

## **From Apathy to Activism: Civic-Mindedness, Critical Pedagogy, and the Sociological Imagination**

Ray Muller<sup>1</sup>

Only those who choose to serve humanity rather than to get caught up in the scramble for all the immediate rewards of finance and status can know the pleasures and lasting rewards of such a pursuit. Alfred McClung Lee (1978:16-17)

From a humanist perspective, the worth and significance of a college education lies primarily in its potential to bring forth competent, mature, and enfranchised citizens willing and able to work cooperatively with others to advance the cause of social equity and justice. Regrettably, traditional pedagogies tend to overemphasize the transmission of disciplinary knowledge and skills at the expense of nurturing in students the civic competencies and cognitive-affective dispositions necessary for the civically efficacious real-world application of such proficiencies. I will begin with a brief overview of the core values and principles of humanist sociology. Next I will examine the major pedagogical implications of the humanist perspective in sociology. This will be followed by an in-depth look at civic mindedness as a necessary affective-cognitive precondition for activist *sociological citizenship*. [Article copies available for a fee from *The Transformative Studies Institute*. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2012 by *The Transformative Studies Institute*. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS:** Humanist Sociology, Public Sociology, Critical Pedagogy, Civic-mindedness, Sociological Citizenship.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Ray Muller**, Ph.D., has been teaching sociology at East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg Pa since 2002. His teaching and research interests include sociological theory, cultural diversity, Race and Ethnicity and public sociology. He has written, published, and presented several papers on issues related to the role of sociology and of the sociological imagination in emancipatory education. Address correspondence to: Ray Muller, East Stroudsburg University, 200 Prospect Street, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301; e-mail: [rmuller@po-box.esu.edu](mailto:rmuller@po-box.esu.edu).