



Adult Learning and Experience of Crises: Interrogating Critical Theory, Democracy, and Citizenship Education

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What's gone is rooting here, at the same place, doleful, unvoiced.

Like a large heirloom vase that was once sold

At times of hardship.

And in the room's corner, where the vase once stood,

A void still remains, concentrated in the very same shape, irremovable,

Shining transparent in the sun-glare, when now and then windows are opened.

And inside the same vase, that has swapped its essence.

with a substance identical and equivalent to the crystal of the empty one,

There still remains the very same cavity, just a little painfully more resonant.

Yannis Ritsos, (1958)

On each visit to Larissa since 2016 I have traveled by train from Athens or Thessaloniki. The impact and shock of the rail disaster at Tempi, in which so many were killed, has led to rallies and protests. Individual human errors distract from errors in the system. It is the current protests that I want to focus on in these opening moments (Bubola, & Giannakopoulos, 2023). The Ritsos poem (above) is a lament for those who died.

Another local event commands my attention too. The Academy of Athens nearby on Panepistimiou Street celebrates the work of the famous Greek writer Kambanellis. One display celebrates his famous Song Cycle which Theodorakis set to music. The moving reminder of the dangers of authoritarianism and its expression in Mauthausen concentration camp are eloquent works of artists who pose questions not only about the past but for the present day. But this anticipates the conclusion of this paper that hopes to identify the arts in general as a way of addressing the awfulness of violence, brutality, and the suffering of war.

CRISES, PROTESTS AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

I have been at previous protests in Syntagma Square (in 2011) and in Plaza de Catalunya, Barcelona (also 2011) that expressed the indignation of citizens against austerity. While looking in some detail at these protests, it is clear that the groups occupying these squares engage through new social media with many more people than are there at the time. Instant increases in numbers can be arranged, information quickly exchanged, democratic decisions made, and leadership exercised and dispersed among a wide group. It is a public sphere (Fleming, 2023). The documents distributed in Barcelona reveal the motivation behind the protests. A proclamation by the protesters stated: 'They thought we were asleep...But they were wrong....Above all we aim to ensure that society itself be the sole driver of transformation' (see Pellicer, et al., 2021, pp, 288–301).

I want to highlight, and present for your consideration, this core idea: Public protests are profound democratic events in which protesters attempt to make their voices heard and fill the public square and the public sphere with their experience. They intend bringing about policy and political change. A vibrant public sphere is essential for democracy.

Such political struggles for change tend to create crises (examine how the police react) and promote tensions (look at how politicians react) that may force society to confront a problem, an issue, or injustices that have not been confronted previously. Street protests are a form of politics from below in which the experience of workers, or students, or other citizens is expressed in the form of critique. Their experiences and insights and understandings are a counter epistemology to that of dominant interests and the protests are an expression of counter publics. The epistemologically marginalized attempt to trigger a crisis in the knowledge of the socially and economically powerful in society. All of us who are familiar with the theory of transformative learning will identify such crises

Διά Βίου Μάθηση και Εκπαίδευση Ενηλίκων την Εποχή της Αβεβαιότητας: ΔΡΟΜΟΙ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΕΝΤΑΞΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΟΧΗ

as potential disorienting dilemmas for society. This is the first step in the learning process that is transformative. Incidentally, crisis and critique seem to have the same root - at least in the Greek language (Eschenbacher & Fleming, 2020, 2021). Usually, transformative learning (TL) refers to crises or dilemmas as being within individual experience but in these public moments of protest, the dilemma is a social one: Whether old frames of reference will remain in command or whether new ones emerge based on the critiques and experience of protesting citizens.

Migrants also challenge the dominant self-understanding of individuals, groups, and indeed entire nations - including the European Union (see Fassin & Honneth, 2022). The system tries to solve these problems by deflecting, and investigating and hoping that very soon everyone and everything will return to normal. The investigations are presented as opportunities from which there will be great learning that focuses on avoiding accountability or responsibility by the system. But in reality, the aim is to never blame politicians who at best 'learn from these mistakes.' This learning is rarely transformative because it leaves the previous epistemological position in command as the true, authentic, and normal narrative, though it may be dysfunctional.

Climate change is a similar contest between those who know about an approaching crisis and those who wish to move on, or at least continue with business as usual. In a world where workers unions have become marginalized or have to a large extent lost their ability to engage effectively in triggering such transformative moments, we look to new sources of leverage and transformation. The increased threat and rise of Far-Right political movements tend to embrace fascism, racism, conspiracy theories and uncomplicated perspectives that often identify the main social problems as located in the other - Jews, People of Color, Muslims, women, LGBTQ+. In a world of conspiracy theories these are deviant forms of critique that involve suspicion and rejection of authority. But they need to be understood as having complex meanings that give ambiguous signals (Fassin & Honneth, 2022).

THE PLAN

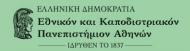
The task I set for this paper is to outline a critical understanding of the current situation in which we find ourselves - often described as a crisis - and weave the beginning of an educational response, at this Conference on Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in Uncertain Times. These are themes of this task:

The experience of citizens. The public sphere and democracy. Crisis and critique. Fascism and other barriers to democracy and Transformative learning.

I am suggesting that adult education may be a useful way of developing an understanding of the sources of contemporary crises and identifying where there are, or may be, emancipatory counter tendencies (see Finnegan & Fleming, in press 2023). To do this I will turn to the work of contemporary adult educator and critical theorist Oskar Negt (1971, 2008; Negt & Kluge, 1993, 1972/2016) and his collaborating co-author Alexander Kluge (2017, 2020; Kluge & Negt 2014). But first a note on this age of experience in which we live. Never before has human experience been so central to how we operate in society (Fleming, 2020).

THE AGE OF EXPERIENCE

John Dewey is a useful ally when educators approach experience. Two ideas are especially important in Dewey's epistemology: the centrality of experience and his ideas about reflective inquiry. He critiqued the gap between the problems faced by the broader community and the learning offered by education. He advocated that schools provide age-appropriate practice of democracy as part of the school curriculum, and these experiences should refer to activities of interest both in the school and beyond (Dewey, 1933, p. 55). A democratic society has the responsibility to improve, through education, the 'methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion and that is the problem





of the public' (Dewey, 1927, p. 208). This clearly connects school with the public sphere and teaches how to engage in critical conversations.

Transformative learning takes on board most of Dewey's insights on critique, on reflection and forefronts the experience of adults as the trigger for learning. According to Dewey the role of education is to teach people to think in response to experiences of 'perplexity' (Dewey, 1933, p.22). Perplexity, like the problem posing of Freire, is the beginning of learning and reflects Greek philosophy that points to wonder (curiosity) as the beginning of wisdom (Plato) – wonder is the 'mother of all sciences' (Plato, *Theaetetus*, 155c-d). This very Socratic idea of life experience producing perplexity, and education inculcating a psychological restlessness (curiosity) is in keeping with an interest in asking questions as against providing students with a world of answers. The 'demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection,' according to Dewey (1933, p. 24). When a 'perplexity lays hold of a mind ... that mind is alert and enquiring because [it is] stimulated from within' (Dewey, 1933, p. 207). The critical mind always remains uncertain, able to doubt and embraces partial solutions that may or must suffice for now - even as the mind experiences an 'emotional disturbance' (Dewey, 1933, p. 24).

The language we speak, the world view we acquire in school, at home and from our culture provides answers, values, attitudes - all inherited, handed on, assumed and indeed powerful. The process of re-thinking everything we inherit is the very definition of adult learning, or more accurately adult transformative learning. Thinking in this way, critical thinking, involves engaging with our experience of the inherited world view, or lifeworld. The educational task for each individual or learning society is to engage in problematizing (Freire, 1972) what we have until that moment taken for granted. Teachers are facilitators of this process. This is what I mean when I contrast this learning to the knowledge offered by the Far Right who provide answers to questions rather than questions that need study in order to be answered. We also know that the fundamentalism of the Far Right ultimately leads to prohibiting public expressions of the experiences of citizens - look at any authoritarian government. The work of artists and poets is particularly threatening. To allow the expression of experience is the first step towards a vibrant public sphere, democracy, and transformative learning. To prohibit the expression of experience is an early stage in the move toward the Far Right.

Experience, Freire argues (1972, 1978), is not just social and personal but also historical and deeply riven by conflicts of interest. Deep critical reflection requires that we learn to read the world in order to understand how personal and community experiences have been shaped by power and to perceive that internal oppressions and external injustices operate dialectically (Freire, 1972). Democratic citizenship involves critically understanding the causes of inequality and engaging in small and large scale actions that change the way power in society is exercised and thus reduce unnecessary suffering and enhance the possibilities of becoming more human. This is a critical 'reconstruction of the experience' - as Dewey (1966) defines education – and also involves the reconstruction of oppression, inequality, exclusion, and misrecognitions that are all in need of transformation.

I also rely on Oskar Negt and Mezirow's transformative learning for this brief highlighting of experience. What is new in this understanding of experience is the aspect mostly ignored by Dewey and by transformative learning - the dialectical nature of experience. Mezirow and most adult education theory has probably allowed the dialectical understanding of experience to escape their grasp. Experience is dialectical. This may have been a missed opportunity for Mezirow (and transformative learning theory) to grasp the full contextualized understanding of experience as outlined by Hegel, Paulo Freire, and Oskar Negt.

Dewey (1966) defines education more completely as 'that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience' (p. 76) and includes 'organizing, restructuring and transforming' experience (p. 50). For Dewey, experience has two dimensions. First, experience is in <u>continuity</u> with previous experience. In pursuing meaning (learning) we modify or integrate new experience with previous experiences. For Mezirow (1978) 'a meaning perspective refers to the structure of cultural assumptions within which one's new experience is assimilated to - and transformed by - one's past experience' (p. 101). Second, experience is in <u>interaction</u> with one's broader environment. Experience is created by interacting with the environment (Dewey, 1963). Learning involves

becoming aware of these interactions and continuities (Dewey, 1966) and how they too are themselves distorted processes and thus open to misinterpretation. Frames of reference help interpret experience and dysfunctional frames of reference distort our experience.

EXPERIENCE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Just as experience is of interest to adult educators so too is the public sphere and here, we make the connection explicit between democracy and, the public sphere, and experience. More than or rather in a different way to the school system, adult education is a player in the everyday life of society. Adult students are political beings, active in the economy and in public opinion formation and expression. Taking on this role and interpreting it as learning and educational experience is an important part of citizenship education (Eschenbacher & Fleming, 2022; Finnegan & Fleming, in press 2023; Fleming, 2023).

For most people, new social media acts as the public sphere in the world today. Negt and Kluge (1972/2016) argue that the concentrated ownership of mass media, the manipulation by state and corporate actors of the media, and the products of the culture industry based on consumption and entertainment undermine the public sphere as a space for critical dialogue. To a striking degree there is a resulting commodification, individualization, and trivialization of social experience.

A vibrant public sphere is the bedrock of an active democratic society and adult education has a powerful role in developing the 'communities of publics' that engage in the public opinion forming processes (Rasmussen, 2021, p. 15). While not ignoring the essential and early work of Habermas (1974) on *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, we can clearly see it has changed significantly in the last 50 years. According to Habermas (2022) it is now a digital, commodified, and globalized space. Democracy cannot survive in the current digital world without an inclusive public sphere and a deliberative process for the formation of public opinion.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING - TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE

Critical reflection is the way to engage transformatively with experience (Mezirow, 1990). Critical reflection is defined by Dewey as 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends' (Dewey, 1933, p. 9). Reflection also involves 'turning on some unconscious assumption and making it explicit' (Dewey, 1933, p. 281) and making a conscious and voluntary effort to establish beliefs upon a 'firm basis of evidence and rationality' (Dewey, 1933, p. 6).

Mezirow (1985) defines transformative learning as;

the process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of our psychocultural assumptions has come to constrain the way in which we perceive our world, of reconstituting that structure in a way that allows us to be more inclusive and discriminating in our integrating of experience and to act on these new understandings ... (p. 22).

The kinds of discussions and conversations that lead to transformative learning (Mezirow, 1996) are open, free, egalitarian, inclusive and participatory and exactly the kinds of discourses that Habermas (1987) describes as communicative action. Discourse is a form of specialized dialogue that is involved in searching for a common understanding. But in order to be understood, there must be intelligible talk, it must be true, justified, sincere and without the intention to deceive (Mezirow, 1991, p. 65). Habermas calls these validity claims and for him rationality means that these validity claims must/can be tested through discourse. For Mezirow an adult is one who is able to participate in these kinds of conversations. This critical reflection demands a great deal from participants. It requires emotional maturity, empathy, awareness, an ability not to be adversarial in discussions and to think and hold different and contradictory thoughts at the same time. It does not involve winning or losing but instead emphasizes consensus building - even if that is not always possible (Mezirow, 2000, p. 11). These requirements give transformation theory a solid theoretical grounding, and at a practical level for learners, a difficult target to achieve. These kinds of discussions are exactly the kinds of





conversions that are demanded of active citizens in a functioning democracy. And this is how I connect transformative learning, democracy, public sphere, critique, and crises (Fleming, 2022b).

Currently, adult education has been (and continues to be) largely focused on how to facilitate instrumental learning – now disguised as lifelong learning. This is one of the risks of adopting lifelong learning as a mantra or policy position, as it has a tendency to be used to refer to functional learning or economic skills (Fleming, 2021). This critique of instrumental reason or learning should not be mistaken as a diminution of its importance, complexity, or usefulness in society or in learning lives. The most persuasive distortion in education results, in Mezirow's view, from our 'assumption that all adult learning proceeds exactly as instrumental learning does' (Mezirow, 1985, p. 18). In previous publications I have mined the considerable works of Axel Honneth in order to inform a development of these ideas (Fleming, 2022b; Fleming, Kokkos, & Finnegan, 2019) but here I turn instead to Oskar Negt and his work on critical education.

OSKAR NEGT

Oskar Negt's (Negt & Kluge, 1993) work allows us to further elaborate the understanding of the reconstruction of experience. His version of critical theory identifies the adult education of workers as a way to eliminate injustices in work. The injustices/humiliations that workers experience, he says, involve the absence of material resources (redistributive justice) and the denial of recognition. According to Negt (Kluge & Negt, 2014) the experience of workers gives an insight into and starting point for learning, teaching and his critical social theory. Their experience as workers (Kluge & Negt, 2014) is infused with the contradictions of capitalist society and these authors see experience as a source of 'resistance to capitalism' (p. 31). Negt's concept of exemplary learning describes well his approach to adult education. And the experience of workers is analyzed, and by exercising their sociological imaginations, workers come to understand more comprehensively the issues they experience and take social action to alter the condition of workers (and learners). I would like to call this latter recognitive justice - asserting the rights of workers to be recognized. These experiences of being workers and misrecognitions damage and imprison one in a 'false, distorted, and reduced mode of being' (Taylor, 1992, p. 25).

Finally, as our interdisciplinary reworking of experience unfolds, the next iteration we undertake involves taking seriously an idea borrowed by Negt from Hegel. This refers to the connection between current experiences and past experiences as dialectical. As previously outlined the Dewey position on experience and its connection with previous experiences and with the social environment in which it exists, Negt, now states that these connections are dialectical. What does this mean? Peter Alheit (2021) provides an example of this connection. Quoting Erving Goffman's (1977) study he illustrates how gendered social rules influence individual actions and are thus reproduced across generations. According to Goffman male-female intimate relations are normally of an older/taller man and younger/smaller woman. These are the personal choices of many. These are social and cultural constructs, difficult to change and that act behind the backs of the people concerned. Here 'the "social" breaks into the self-referential self-description of the psychic system, as it were, without being conceptually integrated' (Alheit 2021, p.85). The tacit knowledge of how to act as gendered people operates powerfully because it does so precognitively as 'experience knowledge from countless interaction situations and becomes effective to a certain extent in the background' of our actions (Alheit, 2021, p. 86). It is experienced as beyond question and even natural according to Alheit, quoting Schutz. This tacit knowledge is only available where disruptions occur and where some event forces the participants to reflect. Crises provide such disruptions.

I prefer to take the example of a team game or sport such as football. The game of football (soccer) is usually owned by an organization such as FIFA and enjoyed by players and fans. From time to time either through the increased skills of players, the change in needs of the fans or today through the introduction of technologies to enhance the accuracy of referee's decisions, the rules of the game may be changed. A good example is the way goalkeepers may or may not handle a deliberate back-pass from a player on their own team. Then in turn the players and fans adapt and become accustomed to a different configuration of the game and their experience. Players become more skilled and team tactics are adjusted. These changes are made in the context of a dialectic relationship between the owners, the players, and fans. Fans may become restless with the time

spent on VAR, for instance, and in the dialectic interactions between owners, players, and fans the game evolves. It changes and becomes more responsive to previous experiences and the environment (economic, technical, TV, and skills of players) in which it operates.

It is this understanding of dialectic that is almost totally neglected in adult education, lifelong learning and most unfortunately in transformative learning. Dewey did not give it the attention it deserved, though he was in contact with the Young Hegelians, but today the complexity offered by taking seriously this dialectic is attractive for its potential to address a number of problems in social theory and adult education. The connections between experiences and broader social and cultural contexts are dialectical. This is not to say that Dewey, Habermas and Honneth are unaware of this. But as transformation theory evolves and revisits past ideas and current contexts, we are constantly challenged to renew our familiarity with experience and its importance in learning. This takes us beyond Honneth (Fleming, 2014, 2016, 2021, 2022c).

NEGT AND DIALECTICS OF EXPERIENCE

So Negt reframes experience and says that the continuities with past experience are dialectical and the interactions with broader social environment and contexts are also dialectical. This has implications for transformative learning. Mezirow (1978, p. 101) hardly hints that this interaction between one's current experience and one's previous experience is dialectical. The well-known stages of transformative learning also involve connecting one's individual experience with broader social issues and this connection is dialectical – an aspect of experience neglected in transformation theory. This fundamentally alters our understanding of transformative learning theory. The now familiar phases of transformative learning must now be reinterpreted (Fleming, 2022d). And questions about whether learning and making meaning are individual or social is capable of a different interpretation. The personal and social and dialectically connected experience ought to be understood in this way.

Critiques of transformation theory focus on the way the social dimension of learning is misconstrued or that lifelong learning misses the social dimension. We can now define this aspect of transformations differently. Individual problems are connected dialectically with broader social issues. The political is personal - dialectically. This makes understanding one's problems or dilemmas and the search for solutions more complex than previously understood and these problems are not properly understood unless they are seen as dialectical. Connecting one's experience (usually understood as an individual phenomenon) with broader social issues is not just an interesting add-on for educators and learners, but an essential dimension of understanding one's experiences. Indeed, without this dialectical dimension the connections are mis-construed. The action one takes as the essential final phase of transformative learning I now propose reframing as a dialectically interconnected set of actions at personal and social levels. Praxis is dialectical (Fleming, 2022a).

These are not entirely new ideas in European education studies. Salling Olesen is credited by Knud Illeris (2002) with borrowing these ideas from Negt in 1989. Negt, more than any other critical theorist associated with the Frankfurt School, builds an education theory around these ideas. Even if learners are not aware of these connections, real understandings of experience are only fully revealed when they are interpreted as dialectic (Fleming, 2022a, 2022d). In concluding this part, I now reframe Mezirow's transformation of frames of reference as a pedagogy of transforming experience.

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL IMAGINATION: ASKING THE EDUCATION QUESTIONS

This paper is an exercise in sociological imagination and the educator in me, and I hope in you, wants to ask, what I call, the educational question. How can we teach with this sociological imagination? I am not going to repeat the insights most often associated with C Wright Mills (1959) or Negt and Kluge (Fleming, 2022c). My response is to commence or outline a number of borrowed ingredients for a *Pedagogy of Social Imagination*.





This exercise in sociological imagination involves being wide-awake where wide-awake refers to Alfred Schutz (1967) the scholar of wide-awakens.

By the term "wide-awakeness" we want to denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake.... This attention is an active, not a passive one. Passive attention is the opposite to full awareness. (p. 213)

Greek culture has a strong personal and social imagination exercised in classical Greek literature and just as I commenced with a note on (current) exhibition at the Athens Academy of the work of lavokos Kambanellis (1966) I return to identify his works as a profound and moving statement about the Holocaust experience. With the words of his Song Cycle 'The Ballad of Mauthausen,' Mikis Theodorakis composed what is regarded as the music of the Holocaust. These emotionally moving words and songs are the raw material for an imagination that can leap beyond the awful experiences and imagine a better future. Transformative teachers can prompt learners to engage in the real dilemmas that confront our societies today as so many flee from terror. Such wide-awakeness involves being wide awake and paying attention to life and what is going on around one and in particular being able to exercise one's imagination.

Imagination is the key ingredient in what I am proposing as an educational response to the issues raised in this paper and in the theme of this conference. It involves being wide awake and in empathy with others. Imagination makes empathy possible, and we teach students to resist thinking that lacks empathy and feelings and teach them to resist the monopoly of technical thinking.

Democratic educators must care about the lived experience of learners and their world view. We help students to imagine moving beyond familiar ways of understanding the world. To look at art, as Kokkos (2021) does, and look at Picasso's *Guernica* and see the broken weeping women with dead babies and become aware of the tragic experiences of yesterday's mothers and the mothers of today. If we can imagine this with Picasso, we can also imagine Ukraine today or the boat people. We can then increase the ability to imagine a better world – in which there will be no more wars that make women scream and weep like that – no bombs, no dead children. To open eyes and ears and imagination to art will enable us to pick up the signals deep within us as individuals and a community that knows that a better world is possible (Greene, 1995). Imagination, as Dewey said, helps us break through the 'inertia of habit' and of habitual thinking (Dewey, 1934, p. 272). He proposed teaching for breakthrough moments. Or as Picasso (Malraux, 1974) said about painting;

You have to wake people up. To revolutionize their way of identifying things. You've got to create images they won't accept...Force them to understand that they're living in a pretty queer world. A world that is not reassuring. A world that's not what they think it is. (p. 110)

Even in Europe torn apart by the Second World War, Käthe Kollwitz (2022) was able to draw, paint and sculpt images of closeness, care, and tenderness. There is no critical reflection without imagination.

Some can imagine dark events as possibilities and solutions to problems in the world. We distinguish the dark imagination that imagines that Mauthausen or war, racism are solutions from the imagination that sees the possibility of peace – as in the work of Käthe Kollwitz (2022). Kollwitz made her art in Berlin during WW2. A dark imagination leads to radicalizations. I suggest there is a crisis of imagination in the educational system with its preoccupations with instrumental learning and economically useful learning and managerialism agendas. We can see the limits imposed by those systems (Aronowitz & Bratsis, 2005) and break through the dark imaginings. Imagination is needed to break from what we take for granted – the project of transformation. In contrast to most of the literature on transformative learning with its much-criticized focus on critical reflection, it is imagination that is the grounds for transformation.

Hannah Arendt might also inspire thoughts on imagination. She wrote, train your mind to 'visit the imaginations of others' (Arendt, 1978, p. 2). Or in this, quoted by Bernstein (2018),

Thought itself - to the extent that it is more than a technical, logical operation which electronic machines may be better equipped to perform than the human brain – arises out of the

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> actuality of incidents, and incidents of living experience must remain its guideposts to which it descends. (p. 9).

On more familiar ground for adult educators, we recall with Freire (2004) that imagination allows people to stand on the edge of society and to think beyond the ways that power is exercised now and to at least begin to experience ourselves and 'know ourselves as more, much more that pawns in a game where the rules are already set' (p. 109).

This requires, I think, an integrated theory of critical reflection on experience, and a democracy that seeks to tackle inequality, exclusions, and misrecognition, being mindful of the dynamics of capitalism and alert to the extraordinary nature of human capacities. I suggest that Dewey (1937), Freire, Mezirow, Negt, and Kluge offer useful coordinates for such a theory - a theory that will introduce and induce perplexity, curiosity, thinking, critical reflection and lead students to wideawakeness and become active agents of personal and social transformation.

CONCLUSION

To those killed in the train crash at Termi, we continue with the poem by Ritsos (1958), who concludes:

Through the vase the wall's color can be seen,

Darker, deeper, dreamier,

As if the vase's shadow still remains shaped in a sarcophagus –

And someday, at night on a silent hour,

Or at daytime amidst voices,

You hear from deep inside of you a piercing sound, bitter and multitoned,

As if an invisible finger has tapped.

On that absent, delicate, crystal vessel.

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