Dewey and other thinkers' critical political education in mind, and then envisioning a media literacy initiative with social activism as its primary objective, I hope to start a conversation about the possibility for and potential of a re-politicized media literacy education.

Again, recently some scholars within the media literacy movements have called for greater focus of civic education as part of media education. Rather than solely prepare students to become critical consumers and producers of media, these media literacy efforts should also prepare students to become informed, engaged citizens. For example, in her 2010 white paper, "Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action," Re-

nee Hobbs acknowledges that while the media literacy movement may not adopt a specific political or social agenda, successful media education may encourage social transformation. She writes:

> When people have digital and media literacy competencies, they recognize personal, corporate and political agendas and are empowered to speak out on behalf of the missing voices and omitted perspectives in our communities. By identifying and attempting to solve problems, people use their powerful voices and their rights under the law to improve the world around them. (Hobbs 2010, 17)

And Paul Mihailidis's report "Media Literacy: Empowering Youth Worldwide" concludes with some guidelines for future media education efforts, among them a re-politicized media literacy education:

> Successful media literacy programs are a way to combat social problems and human injustices, such as finding ways to use media literacy as a tool for human rights. (Mihailidis 2009, 24)

The emphasis of media literacy education as a means of social transformation evident in these statements, among others, by leaders in the field provides some momentum for further efforts to create a re-politicized media literacy education, mine included.

A re-politicized media literacy curriculum—informed by the work of Plato, Dewey, Freire, the Frankfurt School, Arnowitz, Giroux, Kellner, Share and others—would place student involvement in positive social change as its primary objective. The following sketch of such a media literacy curriculum is just the beginning of a conversation. And especially given that such a program has not been practically implemented, let alone assessed, the following framework should not be interpreted as a solid criteria for an effective social-activism-oriented media literacy initiative. That being said, I imagine a re-politicized media literacy initiative as addressing the following points:

- *Objective*. Students' exercise of critical thinking and acquisition of media analysis and production skills are staples to existing approaches to media education, as is the understanding that media both are produced by and contribute to larger social, cultural, economic and political relations. Key, though, is seeing critical thinking, media analysis and production as not an end in itself, but as skills and perspectives necessary to address social injustices, cultural crises, economic problems, and political divisions.

- *Pedagogy*. Efforts to democratize the classroom and legitimize students' knowledge and experience are already aspects of media literacy education. Key, though, is finding an approach to learning that encourages students to be self-directed in identifying social issues that interest or affect them, gaining an informed opinion about these issues using media analysis, and engaging with these issues through media production. I think that the Youth Participatory Action Research approach is a particularly interesting and potentially effective means of integrating media education with critical civic engagement, in a way that empowers students to identify, analyze, and address problems facing their own communities.

- *Context*. The location for media literacy education is variable—it can take place in a high school or undergraduate level course, an after-school program, a public library or museum-sponsored initiative or a privately-operated 'camp.' Key, though, is the acknowledgement of context. Students and teachers should discuss how, for example, institutional structures and guidelines, the program's time and place, available resources, classroom dynamics, and representation of diverse perspectives and experiences influence their engagement in these issues of media and society.

- *Content*. Media literacy curricula are flexible. Existing initiatives commonly address different types of media content (entertainment, journalism, advertising), media channels or modes (television, radio, internet), formal elements (sound, visuals, text), and/or methods of media analysis (political-economic, feminist, critical theoretical). Key, though, is that student learning is comprehensive—including media institutions, messages and audiences—and that these discussions of media are contextualized within larger discussions of culture and society, economics and politics.

- *Product*. Final projects often include student-produced PSAs or digital stories, documentaries or personal inventories. Effective projects would require students to develop new media production skills, to apply their critical thinking skills used in their research to the creation of this text, to account for the anticipated impact of the medium, mode, form, and content of their creation, and to engage with not only the perspectives voiced in the discourse relating to their issue but the people (preferably in

their own community) who are voicing these perspectives. Key, though, is not that students use their newly acquired critical thinking, media analysis and production skills to solve a problem plaguing society, but that their project empowers them to engage with such problems in the future.

• *Evaluation*. New approaches to evaluating the relative merit of media education programs, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection, are constantly being developed. Key, though, is critical self-reflection. Students and teachers should be engaged constantly (not just at the project's conclusion) in a conversation about successes they experience and challenges they face, new information they discover and understandings they develop.

Again, this framework is by no means an exhaustive list of necessary characteristics of a re-politicized media literacy education curriculum. But I see some potential in an activism-oriented program as the means of using media education to encourage young people to be more informed, critical, and concerned with social issues that matter to them.

Conclusion

Given current media literacy scholars' efforts to address social issues, there still exists the opportunity for a more critical, political media literacy education. By returning to the foundational philosophies of Plato and John Dewey, tracing the influence of their ideas in contemporary social theory and media scholarship, and identifying their application in media literacy scholarship, we may be able to re-politicize media literacy education. And by building on recent efforts to emphasize media education's potential to encourage informed, engaged citizenship, we can envision and implement activist-oriented media literacy initiatives in an effort to confront injustice and promote positive social change.

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