

## ABSTRACT

# ***Critical Adult Education in International Perspective***

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Critical Theory has emphasised the strong connection that has always existed between education and political thought. As a clear example of writing around this issue, by a major exponent of critical theory and politics and the question of power, one need only refer to Theodor Adorno's essay, 'Education after Auschwitz'. This essay, written in light of the rise of and havoc on humanity wreaked by Nazism and Nazification, registers many themes of relevance today. One need only read the work of contemporary social critic Henry A. Giroux (b. 1943) to gauge the merits and pertinence of Adorno and other critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas to see the mileage such essays have for the current spectre of a New Fascism hovering over the contemporary world. Henry Giroux and his great friend and colleague — the late Roger I. Simon — are prominent exponents of the area, which is the subject of this public lecture, *Critical Adult Education In International Perspective*.

As Giroux is on record as having admitted, the elements of what constitutes critical pedagogy have existed since time immemorial. "I was one of many people who at a particular time in history was dealing with the issue and we were able to seize that moment to put critical pedagogy on the agenda. I do know that Paulo Freire had an enormous influence on my work *and* the work of others ..." (Giroux, 2022, p. 21). He adds, "Let me begin with one suggestion. I think it is a critical mistake to have ever suggested that critical pedagogy was simply the product of one particular region of the world. Critical pedagogy has been going on for a long time in many places: in Latin America, the United States, in England, in Africa, in Malta ..." (Giroux, 2022) He goes on to say that to confine it to one place is tantamount to engaging in the kind of North ethnocentricity and colonisation which would be anathema to critical pedagogy. These statements will provide the guiding principles for Peter Mayo's speech which will treat the subject as internationally as possible. I will highlight what I see as important landmarks, adult educators and (popular) movements in the evolution of the field.