From the Village Institutes to Critical Pedagogy

Rethinking the 'Democratic School' through Tonguç and Freire

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Abstract

By pinpointing similarities between the Pedagogy of Village Institutes in Turkey as a practical education model in the beginning of 1940s and Critical Pedagogy as a theoretical approach today, this article examines how these two strong educational traditions can contribute to the role of the ‘Democratic School’ in solving today's educational problems. For this purpose, the views of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, the founder of the Village Institutes, and Paulo Freire, the founder of Critical Pedagogy, were analysed comparatively. The article aims to show that today a democratic school model based heavily on Tonguç and Freire's views can be a solution for addressing various educational problems created by neoliberal capitalist education.

Keywords: Village Institutes, Tonguç, Critical Pedagogy, Freire, Democratic School

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Introduction and Argument

The Village Institutes ("Köy Enstitüleri") in Turkey should be considered as an experience in learning in the long history of critical democratic educational practice. Founded in 1939 and then closed partly in 1946 and completely in 1954, they were much discussed until today, either glorified or disparaged but never ignored due to their educational as well as political importance and the meaning they carried. Even today, in public debates in Turkey’s critical education circles, political and historic function of the Village Institutes flares up from time to time. It is quite possible to see a similar style of argument and discussion in critical pedagogy today within the framework of Freire's views. The Village Institutes, designed into developmental policies of Turkey and officially built on a school model that was put into practice in some rationally chosen rural areas of the country, relied on a secular state power. Although the origins of both education models differ in some ways, they have many similar directions in terms of following an awareness-raising effort with education for the oppressed, namely the poor, illiterate and landless villagers. In this article, based on a comparison of the views of İsmail Hakkı Tonguç as the founder of the Village Institutes and Paulo Freire as the leading figure of Critical Pedagogy, I try to point out some connections that exist between the Village Institutes as a school model in Turkey and Critical Pedagogy as a pedagogical approach and education movement all over the world. I then analyse these two educational models within the conception of "Democratic School". I argue that these two models of the past say many things in founding a democratic school that are useful for today’s education problems caused by the neoliberal conception of pedagogy in a highly globalized world.

The Village Institutes in the Politics of Turkey

There are those who have long argued that the Village Institutes can be revived in modern, contemporary urban conditions, perhaps in a different form,
namely "Urban Institutes". While there are those who find such suggestions unnecessary, unwarranted and anachronistic in terms of history and context incompatibility, some scholars from Turkey claim that the Village Institutes can only be used again today philosophically rather than physically. The debate on re-adapting these schools to the present conditions shows it’s still inexhaustible importance to the Turkish Left. The Village Institutes were a development-oriented educational practice only for the agricultural community where the many villages of that time (around 40,000) were living in the very poor rural conditions of 1940s Turkey, but it was able to cross this spatial limit and become a universal education model for some countries. Turkish society today is very different from its past in the 1940s, when most of the population consisted of poor peasants living in villages, almost all of whom were illiterate. But after since the pro-American “Democratic Party” came to power in 1950, Turkey has undergone a massive shift towards industrialization and urbanization, its cities have grown, and its economic structure has been liberalized. A kind of view based on individualistic values was strengthened all over country, leading to the search for a new way of life in the big cities dominated by the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the policies, staff, and expenditures of education have already been directed not only to the villages but also to the educational services in the cities. Turkey has changed a lot in terms of its demographic, economy, and politics after those times. In addition to this, new education trends emerged in terms of newly founded private schools run by the bourgeoisie where strong individualistic values were supported. Many different models were tested and practised for the purpose of being a “small America”. After Turkey took the decision to be part of the Western block of the two opposing camps shaped after the Second World War, all governmental apparatus also began to take shape according to this decision. The Village Institutes were already perceived as a left-wing base reminiscent of the Soviet system and were accused of raising radical students whose alleged duty is to incite the peasants to revolt against the bourgeoisie. Implementation of collective life and training methods in these schools were bothering pro-American liberals in Turkey, so the Village Institutes were stripped of their original philosophy before they were

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2 For this model, see Adil Türkoğlu, Köy Enstitüleriinden Kent Enstitüleri'ne. Bir Model Önerisi, Ankara: Anı Yayınları, 2011.
3 For this approach, see Murat Kaymak, The Village Institutes as “Schools of Life and Work”, Educazione Aperta, Number 5, 2019, pp. 145-158.
transformed into ordinary, poor quality and traditional teacher training schools in 1954.

Defining the Village Institutes and Critical Pedagogy in terms of consciousness based on practice

Trained in the Village Institutes to be a primary school teacher, a student could easily produce a wooden or iron chessboard. He could also manufacture the chess set by using the facilities available at school and learn how to play this game well. The student who built a wall of a workshop in the school could read Sophocles, discuss it with his friends at school, write an essay as homework on the subject, and even stage this play. In other words, in the Village Institutes, practice and theory were not opposing dichotomous realities, but pedagogical milieus where dialectical contradictions were resolved. In these schools, there was no capitalist result that Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse criticized in his book "One Dimensional Man"\textsuperscript{4}. This was, in fact, a model of Marx's "polytechnic education"\textsuperscript{5} aimed at training people as "multi-faceted". As a matter of fact, İsmail Hakkı Tonguç,\textsuperscript{6} who established and managed the Institutes for seven years, stated in his books many times that he considered physical and mental education together. Under the "productive work" practice, which is the underlying principle pedagogy of the Village Institutes, the basic aim was to produce while learning a subject matter as well as to change the material environment while producing. Unlike a context where almost everything (information, news, money, relations, etc.) is devoured rapidly in today's consumption-oriented school concept, teachers and students in the Village Institutes saw and evaluated production, first of all, as a philosophical category that could

\textsuperscript{5}Robin Small, “The Concept of Polytechnical Education”, British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol XXXII, No 1, February 1984, pp. 27-44.
\textsuperscript{6}While studying in Germany in 1920s, Tonguç was impressed by the vocational training views of Kerschenteiner and Pestalozzi, and has written and translated many books on practical education. Some of his books in Turkish are: İsmal Hakkı Tonguç, İş ve Meslek Eğitim, Ankara: TÖB-Der Yayınları, 1974; İ. H. Tonguç, Mektuplarla Köy Enstitüsü Yılları, 1936-1946, Istanbul: Güldükeni Yayınları, 1999; İ. H. Tonguç, İlköğretim Kavramı, Piramit Yayınları, 2004; İ.H. Tonguç, Köyde Eğitim, Ankara: KEÇEV Yayınları, 2008; İ.H. Tonguç, Canlandırılacak Köy, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019; İ. H. Tonguç, Pestalozzi Çocuklar Köyü, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2020.
change the course of life rather than just an economic occupation. The foundation or main orientation of this philosophy was to raise consciousness of the person to transform the world.

İsmail Hakkı Tonguç as the architect of the Village Institutes was able to explain what the Village Institutes would do with one word: "revitalization" ("canlandırma” in Turkish). I find an affinity between this word and Paulo Freire's term "conscientização". Freire, in "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed", described this concept as a consciousness-based learning process for learners (adult illiterates) to grasp the various contradictions that surround them, that is, the problems created by their oppressors, and take action to change the conditions of reality that oppress people. Tonguç had, on the other hand, used the term “revitalization” with the meaning that peasant-origin students (and the adults around the Institutes) try to be a dominant power in their hard material environmental conditions by transforming the difficult natural conditions like wasteland into an oasis, finding a source of potable water, improving animal breeding, etc. while being conscious of the “productive work” principle and learning a new profession. “Revitalization” was a sort of process based on a “technical socialization” in which the utilization of a potential was intertwined with the possession of modern jobs and professions. Of course, in order to explain this situation, I think it is appropriate to use Gramsci's category of "organic intellectual". Tonguç and his pedagogical team saw themselves, first of all, as intellectuals who were an extension/organic component of the peasants. However, Tonguç and his working team in the Institutes thought that the peasants were also intellectuals in practical relations, namely and firstly in their relations with rural production. The foundation of Tonguç's praise to the villagers was not empty. The positive traits he attributed to the villagers were potential and values were to be revived in them. All it took was to gain awareness, that is, to acquire new, modern, and productive habits. Only when modern technical habits are acquired, would this process open a new world through culture lessons that would provide an enlightened identity for the rural-

8 Tonguç, Canlandırılacak Köy, 2019
9 See for a detailed evaluation of this concept in the Brasilian context: Timothy D. Ireland, Antonio Gramsci and adult education: Reflections on the Brazilian experience. Manchester: University, Centre for adult and higher education, 1987 (Translated by Kemal Inal into Turkish: Gramsci ve Halk Eğitim, Brezilya Deneyimi Üzerine Düşünceler, Ankara: Töz Yayınevi, 2020.)
origin students as well as for the villagers around. With this new world, the peasant, who would be a good producer, a good voter, and a conscious citizen through education, would gain a formation and equipment that could reproduce the forces that enliven his/her life. In this context, parallels can be drawn between the term revival and the concept of "bildung" of German pedagogy. German pedagogues like Nohl use the concept of bildung in the sense of "developing orientation", in both formal education and later social life of people. Orientation is that a professional move forward equips the individual with a certain formation. In the process of bildung, the person dominates over the object / nature and combines natural features and material possibilities in his own personality. While developing new, modern and productive orientations in the peasant, the human (workforce), agriculture (land), consciousness (culture / personality), potential (talent / skill), solidarity (alliance) actually meant the re-creation of the peasant himself in the work. Revitalization means that the potentials such as doing business, resisting difficulties, understanding the language of nature, learning by seeing/doing, collaborating and cooperating among the peasants and villages are inert due to various reasons (e.g. religion, poor education, traditional beliefs, fatalism, primitive agricultural techniques, etc.). These potentials should be awakened and activated. Doing so, the peasants will be revived and transformed into "productive producer", "good voter", "conscious citizen" as stated by Türkoğlu. So, revitalization means having a job and a profession, that is, learning and using modern techniques while producing and solving various problems and raising awareness. In short, it means defeating the contradictions, reactionary forces and difficult natural conditions that surround him/her while being a conscious citizen at the national level and developing through education. That is to say, the content and purpose of both "revitalization" (cultural development) and "conscientização" (critical awareness) are the same: to learn critically. The theory of learning in the Village Institutes, where theory and practice were working together and intertwining, was mainly based on practice through formal education. One of them, namely theory or practice, did not stand out. Practice created the model, but there was also an underlying thought. In this regard, too many models have been invented and put into practice in the Village


Institutes, where some of these were related to animal care, the treatment of diseases, the cultivation of the land, but mostly aimed at developing new methods of education by transforming the consciousness of the peasant-origin students. Like this, the learning model Freire applied to landless peasants/workers in Brazil in the early 1960s was also based on an awareness-raising practice through non-formal education of adults.

**Critical Learning**

Both models were based on "critical learning". The main criticism at the Village Institutes was targeted at traditional theoretical, abstract, and rote education inherited from the Ottoman culture. In Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, the "banking education model" that objectifies and petrifies the peasant / worker, creates the perception that the system is immutable, and is loaded with theory weighted, was founded on a monolithic, hierarchical approach based on the absolute knowledge and authority of the teacher. Freire's model, which he called "problem-posing education," focuses on the consciousness of the learning adult through various techniques such as productive words, circles of culture, etc. Freire's pedagogy for the oppressed was dialogic; that is, learning was grounded on a mutually productive, two-way relationship between learner and teacher for whom this relationship was democratic. The educator could be a master, authority, or director, but not an oppressor. Learning was and should be mutual. In fact, in my opinion, this model was also practiced successfully in the Village Institutes. While the teacher was teaching her/his student how to build a wall, the student was able to teach his/her teacher something new by incorporating the knowledge, experience, and skills he gained during his/her education.

In Tonguç's approach, the traditional teacher-student relationship model disappeared in favour of the emergence of an inter-subjective relationship among them. Administrators, teachers, and students were side by side, hand in hand, intertwined. The reason why students, teachers, writers and scientists who graduated from the Village Institutes were self-confident, skilled and talented, and played important roles in the democratization of Turkey, was that the education they received was socially dialogic based on cooperation with the other, namely poor people. The dialogic model was the prior pedagogy to ensure that the silent student is active as a
subject in education. That is why the intellectuals who graduated from the Village Institutes might have been put into a leftist conception of democracy based on dialogic interaction, solidarity and cooperation into practice, as exemplified in both in their individual works and collective efforts and educational or social organizations they founded in the search of enlightenment of the poor and illiterate. Both Tonguç and Freire desired, first, to create a "democratic human"; even though their techniques were different, their philosophical point of views and attained goals were very similar.

Actually, Tonguç and Freire were public educators. They had aimed at realizing a mass education in the person of poor people, not individual education. Both thought that the policies that would train the masses of the people would put the democratization of the country into practice. For both, those people were peasants. Most of the population of both countries in that period (1940s in Turkey and 1960s in Brazil) consisted of largely poor, illiterate, and landless peasants. Both people were exploited to the utmost and could not fully claim the crop, even if they got some, it was too little and inefficient Tonguç deliberately chose the term "Institute". The main reason for naming the Village Institutes instead of the Village (Teacher) School was the demand for examination and research on the material conditions (the condition of the land, water, animal, forest, diseases, cultural potential, social conditions in which people live, etc.), in addition to education.

In fact, Tonguç intended to found a kind of "Village University" in poor rural areas. With this model he targeted a school model that would conduct research, draw conclusions, put the results into practice and apply them in practical life. In his mind, the meaning of the Institutes was clear: A research institution in the sense of a Western university that will carry out research while teaching. Tonguç was making use of Dewey's model of "learning by doing" with a model of "learning at work, by working and with the use of work". Dewey's model was perhaps appropriate for the relatively prosperous conditions of the United States, an advanced capitalist industrial country, but for Tonguç, "learning by doing" was highly abstract, symbolic, and experimental in terms of the poor conditions of Turkey. Due to Turkey’s lack of

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13 In Turkish: “iş üzerinde, iş yaparak, iş ile öğrenme”
resources, rather than founding a laboratory school in experiment in Dewey’s sense, it was necessary to found a school based on direct application of teaching. As a matter of fact, when the first group of students arrived in the rural area where the Village Institutes were founded, where they saw that there was not even a building for school, they inevitably had to dive directly into work-based learning while constructing their school buildings and workshops. Therefore, the Village Institutes were an inevitable requirement of education due to the conditions at that time of Turkey. Necessity was neither accident nor possibility. It was an unmistakable result of harsh reality.

Polish educator Ignacy Szaniawski\(^\text{14}\) claimed that "the postulate of bringing the school closer to life has plural meanings." Dewey also considered the school to be a pragmatic tool between life and democracy, while Tonguç formulated it as life itself. Because the work as an educational/pedagogical tool in the Village Institutes was oriented directly to solving any problem of the villager (for example, the pest commonly seen in agriculture, the sickness of animals, the soil becoming arid, etc.). At those times in Turkey, it was not possible to develop, modernize and establish a democratic order without solving the problems of the villagers who made up 80% of the country. In order for the peasants not to become a pool of votes for the reactionaries, their problems had to be solved with them together in their own life conditions by mobilizing their potential. This is how the village Institutes became life itself so that life, in a sense, would become education. This was both easy and difficult. Easy because it was something more or less known; difficult because new techniques and knowledge had to be learned and applied.

**The Function of Criticism**

For both Tonguç and Freire, "criticism" was primarily a way of thinking, learning method and means of expression. It was also a ground and milieu for democratic participation. *Culture Circles* in Freire’s method and *Days of Criticism* in Tonguç’s schools served to the same logic: solving problems through dialogue (Freire called this *conversation*). The dialogue was not based on monologue, but on mutual reflection, conversation, and discussion of equal parties. However, the process of these meetings was open to dialogue, criticism, self-criticism, and self-control.

Criticism is, rather than the personalized subjects of ordinary or bilateral relations among people, a mechanism with which information obtained through observations and experiments during working times is used to find the most accurate learning system. Because it was constructive, not destructive, it also developed a democratic personality. Criticism was not a kind of method for control, surveillance, or impeachment, but a tool for doing things together more efficiently. Criticism, despite everything, did not prevent people working face to face, side by side, hand in hand. Tonguç's students could criticize all the authorities like teachers, principals, district governors, if necessary. Criticism was a kind of existence and a form of self-realization for any student to be well-schooled. Freire's students also stated that after they became conscious, their perspective on life changed and they became more confident in themselves. This, of course, demonstrated the power of (reading and writing) words as well as the ability to internalize those words claimed by Freire.

**Emancipation and Democracy**

The main goal of both the Village Institutes and Critical Pedagogy was to liberate the young students and adults, as learners who were taught to read and write, from their oppressors'. For both educational models, emancipation was not an abstract, symbolic and idealist transformation that started in the mind and ended in thought, but rather a pedagogical-political consciousness based on strenuous efforts to change material conditions. Emancipation meant a process in which dichotomous contradictions between theory and practice, for the Village Institutes, and between the oppressor and the oppressed for Critical Pedagogy, were resolved by putting dialectical thought and practice into work. That is why both Tonguç's and Freire's works were primarily and intensely directed at those who were oppressed. The main target was the liberation of the oppressed as represented by village children and peasants and landless workers. The emancipatory force would be democratic management through education. Therefore, in both practices, democracy and democratic education were not seen as a lesson, but as both a method and a result, kind of a new lifestyle created by the applied programs and methods. The democratization process was achieved not on paper, but in practice by sharing work, authority, and responsibilities, doing work and education together, and making joint
decisions. The resulting product was the "democratic community". The shaping of this community was synonymous with the materialization of a way of life. The organization of the Institute as a community revealed the collective power that would make it the true owner of the institution: The Institute belonged to nobody but everybody. The naturalness, simplicity, and sincerity that accompanied discipline prevented the group from splitting into individualistic tendencies, that is, into atoms. "Clusters" (Küme) in Tonguç, "cultural circles" in Freire, as democratic educational communities, prevented the individual from feeling lonely and atomized/alienated.

**Polytechnic Education**

While critical pedagogy considers learning as a result of education and training, it builds its basic philosophy on the goal of multi-directional development of individuals. The Village Institutes also focused on raising peasant origin students in a polytechnic way by employing the process of common mind, collective labour, and co-creation based on work. Polytechnic was, in fact, a solution to the alienating forces of capitalism's processes of division of labour, specialization, and de-qualification, as Marcuse explained in his "One-Dimensional Man." In capitalism, while work was reduced to a technical process that was handled in isolation from life, in the Village Institutes, the work of life was turned into the subject, tool and milieu of education.

**Participation and Groups**

Both the Village Institutes and the Critical Pedagogy movement allow the student to actually participate and become a subject in every process and in each condition, from administration to education, in order to learn democratic knowledge, values and experience in person, work or education, or a combination of these. In the Village Institutes, both mental potential and physical skills of each student benefited from the provision of with opportunities to participate in administration of the education works. Participation here was not abstract, symbolic, and experimental, but de facto, problem solving, and democratic. In both Institutes and critical pedagogical practices, students did their work jointly in “groups”, not in an isolated way. The administrative organization of each Village Institute was established on groups
consisting of around 50 students. The function of the groups was to solve problems inside the group, without sending it to the upper Institute administration. Groups were free and autonomous in their own right and possessed, to some extent, a kind of self-government. The group leaders were like intermediaries that played a role in coordination between the Institute administration and the students. Collectivism was meant to create solidarity, cooperation, and possible solution. This, too, strengthens group belonging, collective identity and common spirit. In the Village Institutes, from the very first days, students were on duty in each place of the school, in order to realize the value of everything that belonged to the Institute, from workshop to production areas, from dormitory to agricultural lands. Each unit in the different areas of education, agriculture, sports, music, etc. had a responsible head. But the administration of the school would take place in the form of horizontal organization, not vertical. Students could elect the head of the Institute and supervise the affairs and experience a kind of direct democracy in the school because the Village Institutes were planned to be a democratic place.

Creation of a new culture

It can be said that Tonguç put the synthesis in the foreground while forming the relationships between education and culture. Culture had two dimensions in his mind: 1) creating a "new culture" in the Village Institutes; 2) while creating this new culture, to ensure that students find the good, beautiful and useful aspects of the existing traditional culture when they go to their villages on holidays and bring it to the Institutes, and with this to realize a synthesis of the new and the old. Therefore, the Institutes aimed at creating cultural wealth by combining folk culture and modern technique in a work-based pedagogical environment. Tonguç, naturally, did not try to combine local/folk culture with universal values in a mechanical way, that is, not by taking one and adding one to the other, but articulating it dialectically. Additionally, in these institutions he treated folk culture and universal values as resolvable dialectical contradictions, not as antagonisms. The facilitating factor in this synthesis would be scientific knowledge. Health-related folk knowledge from traditional therapeutic thoughts to some techniques, from epics to arts and traditional works
(carpets, rugs, fairy tales, language and dialects, etc.) were all turned into both the subject matter of education and the elements to be developed by passing through a scientific filter. In the words of Türkoğlu: "By developing and enriching the healthy elements of folk culture in the light of education, it aimed to change the cultural level of people by influencing them with their own developed values."\(^{15}\)

In Freire's learning theory, in the "culture circles"\(^{16}\) which were formed in the literacy processes of landless workers/peasants, almost every cultural product that surrounds the workers/peasants as material and moral values from the land to the speaking style, was accepted as the subject matter of education, that is, to learning the topics worth reading and writing. Both Tonguç and Freire were determined not to include rote learning in the teaching process and tried putting education into practical knowledge and application of real life. For example, even an abstract, symbolic lesson such as mathematics in the Village Institutes could be used in the daily life of the Institute, while solving some problems of working life such as determining the size of a land. While boiling lime or whitewashing or pouring plaster, knowledge of chemistry and biology could be transferred into practice. While all this information was being learned, cross-relations could be established between the lessons, and the information obtained in one lesson could be used easily into other.

**Learning from learners**

Freire, who carefully observed every word and action of the oppressed, gave importance to students and learned many lessons from them. His critical pedagogy was founded on the premise that personality, experience, identity, history, and culture of the oppressed as their potential are valuable to be learned. Tonguç acted in the same way. Tonguç, who had village roots and travelled and visited ten thousand of villages in Anatolia throughout his life, thought that rural adolescents had experienced, durable, and free personalities. These teenagers took on authority and responsibility by participating in family production while working at an early age and developing more independent personality but having the disciplined behavioural

\(^{15}\)Türkoğlu, ibid, p.265.
habits. Therefore, Tonguç thought that peasant children could manage themselves better with these features if they got an opportunity to suitable education. For him: “The basic rule was that the students should follow the discipline with their own consciousness. The individual should be able to dominate his own actions based on his own free will.”  

Both educators discovered the power of the people and succeeded in revealing them through education.

**Concluding Remarks: Rethinking Democratic School**

As a result, although Critical Pedagogy, primarily as pedagogical design and practice for the oppressed, was formulated in different times, places and conditions, it is increasingly flowing in a similar channel with the pedagogical model of the Village Institutes of Tonguç in terms of sharing many common assumptions. Freire's basic assumption argues, namely, that there will be no neutral education, that education will either integrate with the logic of the system that serves the interests of the oppressors, or it will become a tool and a practice of freedom in which they discover how to participate in the transformation of their world by looking at the reality in which they are critical and creative. He argued that the critical pedagogue's preference was for the latter. Like Freire, Tonguç hoped that education would raise the awareness of the individual towards liberation. Although Tonguç highlighted the work while Freire stressed productive words, both agreed that intellectual transformation must be through practice. In both models, the method relied heavily on the observation and transformation of practice. Freire has always put forward the concept of "being" against the petrified understanding of reality of crude positivist epistemology and ontology. Being meant that knowledge, teaching, and their results should be open to improvement rather than finished, precise and absolute thing.

Education models in today's dominant school system, however much they talk about creativity, activity, innovation and project-based works, impose some closed-

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17. Türkdoğan, ibid, p. 395.
ended, finished and static educational issues on schools, rather than being an open-ended, unfinished and dynamic process. For example, centralized control, standardized content, reductionist exams, one-dimensional assessment-evaluation systems, authoritarian teaching methods, teaching styles that do not consider student differences are all various dimensions of imposition on poor students. With the concept of “being” in fact, Freire argued that democratic education for the oppressed in schools and various educational settings should have two basic principles. Like Freire, these two features, also emphasized by Apple and Beane\(^\text{20}\) are necessary for the school to be a "democratic place": 1) democratic structure and processes; 2) curriculum providing students with democratic experiences. Consequently, for the school to be a "democratic place", it must be fair, egalitarian, scientific, secular and solidaristic. This should lead to the implementation of three elements in students: 1) critical thinking; 2) social awareness; 3) political empowerment. These three main goals stipulate that democracy should be a "way of life" rather than just a standard, process, and goal at school. As a matter of fact, for both Tonguç and Freire, education at school was not a practice for which democracy would be experienced as an experimental project, but rather one which would be internalized, built, and lived. Therefore, for both Tonguç and Freire (increasingly in critical pedagogy), democracy is not the utopia of tomorrow, but the practice that must take place today. But for this to happen, according to Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, schools should be areas of "critical learning" and "social empowerment".\(^\text{21}\) Consciousness and awareness must be developed in order to free students from various pressures. To achieve this goal, critical pedagogues should look at the political activities of enlightened individuals as their true interests.\(^\text{22}\) Through dialogue, they try to change the roles of students and teachers and develop emancipatory forms of the curriculum.

Today, there are many structural barriers that prevent democratic schools from being founded. These obstacles also existed before, but now their number, type and influence have increased even more. Tonguç's Village Institutes and Freire's pedagogical practices for/of the oppressed developed various methods to overcome

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these obstacles. Today, the views of these two great, original, and effective educators, which are the same on many points, are represented most effectively in the different approaches of Critical Pedagogy. Critical Pedagogy is an educational model devoted to the liberation of poor segments of population who are oppressed, excluded, ignored, suppressed, marginalized, seen as out of date, enslaved, etc. Critical pedagogy, in Kincheloe's point of view\(^23\), deals with the margins of society, the experiences and needs of individuals faced with oppression and marginalization. In this respect, critical teachers deal with individuals who have been excluded from their voices, texts, and perspectives. The main goal of this quest is to raise "critical citizens". Critical pedagogy focuses on developing students' critical capacities to think, criticize, and act in transforming their conditions. Its orientation is "public school" versus "individualist teaching".

However, some types of schools that we experience today as “democratic schools”\(^24\) are schools that include public orientation, interests, and experiences, but their effects in educational circles are extremely little or insignificant. These schools have a powerful and significant democratic public space where the strongest scientific and democratic arguments within the framework of dialogic relations play important roles and give rise to the educational production in its organization. However, today, in a conjunction in which knowledge is merely reduced to standardized central exams, educational materials like the curricula come as a package program from outside into school, the teacher is pushed to symbolic and ineffective positions such as "moderator", “mentor”, and "guide" rather than "instructor master"; democratic school should be taken into consideration. In addition, today’s education is directed at increasing technical competence rather than democratic ideals, inequality and injustice in access to education are still being experienced, parents are being blocked from participating in determination and implementation of education budgets and expenditures to the detriment of free education, conservative attacks weaken science and secularism in education, and schools became a "technology-intensive". Technical knowledge dominates the school when it is held responsible for preparing the students


\(^{24}\)For these schools, see Apple and Beane, ibid.
for various reasons like merely gaining a profession or acquiring skills only for the market. For example, knowledge of fields such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and anthropology are seen as unnecessary and useless. While individualistic values are getting stronger in schools where companies, conservative forces, and a number of organizations under the name of so-called civil activities are increasingly involved in education, public issues can only be discussed in symbolic, artificial and temporary forms.

While classical Marxist theories heavily emphasized the reproduction of the educational system in powerful ways, they always forgot one thing. With the concept of "resistance", Critical pedagogy formulated what they had forgotten. Yet its democratic potential cannot be understood if schools are taken just like that. As Apple also points out, schools are not merely the institutions of reproduction, nor are they the organizations which inexorably produce explicit or secret knowledge that transform students into passive entities willing to keep up with and fabricate an unequal society. In other words, school is a space where many ideological and academic of negotiation and bargaining as education requirements are put into practice by the education subjects within the education and by some organizations and institutions outside of the school. Democratic school is and should be a place where the voices of oppressed or subaltern groups can be heard, in the sense of having a right to equal representation. Democratic educators should develop some democratic practices for solving the problems of subordinate, oppressed and excluded students who come to school with many disadvantages, problems, inequality and injustice outside of school as well as methods how to solve their problems within these practices. Tonguç and Freire literally were pedagogical masters and educational leaders in this regard. While these two educators were demonstrating their conception of democratic education in educational milieus, they built the teaching process on democratic solidarity, cooperation and administration in order to prevent their students from acting with personal/individualistic motivations such as diploma, grade, degree, status, resource, and certificate, etc. In their edited book, Apple and Beane are right in questioning whether schools today can both demonstrate what democracy

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means, and expand this meaning by taking it further.\textsuperscript{27} I think they can do it but, in fact, Tonguç and Freire have already done it and showed us how to achieve it. The views and practices of these two educators are today represented in various forms and different approaches in critical pedagogical theory and practice. We still have a lot to learn from these two educators who built the road from the Village Institutes to Critical Pedagogy, especially in building a democratic school model for our times.

\textsuperscript{27}Apple and Beane, ibid.
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