

Intellectual Influences in Contemporary Curriculum Study

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About this OER

This Open Educational Resource (OER) was initially co-created by a Fall 2021 class at the University of Alberta: *Intellectual Influences in Contemporary Curriculum Study* (EDSE 501 X01 2021) and is edited by Cathryn van Kessel.

As an interdisciplinary field, education draws from a number of sources. The seminar upon which this OER is based was an opportunity for graduate students to engage with readings from scholars in a variety of disciplines in tandem with scholarship in curriculum that draws from those scholars.

Together, we considered driving questions including, but not limited to:

- What are some of the major ideas of these interdisciplinary scholars that have impacted curriculum studies?
- How have these interdisciplinary scholars shaped the discourse of curriculum studies?
- How have curriculum scholars amplified, extended, and/or applied ideas from other areas of inquiry?

The specific objectives of this OER are to help:

- provide a starting point for a working understanding of a variety of interdisciplinary scholars who have a significant impact on contemporary curriculum studies; and
- explore how those scholars and their thinking relate to specific areas of curriculum studies.

The authors contributing to this OER have offered their thoughtful articulation of key aspects of the ‘intellectual influencer’ and their

ideas as well as a synthesis of a few readings from the ‘influencer’ and curriculum scholars influenced by them.

As of December 2021, this OER includes: [Karen Barad](#), [Leanne Betasamosake Simpson](#), [Jacques Derrida](#), [Frantz Fanon](#), [Michel Foucault](#), [Walter D. Mignolo](#), and [Sylvia Wynter](#).

Many thanks to Kateryna Barnes for the cover image.

PART I
KAREN BARAD

I. Karen Barad and Their Influence

ALISON BUCHYNSKI AND MICHAEL LANG



Karen Barad is a feminist, philosopher, and theoretical physicist. They believe there is a need for a greater focus on ontology in science. Barad's background in theoretical physics and the conceptualization of what is real led them to develop a new theory: agential realism (Barad, 2007).

Agential realism is a posthumanist performative approach to studying science that focuses on the practices and processes of science rather than the products (Barad, 2007). It recognizes agency as a quality that the subject *and* object possess (Barad, 2007). Within this theory, the boundaries between subject and object, observer and observed, are not defined prior to their intra-actions. Barad (2007) uses the term intra-action rather than interaction to describe the relationship between the participants (both human and non-human) as it does not presume separate entities prior to the action. Rather the observer and observed are co-constituted via intra-

actions. Both material phenomena and discursive practices, including how we create meaning, are involved in these intra-actions.

According to Barad, physical boundaries are not definite: they are being defined and re-defined. Given their background in theoretical physics, this concept makes sense. At a subatomic level, particles are entangled, electrons move instantaneously, things are in flux. The boundaries between observer and observed, apparatus and phenomena produced, emerge and are defined as a result of intra-actions within larger phenomena (Barad 2007). They view matter not as a physical thing one can pick up, but rather as a materialization of a substance (Barad 2017). Agency and intra-actions are what define these materializations.

Historically, scientists have been portrayed as outside observers who are removed from the phenomena they are studying. Thus, science can be seen as a purely objective matter which is revealed by the scientist. This is a very anthropocentric view. We know that in reality, this is not the case. Nature and culture cannot and should not be separated. Who is doing the science, what questions they're asking, what questions are not being asked, and how funding is allocated all play an important role in science studies. As an example of this phenomenon, Barad highlights an experiment done by Otto Stern and Walther Gerlach in which the presence of sulfur on Stern's breath from his cigar resulted in a chemical reaction allowing the results of their experiment to be seen (Barad, 2007). Without the intra-action between the breath and the apparatus, the experiment could have been viewed as unsuccessful. This is just one example of why we cannot ignore the human aspect of science. Barad believes that objectivity in science comes from the agential separability within phenomena (Barad 2007). Observer and observed are delineated through agential cuts in the intra-actions (Barad 2007).

Barad's theoretical work studying science transcends into the educational world. Using Barad's ideas of intra-action, Eaton and Hendry (2019) described a new way to envision curriculum. They

describe a rhizomatic model as opposed to the current arborescent model used widely in Western society. A rhizomatic assemblage sees curriculum as a phenomena or process in action through the intra-actions of people, rather than a product that a person receives in the end (Eaton & Hendry, 2019).

Furthermore, Barad's work can be applied to research by consciously thinking about the intra-actions between human and nonhuman matter. Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) work to challenge our anthropocentric gaze when doing research which could, ideally, help to produce a new way of knowing. This can be done through recognizing the positive difference that is caused by connections and relations within and between different bodies, affecting each other and being affected. In the end, humans and nonhumans go through a transformation as a result of the intra-actions between them that is better understood if we live outside of "I" (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

Barad's work inspires us to make connections to other philosophers. For example, their work on agential realism serves as a complement to [Simpson's](#) (2014) writings on Aki and the relationship with the land. We considered coloniality in science, asking ourselves who gets to be a scientist, and what questions are being asked or not asked? Barad comments that the concerns of the queer, feminist, critical race theorist, and post-colonial (among others) are being completely overlooked by science studies (Barad 2007). This parallels [Walter Mignolo's](#) need for decoloniality not just in the institution of science but also in the mind (2018).

In conclusion, agential realism extends beyond the scope of science and science studies. In an educational context, we ask ourselves how the rhizomatic metaphor, based on Barad's work on intra-actions, can be used for curriculum development. How would a rhizomatic approach to curriculum change the way we view teaching and learning? What would be different if we paid attention to the intra-actions of both human and nonhuman matter? Barad (2007) invites us to think deeply about matter and meaning, how each is co-created via intra-actions, and ultimately our ethical

responsibility as the concepts of self and other are so intrinsically linked.

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Hultman, K., & Lenz Taguchi, H. (2010). Challenging anthropocentric analysis of visual data: A relational materialist methodological approach to educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(5), 525-542. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.500628>

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Suggested Reading for Further Study

Bozalek, V., Bayat, A., Motala, S., Mitchell, V., & Gachago, D. (2016). Diffracting socially just pedagogies through stained glass. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(3), 201-218. <https://doi.org/10.20853/30-3-647>

Brøgger, K. (2014). The ghosts of higher education reform: On the organisational processes surrounding policy borrowing. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 12(4), 520-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2014.901905>

Brown, S. L., Siegel, L., Blom, S. M. (2020). Entanglements of matter and meaning: The importance of the philosophy of Karen Barad for environmental education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 36(3), 219-233. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ae.2019.29>

Chen, M. Y. (2012). Lead's racial matters. In M. Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, racial mattering, and queer affect* (pp. 159-188). Duke University Press.

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Murris, K., & Bozalek, V. (2019). Diffraction and response-able reading of texts: The relational ontologies of Barad and Deleuze. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 32(7), 872-886. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1609122>

Taylor, C. A. Diffracting the curriculum: Putting "new" material feminism to work to reconfigure knowledge-making practices in undergraduate higher education. *Theory and Method in Higher Education*, 5, 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.14324/FEJ.04.1.01>

Wozolek, B. (2021). *Assemblages of violence in education: Everyday trajectories of oppression*. Routledge.

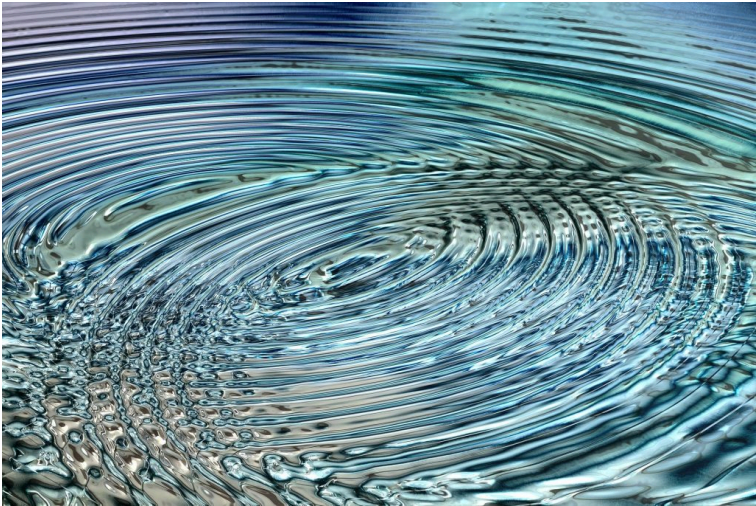
Media Attributions

- [karen-barad](#) © The European Graduate School

2. Barad's Influence: Diffracting Socially Just Pedagogies Through Stained Glass

ESTHER STEEVES

Bozalek, V., Bayat, A., Motala, S., Mitchell, V., & Gachago, D. (2016). Diffracting socially just pedagogies through stained glass. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(3), 201-218. <https://doi.org/10.20853/30-3-647>



After the authors' friend and colleague Theo Combrinck passed away in 2014, Bozalek et al. (2016) used [Karen Barad's](#) idea of diffraction to consider his legacy. Diffraction – as explained by Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) – is the process that occurs when a wave, such as water, light, or sound, encounters and is unalterably

changed by some other entity, such as another wave or an object. The original wave “partly remains within the new wave after its transformation into a new one, and so on, wave after wave” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 535). The process of becoming through diffraction implies that nothing exists outside of the context of intra-action: there are no autonomous entities, only entities made real through encounter with other entities.

Bozalek et al. (2016) explore how diffractive encounters between themselves and Combrinck affected their respective processes of becoming, and how the process of reflecting on this collectively as a writing group led to further and ongoing intra-action and, consequently, diffraction. They frame their exploration in Baradian terms, declaring their apparatus (discursive inputs and processes) to include intra-actions with Combrinck, theories, questions posed by group members, texts, and collaborative technologies; and defining their agential cut (scope of exploration) as the broad topic of socially just pedagogy from a post-humanist stance (p. 205).

The article is designed to engage the reader in the diffractive process of becoming. It does this first by creating a text the reader can intra-act with: Bozalek et al. eschew traditional writing structures, such as persuasive arguments, in favour of curated open-ended reflections, many of which begin with an unedited quote by Combrinck rather than an attempted re-representation of his ideas. The reader also becomes a participant in the intra-active encounter, and subsequent diffraction, through learning about Combrinck’s life, digesting metaphors he created, noting his typos and writing errors, considering his colleagues’ comments about him, and thinking about the tenets of his approach to socially just pedagogy.

The authors note the significance of local social justice protests which took place during the writing of this paper as further inputs to their diffractive process(es), tacitly inviting the reader to consider what aspects of their own context may impact their intra-action with the paper. For example, as I read I thought about my current teaching assignment, and specific students, parents, and scenarios

that have recently taken place. The consciousness of the authors of their own apparatus called upon me as reader to define my own apparatus and agential cut. I did not adopt the cut chosen by the authors, but rather approached the reading primarily with intention to better understand Barad through seeing their theories in application; and secondarily to inform me as a teacher seeking a more fulfilling experience of becoming in this profession. My interest in socially just pedagogy formed a third consideration, and curiosity about posthumanism a fourth. My apparatus included numerous theories and texts not taken up explicitly by the authors, the writing utensil and printed copy of the article I used to write notes and musings in the margins, the process of and technologies used in writing (and rewriting) this OER entry, and a set of memories, interests, and ruminations unique to my own life.

While labeled “conclusion”, the result of this paper is not an end or proven point; rather, it is “a dynamic product with relational agency that can entangle readers” (Bozalek et al., 2016, p. 215). Through its development, its authors explore ways in which their individual and collective existence is defined through past, present, and future encounters with Combrinck. And, through intra-action with the completed text, readers explore and cause their own existence in relation to the writers, Combrinck, and their collective apparatus.

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Bozalek, V., Bayat, A., Motala, S., Mitchell, V., & Gachago, D. (2016). Diffracting socially just pedagogies through stained glass. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(3), 201-218. <https://doi.org/10.20853/30-3-647>

Hultman, K., & Lenz Taguchi, H. (2010). Challenging anthropocentric analysis of visual data: A relational materialist methodological approach to educational research. *International*

Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23(5), 525-542.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.500628>

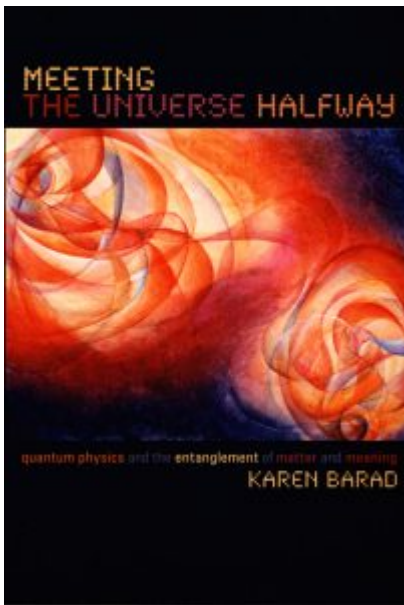
Media Attributions

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3. Barad's Influence: New Materialist Ontologies in Mathematics Education

RAFAEL PELLIZZER SOARES

de Freitas, E., & Sinclair, N. (2013). New materialist ontologies in mathematics education: The body in/of mathematics. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 83, 453-470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-012-9465-z>



Barad's Influence: New Materialist
Ontologies in Mathematics

Encountering

Through their work, Barad presented new possibilities for the understanding of boundaries, knowledge, interactions, and science. As well as many other scholars after them, Barad discussed how “agential intra-action” modify “boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena” (2007, p. 139) generating matter and meaning in an onto-epistem-ological manner.

This text will connect some of these ideas, such as agency, intra-acting, encountering, and fluidity, in order to clarify new approaches to mathematics’ teaching and learning. De Freitas & Sinclair (2013) stated that a “mathematical concept is always fluid and, in some important sense, unfinished” (p. 468). Mathematics is not linear, bounded, or finite; on the contrary, it is epistemologically and ontologically, temporally and physically, broadly and narrowly infinite.

We are “constantly encountering, engaging and indeed amalgamating with other objects” (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013, p. 458), extending the limits of our bodies through these encounters. We are different pieces of one single puzzle: connecting, becoming, and composing; the world is the consequence as well as the cause of our—human and non-human—encounters: “We need to accept one plane of being, where difference is creative, positive and productive. ... This might enable us to produce a different kind of knowing.” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p.526).

Becoming and Performing

Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) wrote about the girl and the sand—and how they were “becoming with”(p. 530) each other; de Freitas & Sinclair (2013) used Roth’s experiment with the student holding a cube to present the not-only-human encounter in which

the cube was “becoming and performing” and should be recognized as a “material agent” (p. 457). Students connect to both internal and external matter in order to become a unique entity that creates—and is affected by—exclusive meanings. It does not matter with which matter (it could be a pencil, a computer, stones, or their own fingers) by which students extend their own matter. Rather, what is important is to make any matter matter: “Learners’ bodies are always in the process of becoming assemblages of diverse and dynamic materialities” (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013, p. 454).

Barad (2007) spoke about Stephen Hawking, his wheelchair, and his computer as only one “phenomenon”: “Where does he stop? Where are his edges?” (p. 159). Positive¹ teachers encourage students to give up their ‘edges’ and unfinished concepts allow positive teachers to encourage students to believe they do not have edges. Education is about destroying edges instead of building walls. During Math classes, the teacher must break down these walls in order to let students take account of a “performative understanding of scientific practices”, internalizing the fact that “knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from a direct material engagement with the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 49).

Meaning and Matter

Mathematical concepts have always been “considered immaterial and inert abstractions acquired after a series of ‘concrete’ activities”; however, this posits mathematics as a disembodied part of the world as it “fails to recognize the materiality and agency of [some] non-humans” matter (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013, p. 468). Mathematics is not only a discourse, it is not a theory asking to be applied, and it is not even a tool or a ladder. Mathematics is matter and meaning: “Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. ... Neither is articulated or

articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated” (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013, p. 152).

Despite the anthropocentric attempts of privileging discourse as a way to transform matter, as well as the attempts to weaken matter’s agency in transforming discourse, Barad stated that “meaning and matter are bound and woven together in a kind of onto-epistem-ology” (p. 460). According to Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010), those attempts “reduce[d] our world to a social world, consisting only of humans and neglecting all other non-human forces that are at play” (p. 526). Actually, onto-epistem-ology spotlights “matter [as well as mathematics] [a]s produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter [/mathematics] is agentive, not a fixed essence or property of things” (Barad, 2007, p. 137).

Mathematics’ Agency

Mathematics is certainly a beautiful encounter between matter and meaning, learner and content, curiosity and creation, fluidity and novelty. Throughout my years working with math, I found out that learners (including myself) do not need someone’s help to understand theories or concepts; rather, they need support to get rid of educational traumas and feel free to re-engaging with mathematics. With this edgeless freedom, student and content get back to the process of becoming with each other, as we can see in the de Freitas and Sinclair (2013) number line’s example: “the body of the number line engages with the body of the student, and a new kind of body-assemblage comes into being”. In addition, “[it] becomes a highly animate concept made vibrant and creative through the indeterminacy buried in it” (p. 466).

According to Barad, agency is the “ongoing reconfigurings of the world”, and agency produce different phenomena through different intra-actions (Barad, 2007). That is, the teacher, the students, the

classroom, the objects, the nature's intra-actions are capable of (re)creating Math every day. Besides, what is eventually created in one classroom is surely different from what is created in any other school. Different fish imply a different river. A different river implies different fish.

Mathematics—as well as the whole universe—is an “agential intra-activity in its becoming” (Barad, 2007, p. 141). Its concepts are not rigid, definitive, or inert. De Freitas and Sinclair (2013) argued that mathematical concepts change over time not only at the epistemological level, but also at the ontological one. Moreover, they used Châtelet and Leibniz's ideas to speak about flexibility and relativity, which reminded me of an important part of the History of Mathematics.

Mathematicians, over the past three millennia, have studied possible ways of rethinking its epistemology by using multiple interpretations to better understand its possibilities. Euclid was a Greek mathematician who, more than two thousand years ago, produced 13 books about Geometry. Nowadays, the Euclidean Geometry is still the core of any geometry content discussed in every elementary and secondary classroom in the world. Right in his first book, Euclid proposed five postulates about straight lines, angles, and intersections. However, until the 18th century, great mathematicians tried to formally prove one of the Euclid's assumptions. That is, they tried to prove Euclid was wrong using theoretical Math concepts. Fortunately, two mathematicians—Lobachevsky and Bolyai—looked at this situation from another angle: instead of trying to demonstrate that postulate, they used an ontological version of Euclid's ideas to create a new one. This was the beginning of the Non-Euclidean Geometry, which has many practical applications today, such as airplane routes design and astronomy studies. Einstein's general theory of relativity is also a good example of the Non-Euclidean Geometry influence.

This story represents that, despite the common understanding of Mathematics as inert, immaterial, and finished, Lobachevsky and Bolyai believed that Geometry was still open and flexible. Thus, they

were much more successful than other mathematicians because they did not studied Geometry only through its epistemological side; they rethought Geometry looking for its ontological open doors, though.

Rethinking the Nature of Learning

The mobility of concepts grants creative power (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013) indeed, which leads us to realize that we should switch from usual understanding of curriculum as a final rigid desirable product to a vibrant and animate “rhizomorphus curriculum of becoming” (Eaton & Hendry, 2019, p. 21). Through the question “how might new materialisms allow us to rethink learning as an indeterminate act of assembling various kinds of agencies rather than a trajectory that ends in the acquiring of fixed objects of knowledge?” (p. 464), Eaton and Hendry also tried to remind us that a child that enters the preschool should not have a predetermined educational pathway; actually, children should “emerge through ... their entangled intra-actions with everything else” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 531).

As educational scholars, de Freitas & Sinclair utilized Barad and Deleuze’s ideas to affirm that “novelty, genesis and creativity (rather than conditions of possibility) are fundamental concepts in a theory of virtuality”. They extended their argument by emphasizing that virtuality represents mobility and that “matter is animated by the virtual” (2013, p. 463). As an example of this, they brought the number line to the discussion, as it is a crucial point within any Mathematics course when it comes to perceiving a reality we cannot see. The notion of infinity is not easy for students to understand; even more when you need to compare different kinds of infinity. Briefly, we can speak about the countable infinity (such as the Natural numbers 0, 1, 2, 3...) and we can speak about the uncountable infinity as well (such as the number line), in which

you can find another infinite quantity of numbers between any two numbers. De Freitas and Sinclair (2013) appealed to our imagination by using virtuality to make this matter matter to students:

The virtual is a kind of intensity that deforms the linearity of extension. The virtual invites in(ter)vention because it is precisely what makes extension plastic and elastic through its intensity. ... Students can carve out the virtual real numbers embedded between whole numbers by grabbing and stretching the number line so that it brings forth an infinitude of numbers that were imperceptible a moment earlier. (pp. 465-466)

To wrap up this article, I will adapt one excerpt from Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010). Although words that kept reference to ‘researching’ were removed in order to build a ‘teaching’ approach, the ideas of intra-actions, becoming and transforming, as well as Barad’s (2007) “appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing, and being” (p. 185)—the ethico-onto-epistem-ology—were preserved indeed:

What we do as [teachers] intervenes with the world and creates new possibilities but also evokes responsibilities. If we think in this way, we might not just live differently. ... but do our [teaching] and [learning] differently, in order to perhaps make it possible for others (humans and non-humans) to live differently in realities yet to come. (p. 540)

¹The idea of ‘positive’ is applied here as not needing to define things/people by comparing opposite meanings by denying one of them in order to produce the other. (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010)

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de Freitas, E., & Sinclair, N. (2013). New materialist ontologies in

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Media Attributions

- [Duke University Press](#)

4. Barad's Influence: Environmental Education

ALISON BUCHYNSKI

Brown, S. L., Siegel, L., Blom, S. M. (2020). Entanglements of matter and meaning: The importance of the philosophy of Karen Barad for environmental education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 36(3), 219-233. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ae.2019.29>



Agential realism is a posthumanist theory in which all bodies, human and nonhuman, are defined by agency and intra-actions within different phenomena (Barad, 2007). Entanglement is a foundation of agential realism: The boundaries of observer and observed are not inherent, but rather emerge as a result of different intra-actions.

Brown et al. (2020) use Barad's agential realist framework to envision a different approach to environmental education. The authors work from the understanding that knowledge building is a relational and participatory process (Brown et al., 2020). Barad writes that "knowledge is not a mediated activity" (Barad 2007, p. 379). This statement stands in stark contrast with the current

structure of our Western educational system. It invites us to conceptualize an educational framework that acknowledges the intra-actions with the world around us.

Agential realism uses the idea of diffraction patterns. It refers to how waves interact with each other. They can amplify one another, or cancel each other out. This phenomenon can be applied to collaborative learning and discussions. The paper by Brown et al. (2020) describes their diffractive discussion of Barad's ideas at a research symposium and summarizes the subsequent conversations of the workshop participants.

Agency and Responsibility

Agency is “not taught, learned or obtained as a human possession: it just is” (Brown et al., 2020, p. 222). All human and nonhuman matter is agential, and the boundaries emerge through intra-activity. Brown et al. (2020) asks educators to consider how agency is being enacted in teaching, and perhaps even more importantly, how it is being denied or silenced. We need to shift our focus from a human-centred approach to one that encompasses the agency of all bodies. The interconnectedness of everything and the responsibility that follows should help to guide our praxis as educators (Brown et al., 2020).

Because of the entangled nature of all matter, there is a responsibility for ethicality in our actions. How we respond and what we learn is the responsibility, or as Haraway (2016) writes, the *response-ability*. Brown et al. (2020) apply these ideas to the foundation of environmental education and sustainability. As humans, we are not separate from the environment but rather within it, intra-acting, and sharing in its becoming: our actions matter.

Highlights from the Workshop Groups

Brown et al. (2020) describe the physical conditions of their discussion space in detail. This description speaks to the respect for the emerging intra-actions with nonhuman matter. They acknowledge that the phenomena produced were unique to the setting and participants present. The attention to detail highlights the importance of human and nonhuman agency in education. Even within a classroom, how is meaning created differently between different groups of students or in different settings? What are the barriers to learning that may be present? Are students hungry, cold, tired, comfortable in their chairs? As educators, we need to be cognizant of the intra-actions that occur every day and the resulting phenomena.

In one discussion group, participants wondered what effect focusing on the entangled nature of living and nonliving things at a young age would have on students (2020). If children are aware of their intra-activity and connectedness to everything, the responsibility that comes with that could spill out into all aspects of their lives. I wonder how curricula would look if it was developed with this responsibility in mind? How would government policies around housing, food access, and environmentalism differ if they were made from an agential realist perspective?

Another group discussed how diffraction applies to knowledge making. Using diffraction as a methodology for discussion resulted in knowledge being formed and reformed: it was dynamic (Brown et al., 2020). Similar to the other groups, the root of the discussion came back to interconnectedness and how that affects all enactments (Brown et al., 2020).

Main Connections to Education and Conclusions

Agential realism can help us move away from binary thinking that places humans outside of the natural world (Brown et al., 2020). It challenges common anthropocentric views and identifies the inherent responsibility we have to each other and the environment which we are a part of. The importance of this relationality extends out of environmentalism into all aspects of curriculum and beyond.

Furthermore, agential realism lays the foundation for the importance of interdisciplinary learning (Brown et al., 2020). Adopting this approach, we become aware of the complex and interconnected nature of the learning process. If we continue to separate learning into distinct subjects, we are missing out on critical opportunities to develop new ways for knowledge to emerge.

Brown et al., (2020) use Barad's agential realism theory to conceptualize change in environmental education. Agential realism helps us question everything and dig deeper into what it means to be human and how that relates to the praxis of education.

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PART II
JACQUES DERRIDA

5. Jacques Derrida and His Influence

DOMONIC LODGE; SUMAIYA AKHTER NITU; AND ALEXANDRA OLSVIK



As French, Jewish intellectual born in Algeria at the time of French colonial power, Derrida (1930-2004) became a notable post-structuralist because of his work on deconstruction, auto-biography,, and hauntology, among other notable concepts. This article focuses on deconstruction.

Sign and Trace

When we think of the term deconstruction, we rarely think of it as a generative or enlightening process, as the process of breaking apart or decomposing often leaves us without something. Jacques Derrida, however, subverts such expectations. Spivak (1976) tells us that to Derrida, deconstruction is a method of moving closer to understanding in its rawest form, whilst accepting that, after all, we are never truly able to find what we are looking for. With each layer removed as we deconstruct, the elusive “stable center” (p. xi)—the object of our search—shifts, and what was presumed to be known eludes knowability. What we thought was the centre is not where we sought it: simultaneously, not what we thought and not where we thought it to be. Our only aids as we search are signs (p. xiv) and traces (p. xv). Signs are the way we know what something is, yet only in the sense that a sign is different from every other sign. Traces are the “footprint” or evidence left over to guide us, whilst not actually being something in their own right.

Fluidity of Meaning: Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Though structuralists argue that signs are comprised of a signified (image) and signifier (written word) and that the relation between these terms is arbitrary (de Saussure, 2001), Derrida (1960/2007) contends that there is no signified, only signifiers. Meaning is thus contextual and intertextual, not built on an impenetrable foundation of universal truths. For Derrida (1985), there is no objective correlate or stable signified for the term “deconstruction,” and this lack makes both full and singular translation and definition impossible. When tasked, for

example, with providing an accurate definition that would enable the term to be translated, Derrida finds that there is not only no definite origin that would lead us toward a sufficient definition but also that deconstruction eludes pre-existing definitions. The elusiveness of the term is significant because it refers to a process or orientation that resists both a priori categorization and teleological closure.

As an open-ended process or orientation, deconstruction involves pulling apart the components that support structural integrity. As such, the bias, assumptions, and presuppositions that are concealed within structural operations are made visible. Derrida uses the term “de-sedimented” to help describe the illusion of solid structural foundations: sediment is not one but a composition of elements deposited and compacted over time, proffering the appearance of permanence. Likewise, tradition exudes the illusion of unalterable origin and permanence but can, in fact, be de-sedimented for purposes that have yet to become. Rather than the destructive impulse suggested by the prefix “de,” Derrida attends to the sense of possibility through the verb *remonter*, which refers to the process of reconstruction.

Educational and Ethical Implications

In the context of education, open-ended processes of deconstruction and reconstruction become significant in a variety of ways. As a philosopher of education, Derrida posits that students are not mere receptacles for a knowledge that is of itself stable and complete. Deconstruction reveals a tension between learning and pre-existing structures of knowledge affirmed concomitantly through a “pedagogy of mimesis” and the legitimacy of the “cultural archive,” which presupposes knowledge as hermetically sealed, a-temporal, and de-contextualized. The implication, then, is that to ignore living context

is to perpetuate an “illusion of truth,” as it is a myth to imagine we come to educational situations devoid of context (Trifonis, 2000).

The “archive of cultural knowledge” operates through the logic of the sign in which there is an “inside” and “outside” whose edges are inscribed with definite demarcations and generates authority through the assumption that what is on the inside is what is worth knowing. As such, the archive creates a centre that erases its own origin and so provides the stable foundations tradition uses to justify its claims to canonical knowledge. Otherness is thus concealed and repressed through the authority of what is legitimate knowledge. Deconstruction exposes the illusory quality of these boundaries and demonstrates how such archive madness, generated through canons of knowledge conceived of as closed systems, forecloses possibility. While status-quo thinking limits possibility, the critical consciousness deconstruction engages has the capacity to interfere and intervene in such status-quo models and operations of efficiency.

The idea of deconstruction can further be employed to explain Susan Dion’s theory of the “Perfect Stranger.” A perfect stranger is a white teacher who inherits white privileges and acquires Eurocentric ideas and knowledge. However, this perfect stranger struggles and faces obstacles in order to teach in an urban Indigenous education system because they are unfamiliar with indigenous culture (Higgins, et al., 2015). The perfect stranger wears the “colonial cloak” and brings white supremacy to the table. Nevertheless, it is ironic how being “perfect” (whiteness), they feel like a “stranger” who is not confident enough to teach in an Indigenous setting. This highlights their lack of knowledge, which is important for them to know, not only to teach Indigenous students but also to acknowledge themselves as cultural beings. Therefore, the expression “going against the grain” acts as a tool of deconstruction here to describe the scenario of a perfect stranger and as well explains the binaries of perfect/strange.

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6. Derrida's Influence: Education as Humanism of the Other

ALEXANDRA OLSVIK

Tarc, A. M. (2005). Education as humanism of the other. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37(6), 833-849. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2005.00161.x>



Subjects and Subjectivity

Drawing from Jacques Derrida's processes of deconstruction,

Aparna Mishra Tarc's (2005) inquiry into how human subjectivity emerges through humanities education questions the stability and legitimacy of its "classical" subject. Because the philosophical underpinnings of discourses within the humanities are linked to "humanism," Tarc contends, the subject formation they engender is rooted in notions of a particular kind of subject. Precisely white, male, and Western, this "classical" subject becomes the legitimizing norm upon which other subjectivities are written. Thus, canons of knowledge and their discourses generate a version of humanness that both affirms the stability and structural integrity of the subject and reduces otherness to the category of the same. Deconstruction, however, reveals gaps and fissures within the subject's structural integrity, pointing to its inherent instability and enabling as yet unthought possibilities for subjects and subjectivity to emerge.

Critical Education and Irreducible Subjectivity

As dominant, canonical discourses are legitimized through educational institutions, they necessarily contribute to the formation of subjectivity, and in effect, suture other subjectivities onto the "classical" subject. Such dominant discourses include not only canonical texts but also, methods of interpretation and analysis—which, in the case of literacy, refers to not only what is read but how it is read. For Tarc (2005), critical orientation toward the question of how one reads has the capacity to destabilize status quo ways of thinking as well as making space for other subject positions, concomitantly dismantling the conceptual architecture that makes it possible to think of the subject as fixed. This is important because canonical knowledge within the humanities, endorsed by educational institutions, demarcates what and whom may be considered legitimately human.

According to Tarc (2005), critical education must move beyond replacing one totalized, stable version of subjectivity with another

(p. 839). This involves creating conditions of radical openness toward the Other which necessarily cannot be known in advance. Following Derrida, the Other cannot be categorized a priori, and as such, deconstruction must be a responsibility to others. Turning outward and away from stable notions of the self creates conditions necessary to respond to the call of the Other. If education is to become a response to others, it cannot take “normative being” as its measure as this works to transform the elusiveness of human subjectivity into an object of knowledge (p. 836). Critical education, then, involves a continuous negotiation between educators and students and the texts they engage, attending to ways subjects are created through texts.

Ethical Implications and Reparative Practice

Like Derrida, Tarc (2005) does not call for an eradication of the canon, but rather, to disrupt the formation of the normative subject through the inclusion of counter texts as well as modes of reading that engage processes of deconstruction. As deconstruction exposes tensions within structural integrity, the process concomitantly generates space to question the legitimacy of so-called normative subjects and how they are affirmed through canonical texts and educational institutions. Processes of deconstruction are necessarily open-ended in order to respond to contexts and subjects that are never stable and complete; in this way, they have the capacity to destabilize and reorient education away from classical humanist structures that continuously digest the Other to legitimize themselves.

Significantly, for educational research to move toward an ethics of the Other, it is critical that such research attend to relations between the humanist subject and its Others. Tarc (2005) reminds us such relations are complex, emerging through encounters between the West and the global majority that are often violent

(p. 846). Referring to the concept of reparation, Tarc (2011) further develops notions of the Other's incalculable, irreducible existence and the educational and ethical implications of these notions. Through the process of reparation, attending to the Other requires a deconstruction and reconstruction of subjectivity, as the subject moves into the unknowable space of the Other's experience. Tarc (2005) highlights Spivak's desire to "displace the violence within the self/other dichotomy" with "radical alterity" through pedagogical practices that situate readers in the presence of 'Others' to "provoke a re-shattering of what it means to be human or self" (p. 843). In a similar vein, reparation, as Tarc (2011) has it, calls for radical openness to alterity that is not yet known. Extending from deconstruction, then, reparative work engages a continuous process that makes it possible to bear one's own experience and attend to the irreducible existence and expression of the Other.

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PART III
FRANTZ FANON

7. Frantz Fanon and His Influence

JILLIAN KOWALCHUK AND RAFAEL PELLIZZER SOARES



Conceptualizing Fanon

Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) was a French psychiatrist and existentialist thinker who grew up under French colonial rule in Martinique and later lived in France, Algeria, and Sub-Saharan Africa. He troubled fundamental societal issues around race, gender, sexuality, and social formation. Some of Fanon's most influential works, two of which will be discussed here, emerged as a result of his experience

during the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962). During this period, Fanon began to recognize the internalization of racism and the impacts of colonialism first-hand, which prompted him to begin theorizing about the anti-colonial struggle and the process of decolonization.

Black Skin, White Masks (Originally Published in 1952)

Drawing on the influences such as his fellow French intellectual, Jean-Paul Sartre, Fanon provided an existentialist-phenomenological interpretation of “otherness” in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952/2008). Here, Fanon highlighted the internalization of the “symbolic order” wherein the colonizer’s worldview is imposed upon the colonized person, which as a result traps them in their own inferiority complex. Thus, Fanon recognized racism as a psychological reality for the colonized. He famously advocated for the “liberation of the man of color from himself” (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 2). This suggests that as a consequence of colonialism, race traps both Black and white people in their own subjectivities and only serves to perpetuate the colonial system through the colonization of the mind. Therefore, we must first consider the ways in which we might go about decolonizing our thinking to ignite the decolonization process within larger societal structures.

Wretched of the Earth (Originally published in 1961)

Wretched of the Earth (1961/2004), cements Fanon as a post-colonial thinker as he imagined a world freed from the tight grasp of the colonial system. Within the work, Fanon raised questions about

the necessity of violence in the anti-colonial struggle, addressed capitalism as a “necessary evil,” and troubled the notion that a broken system can be infiltrated and restructured from the inside.

Fanon asserted that “decolonization is always a violent event” (p. 1), taking on a Manichaean view as he described decolonization as the substitution of one “species” of humankind to another. Much like Foucault’s (1980) notion of how power shifts from one form to another, Fanon (2004) illustrated that decolonization must be violent because colonialism inherently is. Thus, colonialism cannot be dismantled through some sort of “mutual” agreement because language alone will not convince a colonialist power to change or make concessions for those they seek to oppress. It is essential to be wary of an oversimplification of his theories and ideas, including the role of violence. His promotion of the role of violence is sometimes reduced to promoting any and all violent acts. However, for Fanon, violence is only effective *when it is aimed at the colonial system itself*. Therefore, we need to consider the ways that political/national conscious-raising must work in conjunction with political violence to dismantle the colonial system.

Fanon (1961/2008) highlighted the harm in suggesting that the colonized could infiltrate the institutions and change them from within in his discussion of the colonized intellectual. Not only is changing a system from within not possible according to Fanon, but also it would work to perpetuate the system of colonialism as the colonized person becomes a “mimic man.” Chari (2004) called attention to this point when she argued that, for Fanon, the very idea of recognition within a colonial system can serve as a vehicle for perpetuating the injustices it purports to combat (p. 116). Therefore, recognition of the colonized intellectual is not justice or freedom but rather only serves to define and evaluate the colonized within the existing terms of colonial power.

Following this argument, we must attempt to imagine a world beyond colonialism. As such, identity is not the problem, but rather inaction is. Therefore, it is up to the colonized to “act” and liberate themselves from the white gaze of colonialism instead of attempting

to compete with their oppressors or ask nicely to be granted freedom.

Implications for Education

There is arguably a great deal of concern within contemporary education circles regarding how colonialism shapes curriculum and pedagogy. Fanon's proposal for violence and political consciousness-raising is largely a radical suggestion for a system so deeply entrenched in the tales of colonialism. However, Fanon ultimately argues that what is needed is not a new adaptation of the current system but rather a whole new system. Therefore, asking ourselves as educators and researchers to contemplate our current conceptualizations of education is a reasonable starting place. To this end, educators might adopt what Dei and Simmons (2010) cite as a "Critical Fanonian Approach." They suggest that such a framework draws on a critical analysis of the institutional structures within which the delivery of "social services and goods" occurs (p. xvi). In this sense, we might begin to acknowledge that social institutions, such as schools, reproduce societal inequality, ultimately contributing to the colonial machine. Finally, Dei and Simmons (2010) further assert that the focus should be on the liberation of the learner (p. xvii), which indicates that through generative dialogue and critical discourse, unequal power structures that act to colonize the minds of nearly every human being today can be exposed and actively challenged.

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8. Fanon's Influence: Education and Violation

REBEKA PLOTS

De Lissovoy, N. (2011). Education and violation: Conceptualizing power, domination, and agency in the hidden curriculum. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(4), 463-484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2011.618831>

Lissovoy, 2011, p. 464) For De Lissovoy (2011) violation is more than just violence, it “acts against what has already been constituted, what already exists as whole... its aim is not pure destruction or negation, but rather the moment of prolific assault, invasion, and fragmentation” (p. 465). Violation breaks systems that are already in place, working to create dichotomies that didn’t exist before, or to reinforce those dichotomies through continued violation. The world we live in today is marked by historical violations, creating a system of domination that oppresses those people of colour, and creates spaces of privilege for those who are dominating. Education and curriculum are the site for this trauma for students: the way curriculum is organized, standardized assessments, as well as the process of schooling as a method of qualification, create a system that ensures that education is traumatic, making it a space that is ripe for “demoralization, marginalization, and punishment” (De Lissovoy, 2011, p. 465). According to De Lissovoy (2011), violation “marks the obscene point at which an arbitrary and particular offense against human being is made ordinary, systematic, and structural. But while it names this systematicity, the term also evokes the material hurt that is always the effect and aim of historical processes of oppression” (p. 469). We have to critique places that allow power and violation to occur, such as education, but at the same time we can’t allow ourselves to fall into the trap of believing we don’t have the agency to change the world around us, lest we continue to perpetuate systems of power and violation.

Engagements with Fanon

In working with Fanon and his work on racism and the division of colonial society, De Lissovoy (2011) proposes that “in producing an account of the invasions and assaults experienced by those who have been oppressed, we should not only count but recount, not only calculate but confront, in the service of an emancipatory

analysis that in understanding history does not seek to separate itself from the outrage and agony that constitute its basic texture” (p. 469). Violation works to exacerbate this process of institutionalized power against Black people, especially in the process of how we “name, know, and organize student identities” (De Lissovoy, 2011, p. 480) in our education systems. It is important to not sink into despair that these colonial and neo-colonial systems will continue to be perpetuated indefinitely; De Lissovoy (2011) gives us hope by reminding us that our resilience and agency will continually re-emerge in the face of violation and power, and the oppressed will continue to rise to challenge and renegotiate these systems (p. 476).

Implications for Education

The hidden curriculum helps reinforce the system of domination and violation through the preservation of social structures and systems in order to privilege some but not others, and by normalizing this violation as well. The process of labelling students and putting them into categories “is itself a kind of distorted instruction and knowledge production, in which students are ‘taught’ into the limits of the identities and aspirations that school and society make available to them” (De Lissovoy, 2011, p. 470). Labelling is a legitimization of violence, by creating a system of privilege and othering based on behaviours and ability. Some students may be able to succeed because being labelled as a “problem” or as “poor” students may actually work to give them resources that they otherwise would not have had access to, but the benefits that may only work to help some of these students don’t make up for the overarching violation that the hidden curriculum brings. De Lissovoy (2011) points out that “just as the individual achievement of working-class students does not by itself disprove the general fact of educational stratification in favor of the affluent,

so too the local benefits to students of labels for academic or behavioral deviance do not negate the their broader dominative and pathologizing force” (p. 471). This violation of students is continually reproduced, so much so that to teach in an educational system without labelling students would be considered a deficit in some way. In this way the power of labelling our students becomes “[addictive] and [excessive], seeking not only to know and name students under the proper headings and classifications, but at the same time to assault and injure them in the very process of this construction” (De Lissovoy, 2011, p. 472-473). It is an intentional violation, an intentional perversion of power and domination. The students we teach are violated by the codes we label them as, and by the classifications and castes that we ascribe to them.

Moving Forward

There is hope for the future. As we continue to neatly box students into labelled packages, they continue to work in ways that maximise their own use out of the educational system and the intervention and aid it can provide, and “for this reason, power as violation should be seen as a process of injury rather than destruction, since the beings that it targets are never finally defeated” (De Lissovoy, 2011, p. 475). Our students are resilient agents in their own lives, and as De Lissovoy (2011) notes, when looking at our students through the lens of Fanon’s work, we shouldn’t look at them as just products of the system they’re in, “rather, students’ selves are dynamically produced within the complex (mine)field of power and resistance to it” (p. 476). Students are able to erupt the power of the hidden curriculum by taking their classification into their own hands and subverting the expectations placed on them because of their label, as well as by utilizing the tools they have because of their label to break through these barriers. We shouldn’t just look at only these moments of rupture however, but also in the “in the privileged space

of the classroom, in which students overtly challenge dominant understandings and interpretations, we should also learn to see a radical agency in the other worlds that students are already at work producing on their own terms” (De Lissoyoy, 2011, p. 479). The radical agency that students have, and that can be fostered in our classrooms, can then lead to the radical change our students want to see in the world, especially when it comes to decoloniality, and dismantling the systems of oppression that permeate our world.

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PART IV

MICHEL FOUCAULT

9. Michel Foucault and His Influence

DOMONIC LODGE



Plague, Pestilence and Power

Michel Foucault (1979) demonstrated how those searching for order in times of fear and chaos place their very lives in the hands of those who wield power. Prior to modern medicine, one of the most terrifying events were outbreaks of an infectious disease, or plague. So widespread was

the fear of a plague that by the end of the 17th century most towns had clear sets of “measures to be taken when the plague appeared in a town” (p. 195). Here, Foucault demonstrated how “discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis” (p. 197).

By submitting to “an omnipresent and omniscient power” (p. 197) townspeople under quarantine surrendered all rights and liberties, hoping to create a source of power strong enough to combat and overcome the outbreak. However, do not be deceived by notions of voluntarily surrendering one’s rights as a symbolic release of power that would later be returned, no such transaction takes place. Those with power impose emergency measures; any townspeople who fail to abide by the clear hierarchy of command are “condemned to death” (p. 195). This triangular hierarchy becomes our blueprint for examining power through Foucault’s eyes. Yet, there is no broad base of untapped power in the pyramid waiting to rise, to Foucault “power is exercised without division” (p. 197). Those at the top receive information then disseminate both judgement and manifestations of power, those in the middle carry out the latter in each direction, those at the bottom obey. Although an extreme example, the power of a quarantine system is the perfect place to further analyze concepts of power.

Perceived Power through the Panopticon

Foucault referred to “mechanisms” (p. 199) or manifestations of

power through Bentham's Panopticon, seeing the early 19th century prison design as "the architectural figure of this composition" (p. 200). The concept of "backlighting" (p. 200) prisoners in order to remove any sense of privacy is not dissimilar from the modern concept of 'Big Brother' in that there is nowhere to hide from those who wield the power, no shadows in which to find reprieve; simultaneously, nothing can be seen or witnessed of those who wield power upon you. Unable to directly observe those perceived to have power in the central guard tower of the prison, yet also unable to know with any degree of certainty when they are being observed by the guard who wields it, the illusion of power through the Panopticon becomes an intangible, yet incredibly potent force upon prisoners, a "faceless gaze" (p. 214) as power no longer needs to be wielded directly. Instead, in its place the fear of perceived power changes the point of application from the body to the mind.

A Brief Timeline of Power

In "The history of sexuality, vol. 1" Foucault (1980) provided a timeline of power, its sources and manifestations. We begin with the right of supreme sovereigns "to decide life and death" (p.135), historically with the swing of a sword. Importantly, in both the Classical and Medieval contexts, power is a means of "deduction, a subtraction mechanism" (p. 136-137). This harkens

to ideas of absolute monarchies, patriarchal family structures and power emanating from people, not ideas or concepts shared amongst a people. Yet, as we transition into the Modern and Contemporary ages we see “deduction” (p. 138) fade into the background of power’s common manifestations. Herein lies the transition of power from a “subtraction mechanism” (p. 136) to a generative force. In addition, power no longer rests exclusively with the sovereign (p. 139), but exists also within the “social body” (p. 139). Furthermore, power manifests not as the tangible will of an individual but instead as an ideology or concept.

Power in People and in Principle

In the current context of power and its manifestations, Foucault put forward that power manifests in two basic forms and once again notes significant shifts in its base. Regarding forms, power evolves into “anatomy-politics” and “biopolitics” (p. 139), primarily surrounding the mechanics, development and supervision of the human body and its workings. Regarding power’s base, we now see it rests first within economic entities, focused on “the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life.” (p. 139-140). Secondly, Foucault stated that power also rests innately within each of us as “The “right” to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all the oppressions or “alienations,” the “right” to rediscover what one is and all that one can be” (p. 145).

From classroom management, design and composition, to the nature of hierarchies and leadership structures within school systems, Foucauldian principles are present throughout the world of education. Examples of these contemporary notions of power are present in the work of Kohl, H. (2009), or Dauphinais (2021) who navigates “mindfulness as biopower” (p. 17) in an educational context through a “Foucauldian perspective” (p. 17).

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10. Foucault's Influence: School Labelling as Technology of Governance

JILLIAN KOWALCHUK

Klaf, S. (2013). School labelling as technology of governance: Problematizing ascribed labels to school spaces. *The Canadian Geographer*, 57(3), 296-302. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12020>



Klaf (2013) draws on a Foucauldian understanding of power and knowledge to explore the ways in which the *No Child Left Behind* educational reform policy is a mechanism used to label U.S. schools within a “good” versus “bad” binary. She cites that “labelling is a technique of governance used to identify, define, and classify school space and perpetuate dominant representations of schools” (p. 297). Under *No Child Left Behind*, which was formally signed into law under the Bush administration in 2001, schools are subjected to various mechanisms such as yearly standardized testing as an

attempt to regulate teaching and learning, hold teachers and school leaders accountable, and reiterate educational objectives based on efficiency and high performance (Klaf, 2013, p. 297). Within this framework, the labelling of schools as either “good” or “bad” is imbued with power. Such power “transcends discourse and the symbolic to affix itself to places” (Klaf, 2013, p. 297).

A direct connection to Foucault’s (1979) notion of how “power is exercised without division” (p. 197) becomes evident when we recognize that our contemporary society has become accustomed to relying on the powerful to disseminate information that essentially goes unchallenged by the masses because it is representative of the dominant narrative that many take comfort in. By creating a system where teachers and school leaders must constantly fear their status within the community, a high degree of civic obedience is ensured, which is a significant win for any one-size-fits-all program such as *No Child Left Behind*.

Klaf’s (2013) central argument highlights how the propensity to label schools using a simple “good” versus “bad” binary assigns a perceived educational quality to the socially constructed school space. This labelling ultimately produces “geographies of school performance” (Klaf, 2013, p. 301). Thus, the socioeconomic and racial divide becomes more pronounced as “data” (which is often profoundly limited) from standardized tests is widely disseminated to the public complying with the Foucauldian notion of the normalizing gaze, which seeks to reduce students to measurable objects, effectively removing the humanity from education (Klaf, 2013, p. 298).

Additionally, the “data” which reinforces a “culture of auditing” is put to use by many, including real estate agents and the mainstream media. Therefore, the makeup of specific communities is altered by whether a school is “good” or “bad.” In this case, “bad” schools are often situated in more economically disadvantaged areas. As a result, these schools receive less funding while simultaneously being expected to increase their test scores with fewer resources. Thus, Klaf (2013) argues that a mechanism meant to “leave no child

behind” actually perpetuates social unrest within society and reinforces familiar neoliberal tropes that favour competition above all else, ultimately widening the gap that education is meant to close.

Although Klaf (2013) primarily focuses on the implications of labelling schools as a technique of governance in the United States, her argument transcends borders. It raises questions about the direction of the education field globally. Her arguments should also spark concerns for many in Canada and Alberta specifically, as we continue to grapple with curriculum and policy reflecting a neoliberal agenda.

It is no surprise that neoliberal rhetoric has become ever-present in our education system. In Alberta, our Premier and Education Minister regularly cite the core tenets of neoliberalism as they profess their plans for Alberta’s education system and curriculum reform. Frankly, their harmful ideologies associated with a white-washed version of history that focuses on cementing a hierarchy of people, effectively labelling some (marginalized) groups as “low value” or unable to govern themselves, raises concerns about the future of education in the province. With an increase in the labelling of schools, teachers and students, and the obsession with measuring desired outcomes, I believe we are headed towards a significantly more unequal education system.

Looking to Klaf’s (2013) insights regarding the direction of education policy and the harmful labels ascribed to school spaces in the United States, there is a need to “unmask these collective representations that are read as factual system[s]” (p. 299). To do so, teachers must engage in radical pedagogy that works to resist neoliberalism. Unfortunately, in a post-modern, neoliberal society, it can often appear that there is less opportunity for teachers to engage in radical pedagogy, especially when bogged down with heaps of standardized assessments. However, the increasingly digital world that we find ourselves in creates new opportunities for connection and dialogue that have not been possible in the past.

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II. Foucault's Influence: The Physics of Power

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Power and Discipline

Michel Foucault's notion of power connotes the disciplinary internalization in society in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1995). He describes the usage of power by the hierarchy who makes

disciplines so that society is regulated in order, in fear of repercussions because with discipline comes punishment. Power is structured in every type of institutions and is 'immortal'. The society has been constructed using power in a way that every individual is disciplined. Foucault used Jeremy Bentham's panopticon prison to illustrate the importance of power. Just like the panopticon prison, power has its eyes watching every individual 24/7.

Panopticism

In the paper, "The Physics of Power: Stories of Panopticism at Two Levels of the School System," the two educators, Jefferson and Smith-Peterson, portray the stories of their lived experiences using panopticism at the two level of the school system. Jefferson discusses about the panoptic surveillance in the classroom and his role as a disciplinary educator, whereas, Smith-Peterson as a district administrator, discusses how the hierarchical networks function and effect the district level. However, in doing so, they both draw Simon Browne's (2015) concept of racializing surveillance to highlight the use of power to maintain racial oppression within the education system.

Efficient Machine

Surveillance in classrooms work in various ways to ensure that students are in equilibrium state. The environment and architecture of the classroom has been designed in a manner so that teachers are aware of the students' presence and activities.

Jefferson mentions that in order to discipline his students' behavior and actions he had to be stern and impose rules and limits on them. By default, students are ingrained with the thoughts that

if they reject any rules or cross their limits, they would face serious consequences. The teacher acts as a surveillance to make sure that all the students are in proper order. Thus, disciplinary actions with rules, regulations and punishment are instilled within students, so that they act as “efficient machine” (Foucault, 1995) without breaking the norm.

Docility

Jefferson also adds how being a surveillance and upholding his authorial power, he is only abiding by the scripts he is mandated to follow. Furthermore, the students are not the only ones who are being watched through the surveillance, but the teachers too. Every actions of the teachers are being monitored and recorded to ensure that they do not act off the scripts in order to play their roles as educators. Nevertheless, the concept of discipline and punishment exists in the classroom for the emergence of docility among students and teachers. Docility escalates more on the students’ side when Jefferson being the white male teacher, surveils and uses discipline and punish in a classroom where the majority are students of color, which also highlights Simon Browne’s (2015) concept of racializing surveillance and reflects the present situation of race and anti-blackness in society (2021).

Being Observed

According to Smith-Peterson, the central offices of large, urban school districts are mostly situated in locations, which are in poor economic, depressing and racially segregated areas. These racially segregated schools are targeted to be surveilled more than the other schools. Therefore, rigid monitoring is employed on them to

produce more docility and to make them behave properly in order to be allowed to have the pass to enter across the city from being in 'quarantine city' (2021).

Smith-Peterson, also adds that it is not only the teachers and students who are victims of power, discipline and punishment. Each level of the ladder of power within the school system works in a way that every individual has roles to play and act as surveillance. Students are surveilled by the teachers, teachers are surveilled by the Principals, who are then monitored by the Lead Administrator. The Superintendent assesses the Lead Administrator and the school board members evaluates the Superintendent. Therefore, every level of the hierarchical pyramid of the school system is being observed in order to function like an 'efficient machine' (Foucault, 1995).

Autonomy

Michel Foucault reflected on the importance of power in shaping and functioning the society. He never explicitly conveyed if this notion of 'discipline and punish' is wrong or right. It is understandable that in order to run a nation or shape a society equilibrium and orderliness is needed. However, isn't this concept of students acting as 'efficient machine' or 'robots' creating absence of autonomy within them? Isn't this disabling their creative power, their inquisitiveness and voices from being heard? We certainly do not aim to build a generation of students as 'robots' rather help them to be their own sovereign.

As a student and an educator from the context of Bangladesh, I have witnessed how teachers clip off the wings of the future generation, which they are supposed to build and how nobody acknowledges the wrongness in this action. Moreover, teachers' true voices are also unheard of when they need to act following the scripts and worry of being surveilled. Therefore, every level of the

system is in constant tension of being surveilled by the panopticism, which enforces discipline in society.

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12. Foucault's Influence: Positioning Indigenous Knowledge Systems within the Australian Mathematics Curriculum

MICHAEL LANG

Hughes, A. (2021). Positioning Indigenous knowledge systems within the Australian mathematics curriculum: Investigating transformative paradigms with Foucault. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 42(4), 487-498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2020.1715345>



What does it mean when we speak of “closing the gap” in positive terms? Are there negative connotations associated with such a slogan? Hughes (2021) explains that the people involved in Australian curriculum are constantly talking about “closing the gap” in literacy and numeracy, something we hear about often in Canadian society. This slogan inherently has many problems however, especially when it is applied universally among people whose make up is from many different cultures. What success looks like can be very different, and we currently continue to use Western beliefs and systems of knowledge as the goal posts, or the gold standard of what everyone should be able to achieve. Although

Hughes is based in Australia and her work centres around Indigenous peoples in Australia, her work and thoughts are easily transferred to our context here in Canada.

Some have argued that mathematics and science cannot possibly involve Indigenous ways of knowing due to the very nature of their topics (i.e., it is clear that these subjects we teach are grounded in Westcentric epistemological perspectives), and have purposely pushed us back in terms of recognizing Indigenous ways of knowing. Thus, through the lens of Foucault, we should ask ourselves why we prefer, or choose, Western forms of knowledge over non-Western forms of knowledge and learning. Hughes writes that “[w]ays of learning that are conducive to Indigenous students’ engagement are prioritised as appropriate ways forward for ‘indigenising’ curricula, however, what remains to be challenged within this context is the dominance of Western knowledge” (2021, p. 491). The very fact that Indigenous peoples very much do not have a say in the way knowledge in many classrooms throughout the country is disseminated, serves to keep them silenced and thus ensures non-Indigenous people continue to hold the power. This uneven balance of power continues to be shown within our own context in Canada.

Foucault enlightens us to say that “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true’ (Foucault, 1991). We have overtaken and implemented a system which leaves out the very people we forced out. Teachers are the ones who are charged with saying what counts as true, and thus teachers must be mindful of the ways they present their content to young, inquiring minds.

Perhaps, we can all work towards a critical collective consciousness and more of a collective agreement on..... This in turn challenges what we view as ‘the norm’ and paves the way for the

unsilencing of many groups in which Western systems of knowledge may differ. We must ask ourselves why we have turned a blind eye to Indigenous ways of knowing, when exposing our children to it could be something that would benefit communities all across our country.

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PART V

WALTER MIGNOLO

13. Walter Mignolo and His Influence

WAISHING LAM



Walter D. Mignolo is an important contributor and influencer to the field of curriculum studies, serving in a variety of academic appointments at Duke University: Distinguished Professor of Romance Studies, Professor of Literature, and Professor of Cultural Anthropology.

Mignolo's contribution to the field has been evidenced in the interdisciplinary understanding of relationships between decoloniality and coloniality , where his “research has been and continues to be devoted to exposing modernity/coloniality as a machine that generates and maintains un-justices and to exploring

decolonial ways of delinking from the modernity/coloniality” (Mignolo, n.d.). Mignolo’s work in decoloniality functions in the field of educational research through Truth and Reconciliation in education, with connections to the work of philosophers [Leanne Betasamosake Simpson](#), [Frantz Fanon](#), [Michel Foucault](#), and [Sylvia Wynter](#).

Crisis of Modernity

A great deal of Mignolo’s research can be found in Mignolo’s 2007 piece titled, “Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality.” Mignolo begins by noting a tension between modernity, coloniality, and decolonization, asserting that modernity is rooted in Western exceptionalism, capitalism, neoliberalism, and democracy. Mignolo notes that modernity and modernization are “being sold as a package trip to the promised land of happiness... a crooked rhetoric that naturalizes ‘modernity’ as a universal global process and point of arrival hides its darker side, the constant reproduction of ‘coloniality’” (p. 450). In Mignolo’s (2018) book chapter, “the Conceptual Triad, modernity/coloniality/decoloniality”; Mignolo explains that modernity, coloniality, and decoloniality are inextricably entangled; “simultaneously, since the sixteenth century, divided and united” (p. 139). Mignolo goes on to explain that the slash “/” divides and connects this triad, implying that there is no modernity without coloniality, and that decoloniality is not necessary without coloniality (p. 139).

Delinking and Decoloniality

Mignolo makes a case that there is a need to delink “the rhetoric

of modernity and the logic of coloniality” from concentrated epistemological assumptions rooted in Western civilization often regarded as “the way the world works,” where the success of capitalism has been derived from colonialism through industrial “progress.” Mignolo articulates the work of delinking as a “means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation” (2007, p. 459), and to displace “hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are... what economy and politics, ethics and philosophy, technology and the organization of society should be” (p. 459), but instead “create alternatives to modernity and neo-liberal civilization (p. 492).”

This displacing of hegemonic ideals requires a societal willingness to go against epistemic assumptions in a post-structural sense as coloniality is rooted in institutionalized power of Enlightenment ideals. Mignolo describes the need to “fracture the[se] hegemon[ic] structures [of] ... theo-logical and ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding” (p. 459), which have remained largely unchallenged because of modernity’s role of liberating and emancipating those deemed “oppressed” by other ways of knowing and being. Mignolo (2007) asserts that emancipation and liberation are two sides of the same coin, the coin of modernity/coloniality, where those “colonized do not have epistemic privileges” (p. 459). Instead, Mignolo makes a case for society to embrace decoloniality, which is “first and foremost [a] liberation of knowledge (2018, p. 146),” where society works “toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ” (2007, p. 459).

An Option instead of a Mission

In a 2014 interview with curriculum scholar Ruben Gaztambide-Fernandez on decolonization and decoloniality, Mignolo describes decolonial thinking as an “option,” distinguishing from

decolonization associated with the emancipation of those colonized through independence movements, or the expulsion of colonizers from states by Indigenous peoples (p. 197). Mignolo's emphasis on decoloniality as an option stems from a desire to avoid decoloniality being considered a dogmatic "mission," similar to missions throughout history to "civilize" and "modernize" peoples in the New World according to assumed universal truths, thereby perpetuating hegemonic values of modernity.

Implications for Educators

Curriculum scholar Vanessa Andreotti (2014) provides a practical application of Mignolo's examination of modernity in the context of teaching and learning to ultimately problematize the universalization of modernity. Andreotti points out the facade of modernity represented that has largely contributed to the plethora of the world's issues. In an effort to problematize the universalization of modernity, Andreotti (2014) has come up with an acronym "HEADS UP" to aid in the detection description of problematic patterns of systemic knowledge production: hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, depoliticization, salvationism, un-complicated solutions, and paternalism (p. 5-6) that are grounded in modernity's grammar of universalisms.

In Andreotti's closing, emphasis is placed on a series of throughline questions aimed at having members in the field of curriculum studies ponder how these deeply rooted issues and complicated contextual particularities can be taken up by educators and curriculum scholars alike as a form of actionable curriculum theory.

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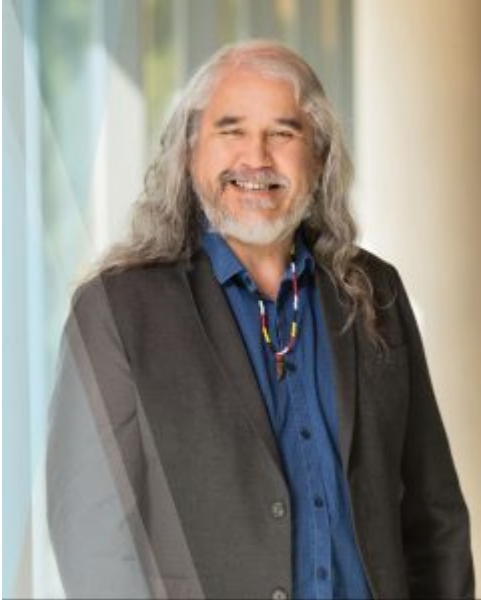
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14. Mignolo's Influence: Beyond Epistemic Provincialism

WAISHING LAM

Ahenakew, C., Andreotti, V., Cooper, G., & Hireme, H. (2014). Beyond epistemic provincialism: De-provincializing Indigenous resistance. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 10(3), 216-231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/117718011401000302>





In this transnational collaboration, curriculum scholars Cash Ahenakew, Vanessa Andreotti, Garrick Cooper, and Hemi Hireme

(2014) make a case to “de-provincialize Indigenous struggles;” i.e., to broaden the frames of reference that emphasize Indigenous ways of knowing and being in Indigenous education and resistance (p. 217). The authors assert that Indigenous wisdoms are often subjugated in favour of philosophies rooted in modernity and universalisms that favour Western/European thought and understandings that have and continue to oppress societies and perpetuate colonialism.

Grammatical Choices as Provincialism

The authors in this piece have drawn from work done in decolonial studies by scholars like Walter D. Mignolo (2007/2018), who makes the case for the need to “de-link” the “rhetoric of modernity and logic of coloniality.” Grammatical choices made in taking up Indigenous education often present the rhetoric of modernity as “objective, natural, and transparent” (Ahenakew et al., 2014, p. 217), essentially underpinning Western/European thought as the basis for all knowledge and understanding deemed “worth knowing.”

The deliberate choice by the authors to use the term “de-provincialize” has been used intentionally to make clear the connection to efforts to decolonize and de-universalize commonsensical understandings and universalisms of “how the world works.” Emphasis is placed toward the rhetoric of modernity’s “shine and shadow” that has imposed “intellectual restrictions that provincialize us in modern forms of existence by trapping and arresting resistance, and preventing us from experiencing (k)new knowledge” (Ahenakew et al., 2014, p. 219).

Andreotti (2014) describes this “shine and shadow” being with virtues like rugged individualism and progress while hiding the “unavoidable shadow of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, genocide, cultural repression, land theft, dispossession, destitution, extractivism, unfair trade, crippling debt, border controls,

criminalisation of dissent, marginalisation, militarisation, environmental disaster and so on..." (p. 4).

Ahenakew et al. (2014) goes on to problematize that the rhetoric of modernity has become increasingly destructive from its former state of promoting elements of unfettered capitalism and industry, instead now characterized as "a dystopia... overtaking its utopic promise ...[that] mobilizes new violent forms of racist othering, surveillance and control" (p. 219) revealing systemic issues that exist in existing institutional systems.

Implications for Curriculum

The practice of provincializing Western values "positions Indigenous knowledge as a means to an end" (Ahenakew et al., 2014, p. 220), often in the service of furthering the goals and mission of a conventional schooling system born out of the Industrial Revolution. Ahenakew et al. (2014) argue that seldom "Indigenous knowledge is represented as invaluable in and of itself" (p. 220). They go on to state that these Indigenous knowledges, if represented, are "often superficial, stereotypical and based on desires for redemption and re-centring of the Western subject" (p. 220) where Indigenous ways of knowing and being are dismissed as an implausible and unviable alternatives as tropes to reconciliation. These tropes are often evident in a plethora of course textbooks, approved course resources, and curriculum documents.

These concepts taken up by Ahenakew et al. (2014) assert that a priority in Indigenous education should be to "continue to (re)think the contradictions and paradoxes of survival within modern global capitalism," and instead to create "generative spaces where alternative relationships between knowing and being can emerge and intervene in our lived realities, potentially creating new possibilities... new relationships, and new strategies of political and existential forms of resistance" (p. 218). Ahenakew et al. (2014)

suggests an “epistemological delink” from the tensions of modernity and coloniality in favour of a “relink to ancient metaphysical principles of relationality” (p. 221) as a pathway to knowing and understanding another way to be a human being.

Implications for Educators

Teachers are implicated in this work as often, teachers may “provincial[ize] resistance within the landscape of modernity itself” (Ahenakew et al., 2014, p. 221). For instance, pedagogy that questions hegemonic structures of power and oppression through the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being used in the service of rationalizing or promoting existing systemic institutions is characterized by the authors as “selective, tokenistic and utilitarian” (p. 221). Instead, the authors argue that embracing *kuia/kokum*¹ ethics: “...that emerges from being, rather than knowledge, thus ethical principles are lived, not talked about” (p. 225). The authors go on to state that *kuia/kokum* ethics aim to de-centre and de-universalize, and are “dependent on a very close relationship with the unknown and the mysteries and vicissitudes of life” (p. 226). In other words, the certainty and security that modernity offers by placing a high value in knowledge contradicts these ways of knowing and being. This leaves educators with the pedagogical conundrum of how to take up Indigenous ways of knowing and being beyond epistemic provincialism.

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¹ The Maori and Cree words for “grandmother” respectively, as noted in Ahenakew et al. (2014)

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PART VI
LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE
SIMPSON

15. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Her Influence

ESTHER STEEVES



Nishnaabeg Sovereignty, Ontology, and Epistemology

Introduction

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014) asserts there is an

irresolvable conflict between state-run education and Nishnaabeg ontology and epistemology. The former is an inherently anti-sovereignty colonizing mechanism; while the latter regenerates individual and group/nation sovereignty. She argues for the refusal and dismantling of colonial structures that are not able to provide the proper conditions for Indigenous self-determination and self-actualization.

Regeneration of Sovereignty through Learning

In contrast to a western “power over” style of sovereignty that is hierarchical and heavily dependent on land possession and border defenses, Simpson (2015) writes that diverse Indigenous understandings of sovereignty relate to self-determination and reciprocal relationships, including with the land. She states: “our idea of sovereignty accommodates separate jurisdictions and separate sovereignties over a shared territory as long as everyone is operating in a respectful and responsible manner” (p. 19). Sovereignty from this perspective includes sustainment and continuation of Indigenous ways of being and knowing, including deep theory and complex social systems, across generations.

Goals and Processes of Nishnaabeg Learning

To understand what it means to regenerate knowledge, we must consider what this knowledge entails, and the processes through which its regeneration takes place. Simpson (2014) describes how this occurs in a Nishnaabeg context.

Simpson (2014) describes how the Implicate Order (the spirit world) bestows gifts upon individuals, ensuring the range of diverse skills needed for the community’s wellbeing are present. The

Implicate Order then guides individuals to realize and develop their gifts through dreams, ceremony, stories, and visions.

These transmittances take place in the setting of aki. Aki includes and can be translated as “land”; but is broader than common sense notions of land. It includes people, practices, places, plants, animals, ceremony, spirituality, medicine, language, and more – all in relationship.

Learning through immersion in aki requires repeating past generations’ experience of Nishnaabeg existence on the land with the loving guidance and support of parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, elders, and ancestors. Stories provided by the implicate order are used to transmit complex theory across generations. Children achieve a basic understanding of stories when they are young, which then grows deeper and more complex as the story is retold through their lives in many life and relational contexts, graduating from concept to metaphor to application and finally teaching and modelling over time.

Learners are responsible for discovering and developing their individual gifts, attaining mastery, and then modelling the teachings they have received. The resulting knowledge held by each person is unique, resulting in a plurality of truths that collectively support the community to thrive. Because knowledge is plural, care is taken not to refute others’ experiences and knowledges. Imposing one person’s experiences and knowledge on another could undermine their ability to self-actualize.

Each learner must be respected as sovereign (self-determining). Learning is not coerced or forced. It occurs through informed consent and mutual respect, which reproduces sovereignty rather than dominance and oppression.

Refusal

Simpson (2014) demonstrates the ways in which the western

colonial education system is fundamentally incompatible with Nishnaabeg ontology and epistemology. Specifically, the modern western education system directly diminishes capacity for Nishnaabeg regeneration through reducing time and proximity for access to aki. Knowledge is also imposed and coercive, undermining and reducing capacity for self-determination and self-actualization. Hierarchy and domination – western modes of sovereignty – are regenerated instead. Simpson (2014) asserts, “Indigenous education is not Indigenous or education from without our cultural traditions unless it comes through the land, unless it occurs in an Indigenous context using Indigenous processes” (p. 9).

While Simpson does not advocate for the total abandonment of western education by Indigenous people, she highlights the need to correct the current imbalance which insists Nishnaabeg children and youth immerse themselves in colonial systems of learning, knowing, and being. She (2014) concludes that Nishnaabeg people should refuse to languish within the western, state-run, colonial education system, and instead do what is needed to assure regeneration of Nishnaabeg sovereignty – including “sabotage” of colonial structures (p. 22).

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Suggested Readings for Further Study

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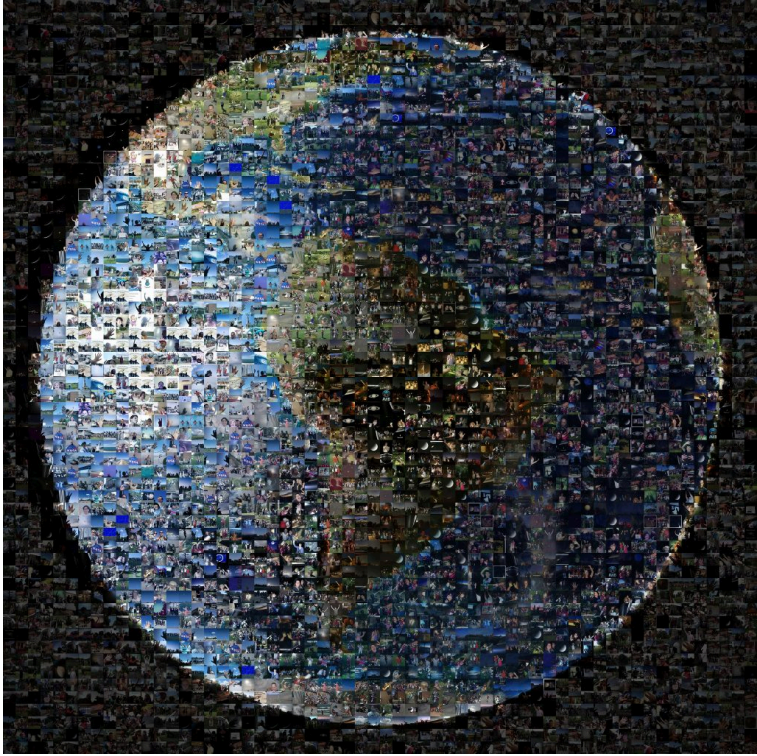
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16. Simpson's Influence: The Tensions between Indigenous Sovereignty and Multicultural Citizenship Education

MELISSA MCQUEEN

Sabzalian, L. (2019). The tensions between Indigenous sovereignty and multicultural citizenship education: Toward an anticolonial approach to civic education. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 47(3), 311-346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2019.1639572>



Leilani Sabzalian examines the concept of citizenship education and the tensions that it creates with Indigenous sovereignty through examining the affect of colonialism and erasure of Indigenous identity. Sabzalian “complicate[s] the ‘One Nation’ discourse within citizenship education, creating space for the many Indigenous nations” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 333) to exist alongside the construct of nation-state sovereignty.

Citizenship Education and Erasure of Indigenousness

In traditional multicultural and global citizenship based education there has been an argument that students should “acquire a delicate

balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and attachments” (Banks, 2004, as cited Sabzalian, 2019, p. 317). These identifications are focused around the idea that “citizens develop a critical relationship with nations” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 317). According to Banks, the idea of “nation” is in regards to the nation-state, not nations within those defined borders of a nation-state. Not only does this cause erasure of Indigenous sovereignty, but reduces Indigenous citizenship as a binary of Eurocentric global citizenship/Indigenous sovereignty as “Ethnocentrism has been naturalized in the field [of citizenship education]” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 321) providing legitimacy to “settler grammars” on who is a citizen as well as what constitutes active citizenship. These “settler grammars” are rooted in the idea of capitalism and colonialism, versus language rooted in relationships and balance in community building. Indigenous ideas of sovereignty where “Sovereignty is not just about land; it is also a spiritual, emotional, and intellectual space” (Simpson, 2015, p. 19) are replaced with defined borders, and “authoritarian power or power-over style of governance” (Simpson, 2015, p. 19). This results in “the erasure of Indigenous citizenship and nationhood within citizenship literature” that is “compounded by another trend to ‘denationalize’ citizenship by discussing ‘global,’ ‘transnational,’ ‘postnational,’ or ‘cosmopolitan’ citizenships beyond the nation-state” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 319). The concept of citizenship education, and for that matter global citizenship education, calls on identity to extend beyond the national. This is problematic when ‘Indigenous peoples as citizens have not been afforded the respect and recognition as nations within [nation-states]’ (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 320). Citizenship education tends to be silent on this erasure of Indigenous sovereignty and read as a form of “myth maintenance” to preserve and protect the idea of sovereignty found in Eurocentric land claims and nationhood (Sabzalian, 2019, p.322). In regards to “active citizenship” Simpson states “when Indigenous peoples use the English word sovereignty in relation to our own political traditions, we use it to mean authentic power coming from a generated consensus and respect for dissent” (Simpson, 2015, p. 19)

this calls on Indigenous people to be actively engaged in political discourse and to react to injustices done to people, as well as land. This traditionally has been seen as a threat to the capitalistic and colonial structures found in Eurocentric understandings as nation, as it calls us to take into consideration “animal nations and plant nations, the water, the air, and the soil, meaning the land is part of us and our sovereignty rather than an abstract natural resource for our unlimited use” (Simpson 2015, p. 19). For Sabzalian, active citizenship is embedded within the concept of Indigenous citizenship as Indigenous youths dissent against colonial structures, advocate for protections of land and sacred spaces and places, honouring and protecting treaties, as well as calling for Indigenous self-determination and recognition internationally and nationally.

Leanne Betasamoake Simpson examines the idea of Indigenous sovereignty in her article, *The Place Where We All Live and Work Together*, stating that the word for “nation” “sovereignty” or even “self-determination” in Anishinaabemowin was “Kina Gchi Anishinaabe-ogaming” which is understood to be “the place where we all live and work together” (Simpson, 2015, p. 18). This definition of nationhood and sovereignty is “at its core about relationships—relationships with each other and with plant and animal nations, with our lands and waters and with the spiritual world” (Simpson, 2015, p. 18). This complicates the narrative of “immigrant nations[s], [that] cast Indigenous homelands as ‘empty’ wilderness, or view settler society as ‘superior’ to Indigenous societies that existed precontact” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 321). This complication is crucial for frameworks of anticolonial education that calls on educators to become aware of how our interpretive frames and pedagogies are built on “settler grammars.” Anticolonial frameworks are necessary when discussing Indigenous sovereignty and citizenship because “for Indigenous Peoples, sovereignty means not only the freedom to make decisions about our land but also the freedom to make decisions about our body” (Simpson, 2015, p. 20). Within this critique of colonialism in Indigenous sovereignty is the extension of representation of women and members of the

2SLGBTQIA+ within these frameworks of citizenships so that we are “all living and working together as dynamic, creative Anishinaabeg people” (Simpson, 2015, p. 19).

Simpson’s and Sabzalian’s notion of Indigenous sovereignty “unsettles the ways citizenship education naturalizes ideologies of conquest” (Sabzalian, 2019, p. 327) by demonstrating how sovereignty is seen through “authentic power coming from a generated consensus and a respect for dissent, rather than sovereignty coming from authoritarian power or power style of governance” (Simpson, 2015, p. 19).

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17. Simpson's Influence: Claywork in an Indigenous STEAM Program

DOMONIC LODGE

Barajas-López, F., & Bang, M. (2018). Indigenous making and sharing: Claywork in an Indigenous STEAM program. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 51(1), 7-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2018.1437847>



Preparing to Walk the Path

In order to engage and explore the text in a way that seeks to honour its full potential, we must first detach ourselves (even if only temporarily) from Western notions of ontology and epistemology. It is crucial to explore important concepts in the text such as animate, inanimate and materiality in the context Barajas-López and Bang

(2018) mean them to be. Such a journey cannot be taken in good faith when we bring with us the suffocating weight of our fixed perspectives. We must first consciously acknowledge, and then release ourselves from, our preconceptions regarding what it is to exist in relation to the world around us, be or believe and in doing so begin to see through new eyes and listen through new ears. This first step may be a stumbling block for many, especially those of a European colonial upbringing similar to myself. However, Barajas-López and Bang make it clear that we cannot meaningfully engage with Indigenous teachings of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) without first accepting that what we know and how we came to know it, are but one of many versions of knowing: This is perhaps the first lesson from the text to be learned.

Theory and Pedagogy behind ISTEAM

Throughout *Indigenous Making and Sharing: Claywork in an Indigenous STEAM Program*, Barajas-López and Bang (2018) provide ample evidence to challenge dominant conceptions of meaning making and materiality. They suggest that by doing so, we can use ISTEAM and makerspaces to create equity and transformative learning environments by providing a counter argument to the crushing weight of commonly accepted colonial pedagogies. In addition, Barajas-López & Bang posit we can find immense meaning through “living Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, axiologies, and cosmologies in learning, practice, and being” (p. 9).

Combating Indigenous Erasure

Throughout their work, Barajas-López and Bang (2018) demonstrate how by starting with Indigenous teachings and principles, they were

able to co-create a research project from the ground up that walked alongside Indigenous ways of learning. This is a crucial step, as by involving all parties in decision making from conception to fruition, the research group authentically engaged in meaning making and “cultivating Indigenous nature-culture relations” (p. 9). The pedagogical emphasis throughout the research process was on land, or ‘Aki’ as teacher, with a strong emphasis on the relationship between earth and water. Here we see a clear line from the ideas of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and her work on land as pedagogy (Simpson, 2014). In line with learning practices we see from other Indigenous academics, Simpson as well as Barajas-Lópenz and Bang describe how walking and storying are implemented as the core languages of learning. In this research project, local Indigenous artists, scientists and academics were not seen as the principal sources of knowledge. Instead, their wisdom and insight positioned them as guides along the path the students journeyed on. These guides existed not to instruct, but instead to help students interpret the wisdom of nature, and navigate a complex and often combative modern society in relation to many Indigenous principles: Here the true value of ISTEAM can be found.

The Trauma of Clay

A beautiful moment takes place later in the text when an interviewee named Miguel bridges the gap between Western knowledge and Indigenous teachings through his description of “Elder clay” (p. 12). Miguel starts by describing the clay as inanimate, consisting of ionic charges explaining why it might repel or attract different materials. At this point, you feel confident you could verify Miguel’s knowledge in any Western Undergraduate degree Earth Sciences textbook. However, Miguel then goes on to discuss the trauma of clay and its connection to Elders, giving it life beyond its chemical or material composition. You see, as Miguel puts it “clay

holds a lot of history. Clay's seen a lot of things and the traumas, in particular, are found within its properties" (p. 12). Impermeable and layered, clay holds much of what passes through it, acting as both a foundation and a filter. Furthermore, by also being impermeable to water, clay provides the site of chemical reactions which interact with, influence and facilitate change in their surroundings- much like the Elders and knowledge keepers of Indigenous cultures. Here we have the perfect example of how Indigenous pedagogies and ways of describing the world around us are able to provide a cultural resurgence, equal to the significance of Western knowledge. This deeply meaningful way of understanding the world takes place not by dismissing Western knowledge or taking a contrasting or combative stance, but instead by offering a new lens through which to see the same world.

A Wooded Path in a Concrete Jungle

More than anything else in this text, Barajas-López and Bang (2018) are speaking to "human-nature relationships" (p.17). The manner in which we learn is a continual process of interactions between ourselves and our environment. Therefore, a serious case needs to be made for understanding how that interaction shapes the way we comprehend, process, make and communicate meaning. The Indigenous youth who participated in this journey were able to engage with the world around them in an incredibly rich, immersive, creative and educational manner. In turn, this enabled them to shirk off the weight of materialism and the perceived colonial need to "conquer", "own" or "commodify" (p. 8) their surroundings. The challenge however, becomes honouring those values and belief systems once learners are once again separated from the rich learning grounds and the power they gained through honouring nature-culture relationships.

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PART VII
SYLVIA WYNTER

18. Sylvia Wynter and Her Influence

KARA BOUCHER; MELISSA MCQUEEN; AND REBEKA PLOTS



Sylvia Wynter is prolific for weaving together skills from her diverse practices as a playwright, critic, essayist, and philosopher, to generate complex and nuanced ideas on the construction of social identities of “Man” (which has come to be equated with “human”) and its binary otherness (equated with “sub-human”). Wynter’s scholarship has been taken up recently to bolster BlackCrit theory, explore conceptions of emotion and affect, and to critique and attend to the ways in which education performs (re)productive acts of identity (over)construction (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2020; Snaza & Tarc, 2019; Wynter, 2003; Zemblyas, 2021). One way the scholarship

of Wynter (and those inspired by her work) can be understood is through four major categories: conceptualizations of “Man”, production and reproduction, overrepresentation, as well as affect and emotionality.

Conceptualizations of “Man”

A strong tenet of Wynter’s scholarship is her explicit description of how, through social construction, the definition of “Man” has come to be understood. Wynter sees “Man” as an evolution of the reproduction of characteristics of those who hold oppressive power and is therefore the echelon of what an acceptable human should embody. Man is conceived as a binary to other “non” humans who are unable to embody these specific characteristics. Wynter describes this evolution as one where the power to construct identity has shifted over time from the divine power granted by the church to both the very real and also perceived power of the colonizer and therefore politics (or the state). As described by Wynter (2003) “two different anthropologies and their respective origin models/narratives had inscribed two different descriptive statements of the human, one which underpinned the evangelizing mission of the Church, the other the imperializing mission of the state based on its territorial expansion and conquest” (p. 286).

As we proceed through history, power continues to shift towards that of the economic realm and this has also come to embody new definitions of what is allowed to be considered “Man”. Presently our hierarchy is no longer sheerly based on race (whether it be religious based or biological/politically based, and all the multiracial people that make up the layers of the hierarchy), but also on class. We must inevitably conclude that, “in the wider context of the intellectual revolution of Liberal or economic (rather than civic) political humanism that is being brought in from the end of the eighteenth century onwards by the intellectuals of the bourgeoisie, together

with their redefinition of Man1 in the purely secular and now biocentric terms of Man2 that these new sciences are going to be made possible” (Wynter, 2003, p. 322).

The scholarship of Busey and Dowie-Chin (2020) addresses further concern for these identity constructions in the context of citizenship. Humans that have fallen into the category of “sub” or “non” man have been intentionally denied the citizenship aspect of identity. Citizenship is of particular concern for Black folks and therefore has been central to BlackCrit theory which highlights the reality of how Black folks are “othered” in a dehumanizing way to ensure their lack of power, truth, and freedom within the binary systems where Black folks may find themselves (colonized/ decolonized, slave/citizen, citizen/anti-citizen). The major criticism here is that there is no means of embodying citizenship within the Black identity as constructed by the oppressors, “the concept of anti-citizenship problematizes appeals to the very political system whose very design rendered Black folk as non-human and anti-citizen in the first place” (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2020, p. 158).

Production and Reproduction

Wynter further problematizes identity construction by spotlighting how all contributing society members, as well as society itself, is complicit in this construction. We perpetuate the rules of the social order we are in by enabling re/production of the criteria of Man and contemporary Western society. Wynter (2003) states that “in order to live in society, we must produce the society in which we live” and we do this unconsciously, allowing us to “repress the recognition of our collective production of our modes of social reality” (p. 273).

A lynch pin of Wynter’s (2003) critique here is her conceptualization of a “truth-for ” which she ties directly to coloniality as “our own disciplines... must still continue to function,

as all human orders of knowledge have done from our origin on the continent of Africa until today, as a language-capacitated form of life, to ensure that we continue to know our present order of social reality, and rigorously so, in the adaptive ‘truth-for’ terms needed to conserve our present descriptive statement” (p. 270). These “truths-for” can be seen as socially constructed ways in which we think about categorizing who is or isn’t human, reinforced by centuries of re/production, that have become an “objective set of facts” (p. 271). As reinforced by Wynter (2003), “these truths had therefore both commanded obedience and necessitated the individual and collective behaviours by means of which each such order and its mode of being human were brought into existence, produced, and stably reproduced” (p. 271).

Wynter (2003) additionally highlights how our “truths-for” are enabled within ourselves as the authors and agents of our own orders and we therefore lack the perspective to see our own implications in creating these mechanisms because they’ve always been reproduced in different ways. The shift from Man1 to Man2 is produced and reproduced in the same Grand Narrative, thus even with the shift, the social order is still being continually produced and reproduced without the necessary full systemic change.

Overrepresentation

An understanding of Wynter’s (2003) definition of “man” combined with her conceptions of re/production drive us to the conclusion that “man” has come to be overrepresented. According to Wynter (2003), man “overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself, and that of securing the well-being, and therefore the full cognitive and behavioural autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves” (p. 260). Due to this constant production/reproduction of the current truth-for of what Man is (aka Man2), Man is being overrepresented as human, even though they are very different realities. Man acts

as a prescriptive perspective of humanity held by those in power, but this is not actually reflective of our unique human experiences. This is problematic on many (perhaps every) level, and in sum, overrepresentation leads to the absolute “coloniality of being, power, truth, freedom” (Wynter, 2003, p. 327).

Busey and Dowie-Chin (2021) provide glimmers of hope, as their BlackCrit theorization can provide tools to start the slow process of tempering this phenomenon, “looking towards BlackCrit to create space for resisting the overrepresentation of what man is and the production/reproduction of the dangerous stories that the overrepresentation produces” (p. 162).

Affect and Emotionality

Additional current Wynter scholarship is occurring in the field of affect theory, notably by Zembylas (2021). Affect Theory “is an approach to history, politics, culture, and all other aspects of embodied life that emphasizes the role of nonlinguistic and non-or para-cognitive forces” (Schaefer, 2019, as cited in Zembylas, 2021, p.5). Although Wynter did not directly comment on Affect theory, her studies on overrepresentation of “Man” mixed with emotional recognition of “non-man” humans (and the lack of that emotional recognition) has led scholars to make connections between her works and Affect theory. However there is some reflection necessary on the nuances of how emotion is specifically tied to affect and or whether they are in fact entangled at all. There tends to be two varying perspectives on this, in Camp 1 we see “see affect and emotion as structurally distinct” which is rationalized by perceiving affect as “autonomous, precognitive, prelinguistic, asocial” (Zembylas, 2021, p. 5). Zembylas (2021) explains that “emotion as the conventional manifestation of affect through language, reason and consciousness” (p. 5). Lastly, for affect to

manifest in this way, we require an assumption of a “universal humanist subject and body” (Zembylas, 2021, p.5).

Zembylas’ (2021) article brings to light how this perspective creates potentially problematic assumptions, “some [but-not-all] Western affect theorists claim that there is a universality in our affects, whereas in reality affects are always locally, historically and culturally specific.... [these] fail to recognize the particularities of subordinated/colonized peoples’ affective experiences” (p. 5). Therefore an alternative perspective offered up “see[s] affect and emotion as essentially interchangeable” (Zembylas, 2021, p. 5). When observing daily life, “affect and emotion are not separate but rather intertwined” and seem to exist “on a continuum rather than rigid camps” (Zembylas, 2021, p. 5).

Wynter (2003) tends to argue that within affect there exists implicit bias due to coloniality, and the notion of overrepresentation of man needs to be taken up alongside affect theory in order to provide meaningful context: “Wynter rejects the notion of universally intelligible human affects because the rubric for measuring these is not neutral but, rather, operative within histories of racism, ableism, misogyny, and other fears of bodily difference” (Palmer, 2017, as cited in Zembylas, 2021, p. 7).

Within the social construction of the identity of “man” we need to account for how emotionality is framed and accepted (or not accepted). Zembylas (2021) explains this disconnect, “ ‘being’, ‘power’, ‘truth’, and ‘freedom’ are not the only thing applied to ‘Man’ but also emotional expression and validation of that expression. Any expression outside of framing of ‘Man’ are routinely ignored or even do not register” (p. 2).

Hyper Visualization of emotionality, especially of “Man” has the ability to discount and even reject those that are seen as “non” man humans as though their emotional responses to affect are not seen as rational or justified. “Intelligibility of one’s feelings towards others, particularly the capacity to sense the pain of others, is framed by histories of colonial violence and refusals of imaginative identification” (Zembylas, 2021, p. 2). For example, during the Black

Lives Matter Protests on some right-winged media sources (such as Fox News) the message was “comply” with laws and institutions, implying that compliance is what is necessary for safety and security, discounting the emotionality of the situation as uncalled for, and even exaggerated. When there is a recognition of inequality and injustice “knowledge systems position racism generally and anti blackness specifically, as a glitch” (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2020, p. 156). Racism is sanitized or reduced to “bad actors” and comparisons made to other nations/nation-states that we aren’t “as bad as...”, and therefore we are “morally superior” (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2020).

To conclude, as stated succinctly by Busey and Dowie-Chin state: “the United States becomes a “natural peacemaker” (DuBois, 1920, p. 28) and noble intervener in genocidal projects; the adoption of mestizaje and racial democracy ideologies in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Cuba vindicates Latin American countries from U.S.-style racism (Hooker, 2017); and multiculturalism masked in the lack of a de jure Jim Crow system in Canada makes the country morally superior to the United States (Walcott, 1999, 2000)” (2020, p. 156).

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Suggested Readings for Further Study

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19. Wynter's Influence: Curriculum Against the State

KARA BOUCHER

Snaza, N. (2019). Curriculum against the state: Sylvia Wynter, the human, and futures of curriculum studies. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 49(1), 129-148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2018.1546540>



Curriculum scholar Nathan Snaza takes up intellectual influencer Sylvia Wynter in meaningful, contemporary, ways in his 2019 article, “Curriculum against the State: Sylvia Wynter, the Human, and Futures of Curriculum Studies.” Snaza applies Wynter’s conceptualization of the overrepresentation of “Man” (Wynter, 2003) in the context of state-created curriculum, and then extends her theories to prompt discussion on the current usages of Syllabus Projects as a means of countering these state approved models (Snaza, 2019).

Wynter believes that since the first impacts of colonization were

felt the term “human” has come to be defined in an inequitable and inaccessible way. Snaza describes how Wynter perceives this redefinition as stemming from “Western imperialist projects that from 1492 on institute[d] one specific genre of the human on the whole of the Earth’s peoples. She calls this imperialist, white, Western, masculinist, heterosexist version of the human ‘Man’” (2019, p. 131).

This construction is problematic because it creates tensions as it holds one identity up above all other possible multiplicities of identity of being human. Socially this has been rooted in (and persists currently as) racialization. By creating binaries of humanness with Man on one end of the spectrum, “racialization... generates a mechanism of producing differential access to the “human” (p. 131). The cyclical nature of our constructed, imperial, society works actively to produce and reproduce this identity construction that is embedded necessarily within our education system (Wynter, 2003; see also Snaza, 2019). As described in Snaza’s article, “schools become critical apparatuses of subject formation, generating assemblages (pedagogies, practices, curricula, modes of behaviour, etc) that create Man” (p. 133). This truth can be difficult to reconcile, as schools have tended to be seen as “neutral” spaces which is a problematic mindset. The critiques towards curricula and education as sites of inequity reproduction highlights a necessity to potentially look offsite for more effective social change. Additionally, due to the colonial reproductivity of state education, efforts to undermine official curricula must actively entail “the abolition of Man” (Wynter, 2003; see also Snaza, 2019). Snaza states we must “abolish Man so that other ways of performing and practicing the human can flourish” (p. 132). He explains his rationale that “if Man violently overrepresents itself as the human, the abolition of Man is a project of asserting, inventing, and practicing the human differently” (p. 132).

Snaza articulates the potential for Syllabus Projects, which have gained momentum since as recently as 2012 (the beginnings of the #IdleNoMore movement), as a possible tool to counter these

embedded, racialized, systems while actively working to mitigate overrepresentation of a single identity. He mentions recent Syllabus Projects that have sprung up in the wake of pervasive social unrest, including #BLM, #Idle No More, the execution of Michael Brown, the Charleston, SC church bombings, Standing Rock, and #NoDPL (2019). He explains the goal of these projects as “a commitment to the abolition of Man in the regeneration of futures” (p. 138).

Syllabus projects foster communities of diverse individuals, to provide and engage with a “syllabus” in order to communally unpack traumatic local events that become tied to larger historical unrest (Snaza, 2019). There is no single actor structuring their thought and there is room for multiplicities of worldviews, with the intention of maintaining humility and avoiding academic elitism or the pitfalls of prescriptive methodologies. Such projects are an active means to work against “overrepresentation” by providing counterstories, fostering new narratives, and building legitimacy towards other ways of being human by means of information dissemination.

Snaza (2019) identifies three major ways these syllabus projects are providing a counter narrative: they are available for anyone to access or contribute to regardless of status or credentials, they are ongoing and open ended in order to adjust to changing goals as a response to shifting political climates, and principally they are working towards the abolition of Man.

As embodied in the article title, these assemblages of syllabi are what Snaza considers to be “against the state” (p. 140). He sees the term “against” acting in both senses of the word (in opposition to, as well as leaning upon). This allows us to unpack the role the state plays and how the various syllabi projects work to counter the state, as Snaza describes, “syllabi against the state are thus made up of “scraps” of state projects, but redirected against state violence and the overrepresentation of the human by Man” (p. 140). This requires some level of thoughtfulness in our praxis, where we must learn to recognize how we may be contributing to reproduction, despite our intentions. Snaza takes up Wynter again here, explaining that she “urges us to see schools themselves as settler state apparatuses” (p.

140) which function to reproduce and foster the overrepresentation of Man. Schools therefore are not likely places in which sweeping change can take place, despite a strong potentiality to believe otherwise.

Therefore Snaza and Wynter, along with the many established and burgeoning syllabus projects, ask us to take up counterstories and countercurriculum “that are flexible, intersectional and committed to the production of living alternatives to being human as Man” (142). It is with this in mind that Snaza lastly makes a call to fellow curriculum scholars, perhaps in an attempt to humanize the cause, “our graduate educations and our departmental regimes try to lock our skills, energies and desires into building better bigger, stronger manifestations of (settler) state power. But we do not have to” (p. 141). We do not have to.

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