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Emerging Voices in Adult Education

Stephen Brookfield

Adult education is inherently uncontrollable, a reality that brings warmth to my ageing brain and body. Sure, governments and professional associations can attempt to legislate codes of practice, ethical and professional standards, and licensure requirements so that from the outside it looks as though the field is appropriately credentialed and rationally organized. But the formal activities that bear the name of adult, continuing, or lifelong education are only the tip of the adult educational iceberg. I understand adult education to be the process by which adults intentionally help each other learn. Conceived this way, adult education is only a part of adult learning, given the ubiquity of unplanned, unintended learning. Indeed, studies of transformative learning (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) pay eloquent testimony to the crucial role of unexpected “disorienting dilemmas” in prompting a significant reframing of previously assimilated assumptions and perspectives.

Adult education is the process by which adults intentionally help each other learn. This sounds deceptively simple. Of course, a moment’s thought makes it clear how incredibly complex this is. First, learning involves multiple processes—developing and practicing skills, assimilating information, understanding concepts, extending knowledge, developing empathy and inter-subjective understanding, applying old ideas and techniques in new settings, questioning and reframing assumptions, and so on almost ad infinitum. Second, learning occurs across multiple dimensions (instrumental, emancipatory, interpersonal, political, communicative, affective, somatic, spiritual, and so on) and in multiple arenas (family, community, peer groups, support networks, workplace, political organizations, community groups, recreational associations,

Stephen Brookfield is Distinguished University Professor at the University of St. Thomas.

churches etc.). Third, how learning is organized and conducted varies enormously across contexts, learners, and learning tasks. At different times—according to the nature of the learning task, the learner’s readiness and experience, or the teacher’s philosophy, personality or training—it can be self-directed, didactic, experiential, exploratory, closely monitored or any combination of these or multiple other formats.

I could go on but I hope the point is made. Far from being something that can be tamed and controlled, adult education is inherently uncontrollable. Even in the most rigid totalitarian regimes, or in the most tightly controlled penal institutions, adult education occurs. From the H-Block of the Maze prison in Northern Ireland (O’ Hearn, 2006) to Robben Island (Mandela, 1994) prisons have been crucibles of subversive adult education. This is a point made by commentators as diverse as Michel Foucault (1977) and Angela Davis (2003). So even as adult education programs are cancelled, graduate programs of adult education disappear, funding is cut from public adult education (at the time of writing Arizona faces the total elimination of state funded adult education) and the professional profile of the field seems to fade, this does not mean that adult education has somehow reached the end of history. As Habermas (1979) argues, humans have a social imperative to learn with and from each other that cannot be denied.

In this article I want to review some emerging trends in American adult education practice and theorizing that epitomize the inherently uncontrollable nature of adult education. Although many of these trends are situated within intellectual traditions that can trace their origins back several decades, together they represent perspectives and practices that have assumed new prominence in the first decade of the new millennium.

Africentrism

In the introduction to his influential anthology on African American thought, *Philosophy Born of Struggle* (1983), Leonard Harris observes that “the works of Afro-Americans are trapped, as it were, in a labyrinth where even the walls are white” (p. ix). This applies just as much to the theory and practice of adult education as to critical theory, analytic philosophy, empiricism, idealism or logic. The history of philosophy is undeniably Eurocentric, in Yancy’s (1998) words “the history of white men engaged in conversation with themselves” (p. 3). Although conducted as an intellectual project for the liberation of all humankind,

philosophy's location in white male discourses means that it may well function as yet one more "site of white cultural hegemony, sustained and perpetuated in terms of the particularity of race and gender related institutional power" (pp. 8-9). This is why Yancy argues that "there is a need to de-center Euro-American philosophy" (p. 11). Yancy believes that "African-American philosophers, within the context of American racism, share a certain Othered experiential reality in which the motif of race, its historical reality, its cultural dimensions, its heinous weight, its political importance, and its philosophical problematicity, is both explicitly and implicitly operative" (p. 11). Given that white European critical theorists are unlikely to reframe critical theory in the service of a different racial group, some African American intellectuals have tried to interpret this tradition in terms that serve African American interests. Others feel these interests are best served by instigating a separate Africentric discourse.

Many African American intellectuals, including prominent adult educators, explicitly reject Eurocentric philosophy as a perspective that can be used to understand the African American experience. In their terms the experience of African Americans learning and teaching within adult education must be understood in terms drawing on African cultural traditions; in other words, from an Africentric perspective. In works such as *Afrocentricity* (Asante, 1998a) and *The Afrocentric Idea* (Asante, 1998b) the Africentric perspective articulates a position derived from an analysis of the indigenous elements of African culture. To adult educators Scipio Colin III and Talmadge Guy "Africentrism is a sociocultural and philosophical perspective that reflects the intellectual traditions of both a culture and a continent. It is grounded in the seven basic values embodied in the Swahili Nguzo Saba" (Colin & Guy, 1998, p. 52). The Africentric position towards the field of adult education "asserts that adult educational policies, practices, experiences, philosophies, ethical issues, theories, and concepts must be considered and evaluated on the basis of the perspective and experience of African Americans/African Americans" (p. 52). In particular, an Africentric perspective explicitly excludes the understanding of adult education from a Eurocentric theoretical perspective such as critical theory.

In 1992 the first pre-conference focusing specifically on the presence of African American learners and educators within the field, and articulating what might comprise a research agenda representing the interests of members of the African Diaspora, was held the day before the annual "official" Adult Education Research Conference. This represented an

historic turning point in the development of adult education research in the United States. Up to this time scholarship had an undeniably Eurocentric emphasis and claims concerning the characteristics of adult learners were made with a level of universality that was unwarranted given that the samples of learners such generalizations were based on were overwhelmingly comprised of White, middle-class, North Americans. With the African Diaspora pre-conference the field acknowledged for the first time the reality of racial diversity and the complexities this raised for models of adult learning that up to then confidently claimed universality.

Merriweather-Hunn (2004) defines Africentrism as “the written articulation of indigenous African philosophy (an oral tradition) as embodied by the lived experiences of multiple generations of people of African descent” (p. 68). Africentrism draws on African-centered values and traditions to argue that African American learners and educators—indeed all members of the African Diaspora—need to work in ways shaped by those values and traditions rather than follow the Eurocentric norm. As developed most prominently by Professor Scipio A. J. Colin Jr. III (Colin, 1988, 2002; Closson, 2006) the Africentric paradigm re-conceptualizes adult learning and development as a collective, not individual, process in which *I Am Because We Are* (Hord & Lee, 1995). One’s own interests and identity are deemed to be inextricably intertwined with the well-being of the tribal collective, an approach that in Colin and Guy’s (1998) view “differs significantly from traditional Eurocentric perspectives of individualism, competition, and hierarchical forms of authority and decision-making” (1998, p. 50). To Colin and Guy, the Swahili notions of Ujima (collective work and responsibility) and Ujamaa (cooperative economics, most famously evident in Nyerere’s African socialism) are grounded in African rather than traditional Eurocentric cultural values, and are at the heart of adult learning. The Africentric paradigm conceives adult education as a process of developing African-based cognitive and socio-economic structures that stress community, interdependence and collective action.

The aforementioned values match a particular curricular orientation to adult education, one that focuses on self-ethnic liberation and empowerment. Arguing for a philosophy of self-ethnic reliance, Colin and Guy (1998) argue that African American adult education programs must be “designed to counteract the sociocultural and the socio-psychological effects of racism” (Colin & Guy, 1998, p. 47). Adopting Colin’s (1988, 2002) emphasis on self-ethnic reflectors, such a curriculum should be

developed by members of the ethnic or racial group that have lived the experience of racism and should reflect and affirm the racial identity and traditions of Africans rather than Europeans. Africentric adult education practices and understandings must be generated outside the dominant Eurocentric ideology. In Colin and Guy's opinion, an Africentric practice of adult education "means that the selection, discussion and critique of African American/African American content must not occur based on using standards or criteria arising from traditional Eurocentric perspectives. Rather, selection of content about African American/African American adult education is based on an Africentric perspective" (Colin & Guy, 1998, p. 51).

The Africentric theoretical paradigm has prompted other efforts at racially-based scholarship and led to an awareness of the importance of racially-based ways of knowing amongst majority White scholars. It has inspired a continuing Asian Diaspora pre-conference of the annual Adult Education Research Conference and has widened the range of scholarship evident in the field. In terms of specific adult educational practices, it has underscored the need for programs within which one racial group is pre-eminent to be taught by members of that group who are more attuned to its cultural rhythms and who provide ethnic reflectors for the learners concerned. It has challenged and widened the range of practices seen in adult educational classrooms. Prime examples of this would be the acceptance of "gumbo ya ya" as a mode of discussion (the Creole description for speech in which several people talk simultaneously and conversation constantly overlaps (see Ampadu, 2004), the use of "call and response" in teaching as one of the polyrhythmic realities of African art, music and dance analyzed by Sheared (1999), and the incorporation of African dialect into formal scholarship as represented by student essays and classroom presentations and by journal articles and formal research.

Queer Theory

Another historic turning point in the history of the field was in 1994 when an informal meeting of participants was held at the University of Knoxville during the annual Adult Education Research Conference to explore the possibility of forming some sort of group to focus on the interests of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered learners and educators within the field. This led to the establishment of another important pre-conference on the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered presence

within adult education. Reconstituted as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Allies (LGBTQA) pre-conference, the conference explores “what counts as knowledge, and what knowledge counts in LGBTQA discourse? How have Queer communities exposed/replaced categories such as family/citizenship/democracy? How do Queer communities engage in sense making beyond hetero/homo duality to re/construct social difference in new and meaningful ways?” (Adult Education Research Conference, n.d.).

As with the African Diaspora pre-conference, the interests the LGBTQA conference represented have posed a significant challenge to the field’s hetero-normative dominance.

In recent years, Queer theory has increasingly entered the field’s discourse enjoining adult educators to consider how people constantly learn to construct, dismantle and reconstruct sexual identity, and how they understand and practice desire. Exploring this process is replete with implications for how one thinks, learns, and teaches, and what one believes should be covered in a fully inclusive adult education curriculum. Unlike Africentrism or critical race theory, Queer theory is less a set of theoretical tenets and more a critical posture that questions traditional notions of sexuality. In particular, Queer theory problematizes heteronormativity; that is, the dominant, unquestioned belief that heterosexual relationships are not only the empirical norm, but morally superior to gay and lesbian same-sex relationships. The privilege associated with being “Straight” is, according to Rocco and Gallagher (2006) important to identify and challenge, particularly as it forces gay and lesbian workers to “pass” as straight for purposes of workplace safety or career development.

The ways adults learn dominant ideology, in particular what comprises normality in the most intimate domains of their lives—their sexual identity and practices—is at the heart of adult education’s adoption of Queer theory. A strong influence on this intellectual project has been the work of the French cultural theorist, Michel Foucault. Foucault, who himself was gay, was a major figure in the postmodern movement that had such an impact on adult education in the 1990’s. Foucault questioned taken-for-granted conceptualizations of power and binary classifications of normality and abnormality, oppressor and oppressed. Some of Foucault’s most provocative work, contained in the first three volumes of a planned six volume study of the *History of Sexuality* (1988, 1990a, 1990b), challenged easy conceptualizations of sexual deviancy and normality as inherent in human nature and explored how dominant notions and discourses reflected prevailing ideologies.

In choosing the term “Queer theory” to describe a theoretical posture of sexual critique its adherents are mainstreaming what was previously a term of abuse. As Hill (1995) acknowledges, this is a common response of marginalized groups who proudly wave the term of abuse applied to them as a badge of identity, thus turning the tables on the dominant group. Queer theory argues that pinning down one’s sexuality in a fixed, static way is always likely to be complex, as in transgendered relationships, or in straight friendships between transvestites and cross-dressers. Classics in the field such as *Epistemology of the Closet* (Sedgwick, 2008) “interrogate” (to use a favored term) dominant understandings and practices of sexuality. In other words, they question rigorously and continuously how certain ideas and behaviors become accepted as “normal” and others viewed as “deviant.”

The “Queer” in Queer Theory can never be defined in any stable way since the notion itself rejects an essentialist epistemology that defines sexuality in a bifurcated, either/or way as gay or straight, hetero or homo (Grace & Hill, 2004). Instead, queer celebrates the idea of constantly shifting identities and broadens conceptions of behavioral possibilities. Grace and Hill (2004) argue that Queer Theory’s radical inclusion connects it to theorizing in transformative learning whereby meaning schemes and perspectives are gradually broadened to become ever more permeable and comprehensive. King and Biro (2006) extend this analysis to apply a transformative learning perspective to the development of sexual identity at the workplace.

An interesting example of queering identity is Tisdell’s description of her sexuality as contextual (Bettinger, Timmins, & Tisdell, 2006). In describing being in a committed monogamous relationship with a man, then with a woman for more than 10 years, and now with a man for the past 10 years, Tisdell rejects the descriptor of bisexual or any categorization of her own sexual orientation. She writes “for me my sexual orientation is contextual, and related more to a person and relationship, than with one gender or another” (p. 64). Thus, what to others might appear as sexual confusion, for Tisdell and those who have a more fluid understanding of sexual orientation, is not confusion, since her sexual orientation is “contextually situated as being in love with and committed to a particular person regardless of his or her gender” (p. 64). As Hill (2007) notes, any attempt to queer organizations, classrooms, or adult education programs is a complex practice with multiple dimensions that “is fraught with paradox and contradiction” (p. 101). In his analysis of Queer praxis in adult education, Hill (2007) outlines briefly how research, teaching,

and the Internet are queered in a spirit of wildness and mischief as it focuses on bodily desire.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) assumes, like critical theory, that a state of permanent inequity has become accepted as normal in the U.S. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). However, whereas critical theory traditionally focuses on exclusion by class, critical race theory is concerned with racism and the dominant ideology of White supremacy. Critical race theory views racism as the enduring, all-pervasive reality of American life and suggests adult educators acknowledge this and make its analysis and confrontation a central feature of study and practice. CRT assumes that racism is endemic and that as legal measures restrict its overt expression (as in the existence of Whites-only clubs or organizations) it reconfigures itself in racial microaggressions (Sue, 2003) and aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Racial microaggressions are the subtle, daily expressions of racism embodied in speech, gesture and actions such as who gets called on to contribute in discussions and how those contributions are interpreted. Aversive racism comprises the racist behaviors that liberal Whites enact even as they profess sincerely to be free of racism. Peterson's (1999) early analysis of critical race theory in adult education describes how these subtle forms of racism endure and the conversations African American adult educators need to have to confront class, power, and language in the fight for dignity.

CRT places considerable emphasis on the use of narrative, particularly counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling encourages people of color to recount their experiences of racism in ways that reflect their own culture, a process that challenges not just what Whites consider to be racial reality (that civil rights has made racism a non-issue) but also what constitutes appropriate forms of classroom expression or scholarship. Using Hip Hop as a means of counter-storytelling, for example, stands in contrast to mainstream forms of narrative such as formal autobiographies or memoirs (Guy, 2004). The process of counter-storytelling is complex, however, as Merriweather-Hunn, Guy, and Manglitz's (2006) tale of a White adult educator's involvement with the African Diaspora pre-conference of the Adult Education Research Conference illustrates.

Critical race theory argues for a curriculum that stresses the analysis of how White supremacy is permanently embedded in educational texts, practices, and forms of student assessment. It places racism as the

central factor of American life and requires adult educators to explore how they collude in its perpetuation. Although originated by scholars of color in critical legal studies, the CRT perspective enjoins White adult educators to explore their own racism. Whites need to scrutinize publicly their own racial micro-aggressions such as regularly overlooking the contributions of students of color, dismissing the jargon of some groups while employing that of the dominant White culture, citing examples and authors that are exclusively White, or grading students of color differently because they are held to lower expectations. CRT also explores the notion of discriminative justice, echoing Marcuse's (1965) argument that "discrimination is good when it reveals processes of oppression and privilege in classrooms, funding and policies" (Rocco & Gallagher, 2006, p. 39).

Emerging Artistic Voices

As the music critic Antonino D'Ambrosio (2004) says, art "grabs a hold of you in a place you never knew existed, shakes you to the core and shatters everything you hold as true. It is transcendent. Illuminating. Empowering. Emancipating" (p. xxiii). Anytime you choose to engage with a new experience, or to try to appreciate the internal rules of new artistic forms, you are engaged in aesthetic learning that challenges customary ways of assigning meaning, and that opens you up to the spontaneous, non-rational and emotional elements of your being. It is these that are at the heart of the aesthetic dimension. Social movement researcher T. V. Reed (2005) identifies the following ten functions of art in social movements: to encourage, empower, harmonize, inform internally, inform externally, enact movement goals, historicize, transform affect or tactics, critique movement ideology, and make room for pleasure (pp. 299-300). As I think about the role of art in adult education I want to focus on sounding warnings, building solidarity, and teaching history. New voices have emerged in the last two decades that perform all these functions.

Art that sounds warnings is art that works on two social levels. First, it solidifies and encapsulates an emerging movement in a way that feels accurate and real to members of the movement. Song is particularly suited to this owing to its short gestation time. A song can theoretically be written and learned in a couple of hours, recorded and mixed in a few more, and then available for download on the web almost immediately and on the streets a little later. It is more compact than a blog posting and

works in visceral and emotional ways that an op-ed piece or blog cannot. From the *trouveres* to the broadside ballads, from “Joe Hill” to Billie Holliday’s “Strange Fruit,” song has a directness and immediacy that appeals to memories and instincts deeper than mere prose can. This was well acknowledged by the legendary Joe Hill himself, a songwriter for the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) union who believed “a pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read but once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over; and I maintain that if a person can put a few cold common sense facts in a song, and dress them in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off them he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too uninformed to read a pamphlet or an editorial on economic science” (quoted in Eyerman & Jameson, 1998, p. 59).

Second, art sounds warnings to members outside a movement; it let’s people know “something’s happening here” as Steve Stills sang with Buffalo Springfield. A prime example of art that worked on both levels of sounding warnings, and that also used two forms of media, is Spike Lee’s film *Do the Right Thing*, which opened with Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power.” The violent yet, to some, cryptic end of Lee’s film was a classic warning. On the one hand the character Mookie (played by Lee) had decided the right thing was to take sides and help destroy his employer’s pizzeria; on the other hand, the closing credits quoted Malcolm X and Martin Luther King on the merits of violent or non-violent forms of protest, with no indication which Lee preferred. *Do the Right Thing* came out in the aftermath of the death in Howard Beach of Michael Griffith, Bernard Goetz’s shooting of four Black teenagers in a subway car, and Michael Stewart’s death after being arrested in the subway for tagging a subway car and beaten while in police custody. Public Enemy’s self-description as the Black Panthers of rap had made it clear that Jesse Jackson’s call for a rainbow coalition was only one of many voices in the debate about the African American future. Molefi Asante and Maulana Karenga were developing the African centered philosophy and practice of Afrocentrism, the centrist David Dinkins was shaping up for a run to be New York mayor, and Minister Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam was emerging as the self-help model for many Black Americans. In the midst of this realignment of key players in the debate, and this reconfiguration of what were the key issues, *Do the Right Thing* sounded a warning to a far larger audience than the New York Hip-Hop community that “something’s happening here” and its reverberations were national, even international.

The voices in radical art also want to build solidarity. Its creators are learning how to craft images, create melodies, develop rhythms and tell stories that bind followers into a common cause. The purpose of art that builds solidarity is to encourage someone to signify a commitment to a struggle. Great speeches do this but speeches emanate from one person and, whilst one can invoke resonant phrases (“I have a dream”), it is hard to internalize a speech, to claim it as one’s own. Song is particularly suited to this, particularly songs that follow the “zipper” format described by Lee Hays of the Weavers (quoted in Eyerman & Jameson, 1998, p. 42). This format establishes a basic lyrical and melodic structure that is then repeated as much as people want with a new word or phrase being inserted each verse. The civil rights song “We Shall Overcome” is a classic example of this. Sung at the Highlander Folk School as the police broke up a workshop there, a new verse was added with the refrain “We are not afraid”. The song endures across multiple contexts and, every time it is sung in the midst of a struggle (on a picket line or at a demonstration rather than in a folk club or concert hall), people are publicly committing themselves to a particular project as well as expressing solidarity.

The documentary film *Amandla* is another good example of how movement intellectuals learned how to use song, systematically and intentionally, to bind members, affirm commitment and build solidarity. Chronicling the role of music in the South African struggle for apartheid, from Vuyisile Mini’s “Watch Out Verwoerd” to “Nkosi sikelel’I” (The People’s Anthem), the film shows how songs of protest became radicalized as the Nationalist government’s control measures became more and more extreme. Commissars and freedom fighters in the ANC pay eloquent testimony to the intentional use of song to keep up morale even as killed comrades were being mourned.

In the Skiffle, Punk and Hip-Hop movements the “Do It Yourself” (DIY) ethic prevailed strongly over the ethic of formal skill. All three musical forms involved a great deal of adult learning, not just in learning instrumental & vocal techniques, but also in the business of creating independent record labels to release and distribute music the major labels were dismissive of, and, more recently, also to use the Internet to bypass commercial companies in getting music out to a wide audience. In terms of musicianship, both Skiffle and Punk were basic, relying on a small number of major chords. In terms of formal language, the MC’ing of Hip-Hop (which evolved into rap) did not use the “high” culture language taught in English classrooms, but a mixture of Ebonics and street slang. The point about these three bottom-up musics was their accessi-

bility. Anybody, potentially, could participate without an extensive (and often expensive) period of formal training in technique. This is not to say that technique was not involved. In Hip-Hop, the battles between MC's and the freestyling they engaged in were dazzling in their virtuosity. Yet, freestyling is theoretically, open to anyone quick enough to jump in and improvise. Being a Hip-Hop DJ did not involve training in a vocational-technical institute, nor a degree in broadcast communications, just access to a turntable and a power source. Grandmaster Flash had only style, not a big record collection.

Teaching history is probably the radicalizing function of art that most people think of first, and it is probably the most common. Song has tried to do this, often in the folk ballad form with multiple verses describing particular struggles or injustices. Bob Dylan's early work such as "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," "Oxford Town," or "Only a Pawn in Their Game" built on the ballad form to the extent of sometimes claiming old ballad melodies. Bob Marley's "Buffalo Soldier" is a well-known example of an explicit teaching song. Marley sings to potential inquirers (and maybe to himself as well) "if you know your history then you would know where you were coming from" about the former slaves and freemen "stolen from Africa, brought to America" to fight in the U.S. 9th and 10th cavalry regiments.

Perhaps the most successful aesthetic forms for teaching history are visual. Murals, quilts, and frescoes all constitute visual records of struggle, from the murals celebrating Bobby Sands hunger strike on 124th Street in Manhattan, to the ornate and storied banners of British Trade Unions, or the quilts in Minneapolis-St. Paul produced by Hmong refugees detailing their flight from the mountains of Laos and Cambodia. But film currently trumps all those forms and is the way many learn narratives of struggle. The English film director Ken Loach has a five-decade career of film-making, with no major commercial success to his name, in which narratives of struggle have consistently played a central part. Although often set in the United Kingdom, these have ranged beyond those borders to include the Irish Republic, Nicaragua, Los Angeles, and Spain. A familiar theme that threads its way through his narratives is the means-ends dilemma, the ever-present conundrum of deciding when ends justify means, and which tactics work best for a marginalized group facing a superior force. Typically, Loach locates these dilemmas in the context of an individual narrative, so that the protagonist's choices are emblematic of broader dilemmas facing a movement.

In *Bread and Roses*, his account of the Los Angeles janitor's strike

there are explicit teaching sections, as when the central character, a White union organizer, describes the origins of the phrase “Bread and Roses.” Less overtly pedagogic are Loach’s depictions of the choices made by two Hispanic sisters, one a legal immigrant and one illegal, who find their choices narrowed by class and race. This is a central theme in Loach, the necessary making of choices from only bad alternatives that working people face as a daily reality. Another theme concerns Loach’s belief—or rather our reading of his implied belief—that the ends should never justify the means. In *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, the readiness of Irish republican rebels to compromise with the British authorities in the Irish uprising is dramatized through one brother ordering the execution of another brother for refusing to follow the official Republican line. In *Land and Freedom* the central character—an Englishman who goes to fight for the Republican cause and joins the POUM in the Spanish civil war—vacillates between the wisdom of staying true to collectivist ideals or trading independence of action for superior weaponry and allying with the Soviet supplied and controlled Communist Party of Spain. For educators interested in the dynamics of discussion, by the way, I recommend the extended segment in *Land and Freedom* where villagers and Republican forces together debate the wisdom of collectivizing and abolishing private ownership.

Conclusion

The emerging voices I have focused on inevitably reflect my own identity and history. But I end this piece where I began. Adult learning is enduring and uncontrollable, as essential and necessary to survival as breathing. Who prompts and nurtures that learning, and who tries to stop or quash it, shift constantly. Sometimes they are formally named as adult educators and belong to associations with that phrase in the association’s title. But most adult educators escape the professional identity of adult educator. They are friends, partners, colleagues, media figures, artists, community and political leaders, family members. It is here that we look for the field’s emerging voices.

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