

TRANSCRIPTION

- Scott M.:** My point about moment vs. movement, is somewhat in my eyes, something of a reflective practice of thinking about...what, you know, and talking...and really thinking about, in my eyes, we have to define what is a moment vs. a movement too, right? And in my eyes, a movement is long-term change, vs. a moment being something that you read about in a history book that you don't feel like applies to you, in my eyes. But again, and that it's a spectrum, obviously. But, you know, I think all of the ideas, and to go off something like Scott E.'s stuff about like, I don't know, just like talking about schools and all these things, and these systems that need to change. And, you know, I'm starting to get to a place where I'm not sure that these—these structures are made to change.
- Scott M.:** I'm not sure who...I don't even know if I comfortable with saying that they're, like, white centric, because I don't know who they're supposed to benefit sometimes. Like, I don't know, I, like—like I get there's so much structure, they're so rigid to change. I think there's—there's a large issue of just of how, you know, how can we actually make meaningful changes in these places, that aren't just these small microscopic things that are... And to me, the entire education system just needs an overhaul, because I don't think it's structured in a way to really benefit anybody, in its current capacity. And especially special education, unless you're in a very rich, white district. Other than those places, I've not...I have not seen the educational system be...public educational system be very successful.
- Scott E.:** To me, it speaks to hierarchy, right? Why it's structured the way it's—it's hierarchy. Whether that's economic, racial, gender, sexuality, and so forth. And I think that the focus and, if you go back and look, I mean, schools have been a contested space from the get go. Same thing with universities. And, I think that speaks to the transformative potential that is inherent to education. So, I think, to me, what

organizes it? It's hierarchy. Right? But, it also...the focus that...and all of the reforms, the structure, the testing, the managerial logics, all of that jazz, I think is a reaction to the potentiality that is inherent to education.

David: I think one of the things that I'm really enjoying about this conversation, is the criticality that needs to go along with change, right? And it's through our dialogues together, where we can think, feel, and reflect about even the metaphors or the language that will help us in that struggle, that continuous freedom struggle. I remember taking African American history in undergrad, and that was one of the phrases that I even shared at some point in this semester with my students, where maybe at that point, I didn't really understand. But I think right now, we are in a place where this continuous freedom struggle needs to be at the forefront of what counts as citizenship, which is another contested and construct, or idea, that I think as Scott E. saying.

David: There is no neutral space, in a sense. These subject positions and positionalities and identities are not neutral. It kind of goes back to what Scott M. was saying, that by design, the system has been set up since the construction of this nation state to disenfranchise and erase, right, certain folks vs. others. And I think—I think that's why I kind of go back to Gloria Ladson-Billings and Critical Race Theory to counternarrate and interrogate our assumptions that might be working through us, in this moment, right, because the moment is connected to the historical.

Scott E.: Yeah, um. I love that idea of discontinuous activism. I think that's a beautiful way of putting it. Like I said, I admire Ladson-Billings a lot, and I love the fact that she's kind of expanding out and asking us to look outside of the school. And, in a recent article that just came out, she calls for a hard reset. That's the language she's

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using. And, I admire that. But, here is my critique. And, here's where I am going to part ways with her. When she talks about the hard reset, she speaks to culturally-relevant pedagogy, which I love. I think it's a great idea. But, she falls right into the instrumental logics by just...in order to justify culturally-relevant pedagogy, she's relying on test scores and assessment data. The closing of achievement gaps. And, that kind of instrumental logic undermines the project. So, I'm one of those folks that I'm guilty of being excited about what I read last, right? So, I just finished a book by Kyong-Min Son, *Eclipse of the Demos*. And, in it, he talks about a new way of thinking about democracy, and I think that's relevant to our conversation here. He talks about democratic attunement. Which he speaks of an embodied disposition that orients our identity work and our subjectivities toward democratic collectivities. And, I think if we get away, and I think that's a potential that's within things like culturally-relevant pedagogy and so forth.

Scott E.: But, we need to stop thinking about achievement gaps and test scores and all of these other instrumental logics, managerialism, that has so colonized our imagination, and start thinking about democratic attunement. Start thinking about, "What would education look like if our goal was this kind of democratic attunement?" This...of—of seeing your own individual identity work not as self-fulfillment, not as, you know, a 'growth-mindset'. But, think of it as a democratic attunement. Me, in relation to the other, and to collectivities. And, I think that's where I part ways with Ladson-Billings. We need to break that linkage. We need to start thinking about education. I mean. I don't care if you go back to Dewey or DuBois. Right? They were talking about these kinds of things. They're still relevant. They're still salient to this moment.

Joyce: Yeah I...and thanks for sharing that Scott. This is something that I think about often is, you know, making sure that, as professionals, and as even educators, as

people who have influence over others, making sure that we aren't in some way just upholding stuff that we're trying to dismantle, and I think that's an example of that. Also, even at a local level, our teachers, right? I think about the teachers that come from the local college here, and go into the school buildings here, and...or go into the school buildings in a nearby community where it has a very high number...diversity. And I think about our Black and Brown educators who have received, you know, a bachelor's degree, and who are able to actually be the classroom teacher, and not a paraeducator or a room assistant.

Joyce:

But, I think about them knowing their position, and how they uphold, you know, systemic and institutionalized racism. And I really wonder if they actually even know, because these are things that I learned about, for me specifically, when I got into grad school. And these were just really lightly brushed-over in my undergrad years. And then, you know, connecting and networking. and meeting, like, Dr. David Hernández-Saca, and having classes with you as well, I started uncovering. You know, once you know you can't unknow. And just, more and more, which made me do more self-education. But this isn't something that was offered to me. And I worry about our educators who get to that level of where you even think that you're going to be able to create some type of change, but really maybe that...the only change is representation. You know, really, are you able to actively work to dismantle these systems within your position, or do you know how you're able to actively work to dismantle these systems in your position? If there was a protest at the school, if the kids decided to protest, would you walk out with those kids? Are you allowed to walk out with those kids? Are you allowed to encourage those kids? Are you one who can even, you know, teach the kids about protesting? And teach the kids about you know, making sure that you have demands that you expect to be met so you're not just protesting, just to be you know protesting?

- Joyce:** I think about them still having to teach the curriculum, right? I think...I just think about all these things. And not just in the education field; I think about a lot in the education field, but in our other sectors. You know, when you're...when you become a nurse. You know, even in the church. Even in our nonprofit organizations here, you know? I mean I think about it in kind of all levels and all sectors of the community. And even as a person in my family who is the only person that has college degrees, and how, you know, that reflects for me with the rest of my family. Even when I'm having conversations with them. Am I talking about, you know, quantitative and qualitative, you know, research, stuff like that that's just, you know, beyond what everyone else has. And just thinking about these relationships at kind of all levels, from you know personal all the way to high expansion in the community or personal to you know one's occupation. And it's very complicated, but I think that it's worth exploring, thinking about, and talking about.
- Scott E.:** Yeah, I mean. Those are great examples. Because, I mean, if you think about it in terms of what I talk about power is constructed and contested, right? If you can frame the terms of debate, if you can frame the way people talk about issues of social justice, you win. That's how you construct power, right? So, I mean, many of my colleagues here at my local university, they are well intentioned, right? I'm not disparaging them in any way. And, they're talking about social justice. They're trying to do social justice work. But, it's always within the framework as it exists, right? In terms of, you know, whether it's the achievement gap or something of that nature, or you know, what I call the "hero teacher," right? That we're going to produce hero teachers who, through better curriculum, better classroom management, they're going to 'fix' all of our problems. And, I think we have to get out of that framework. We have to break that framework in order to actually do the work. Because, if you're entering these structures and playing the game of the

structures, you can talk a good game, and might be sincere, and doing good work, but you're not actually going to challenge anything.

Scott M.: I think they..I've heard that called the "Dangerous Minds" kind of thing, right? Like where--

Scott E.: Yes.

Scott M.: --the white teacher or the white savior goes in and saves everybody. I want to go back to Scott E.'s point, I know we're running out of time but it's a good discussion. But like, I—I think your point just about the systems are like, and I know I said it too, like the systems, like test scores and stuff like that, like measuring success by these rigid measures that we really don't measure things that we know are culturally biased, that are based oftentimes in Eugenics. And—and a lot of disability stuff around that, too. And, you know, I—I think we have...like you were saying, we have to repurpose education. Now what becomes the difficult part is communicating to our peers and such that have this rigorous...this rigid mindset, and years, and—and things that they feel like measure, you know, intelligence or achievement, that I don't think truly do. And to me, that's—that becomes—and I want to promote critical thinking. I want to promote self-development.

Scott M.: You know, one, I recently was also, I'm in physical education as I said, and I'm—I'm actually really passionate about that curriculum, because I think it could achieve a lot of those things, or be an avenue to achieve things about, like, just enjoying the more... One of the five standards that they have, which standards in itself often represent an issue when you're talking about the rigidity of education. But one of them is basically, promotion of enjoyment of movement. And when we're in discussions...I was just recently...I was in a discussion

about...we're trying to update the standards, and I felt like that one was, I don't know almost like people don't actually...they don't...they almost have it as a placeholder, rather than they teach to it ,or use it in their lessons. And to me I think it's a beautiful standard, because that's what I actually want to achieve.

Scott M.: I don't want to achieve an athlete...I mean, that is great if they want to be an athlete. I want them to be happy with themselves, and the joy of movement, and/or the culture of movement. And I know that's like a specific area, but like, I wish that those types of standards, or those types of areas, were more focused on. Because I'm, I think this idea of producing workers, or producing whatever it is that we are trying to produce in the education system for the last 200 years or whatever, you know, really, is not . . . I don't—I don't know...I really don't always who it's supposed to even be working for now. But I think it's just a system, that's not working.

Scott E.: Well, I feel like I am talking too much here. You're really sparking some ideas, like... So, for one thing, I was sitting in a curriculum meeting not too long ago, and I was using "understanding." I was talking about student understanding. And, one of my colleagues was like, "Well, you know, the accreditation agencies don't like 'understanding,' because you can't measure it." And you know I almost had a coronary right there. Like a university without 'understanding' isn't a university, right?

Scott E.: And a second thing I would like to point out: I want to make sure that I'm being fair to Ladson-Billings because she has called out the achievement gap, right? She speaks to the 'education debt.' So, when—when I read that hard reset article, when she started talking about test scores and stuff, that was kind of disappointed about it. But, for me, and I want to speak to what David was saying about 'critical.'

I think that's a term that we all use a lot, right? In academia. It sounds like, you know, we're these academic revolutionaries and things of that nature, which is a bit over...over the top let's just say. That's my polite way of putting it. But I do—I do think the term is important because, in terms of rethinking what education could be, to think about what 'critical' might mean, it's to cultivate a mis-relation to the social present, right? So, that's how I think about my class. To cultivate a mis-relation to this historical moment, right?

Scott E.: So, instead of thinking about the transmission of content, and the measure to what degree we deposit it in brains, we need to think about how we foster or cultivate how young people relate to the world. Does that make sense? So, I think that's the break we need to make, and I think that plays into all manner of justice, you know, in terms of ableism, racism, economic justice, all of these things. We need to think about that democratic attunement, or cultivating a mis-relation to the present, to kind of get people to move, so to speak. And, I think the managerialism, or an institution that bans 'understanding' is, you know, I think that's meant to undermine that kind of relation to the world. Sorry.

David: No.

Scott E.: I feel like am rambling too much here.

David: No, this is really wonderful, because I think it does get these sort of like esoteric language, sometimes, or terms, to be palpable to our audience. And our audience are stakeholders in terms of teachers, parents, community members, and also researchers as well. But I think we're really advancing the conversation, humbly, as it relates to criticality in this moment. And I think, the ways in which we think, and feel, and are in relationship with each other, if we foreground that moving

forward, not in a, “here’s the silver bullet,” right, way, but in a way that helps us think about our dispositions in conversation as agents in this system, and that we’re not outside of it or, to demystify and to, right, “to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar,” sort of speak, as it relates to the policies and practices that are become norm, or common sense.

David: And to really disrupt that, as you’re mentioning Scott E., in ways that call all of us to be courageous and also honest and speak from a level of reflexivity in dialogue with each other about our own power and privilege is, I think, how we can engender what Critical Race Theorists talk about, counternarratives, in terms of our analysis of our own assumptions about the world, about a topic at hand, that to generate new praxis. So, I’m really excited for continuing to learn and grow with each of you, and other colleagues and friends.

Scott E.: And, I’d say that speaks to...we don’t need a hard reset. We need to rethink. Completely. Like, why do we do this? Are we really just trying to knock out ‘human capital’? Are we really just trying to produce workers? And, if we’re trying to do something else, that’s going to fundamentally restructure the institution, right? So, I think that’s the conversation we need to be having is “Why do we do this?” We all take it for granted, you know. It’s kind of like when people talk about “we need to fix education.” My instant response is, “Tell me what’s wrong?” Because the problem is always assumed, right? We assume our problems. We assume that we know what schools exist for, but we never actually have the conversation. And, I think if we have that conversation, things might change pretty dramatically. Maybe, I don’t know. Maybe I’m...I’m pretty deeply pessimistic, but maybe I’m being an optimist here. I don’t know.

- David:** So, I know we're probably out of time, but, do we want to go around and maybe share one last thought, or, in order to start practicing sort of rethinking as Scott E. was mentioning?
- Joyce:** I think--
- Scott M.:** You go.
- Joyce:** --Okay. I think, for me, and this kind of ties back in with Ladson-Billings too, is just continuing to, like, share my truths, and continuing to have conversations to actually hear others' narratives and began to even understand what all of our truths really are. I think Scott M. earlier had said...the comment, like, he doesn't even really know who these...who is benefiting from what, or who—who these structures are...you know, kind of, not in place for. I can't remember the exact—exact way you said it. But I mean, I think that there's some truth in that, and us just having conversations and hearing each other's truths is going to be basically how I proceed. And I'm excited for even our next conversation, because this is just something I could do all day, so.
- Scott M.:** Yeah, no this has been awesome. I'm going to just...I'm going to kind of...I really enjoyed this conversation and discussion. I was going to bring it back to something, you know, I think we have been talking a lot about: social justice out of those pandemics that are occurring. And one that I think is maybe global in all, maybe 3 out of 4, maybe not the fires, is mis-knowledge or misinformation right now. You know when we talk about politics, we talk about COVID, and then talking about these movements and social justice things. There is a breadth of knowledge disinformation that I don't think has ever been there before. I think it's always been there, but it is so widespread now. And it's really almost its own overlying or

overarching pandemic right now that, you know I think is something that needs to be combated on almost a daily basis, too. And needs to be acknowledged within all the scopes of all these pandemics.

Scott M.: Because...and I think even with the divisiveness that really exists even within all of these areas, is really due to mostly, not just, you know, attitudes and all of these things. But a lot of it is based on poor knowledge being disseminated. And sometimes it is being disseminated purposively to cause, you know, confusion and—and—and all these things. And that is something that I just think that doing podcasts and talking about it, and really getting these ideas out long-form are really impactful to try to combat. But, that's kind of my last thought-ish.

Scott E.: And Scott, can I play off that, and before we end? My last thought would be... I'm going quote somebody that you would probably never think of me quoting. Milton Friedman said that, "crises happen. What comes next depends on the ideas that are lying around." So, I think that's what everybody here is speaking to, is we need to think about new ideas. New ways of talking about the world, and new ways of talking about education, institutions, health care, and whatnot. Because, these crises do happen, but crises themselves do not bring about change; people do. So, it's the work that we do to take advantage, for lack of better term, of moments of crisis to achieve lasting change with—with knowing that it's going to be a continuous struggle. That there is no end point. So, I think that's—that's the challenge.

David: I really loved what each of you just shared because I think it's bringing us full circle. But my last idea or expression would be to really go back to this idea that Scott E. was saying, about being a democratic sort of citizen, right? And how do we dialogue with each other? And it really connects really well with what Scott M.



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was saying about, “how do we listen, but with a critical eye,” right? Where the information should be one in which that is also critiqued or investigated, and how do we allow that to also be one in which provides all of us a space to tell our truths, like Joyce was mentioning. So, easier said than done, but I think it goes back to the spirit of democracy. Thank you everyone.

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