RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Critical Collaboration

by Neil Meyer

JULIE MEHRETU, "ATLANTIC WALL". SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK COMMISSIONED BY DEUTSCHE BANK AG IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION FOR THE DEUTSCHE GUGGENHEIM, BERLIN

The contributors featured in this issue of *Radical Teacher* range across geographical locations, identities, institutions. But despite (or perhaps rather, through) that heterogeneity, they often recur to certain pressing, central themes that matter to *Radical Teacher* and our readers: educational justice, community outreach, dismantling systems of oppression within and beyond educational institutions, among others. The essays in this issue investigate ways to disrupt the status quo and to create more egalitarian worlds.

In this issue, all of our contributors in some ways are crossing boundaries: geographical, disciplinary, institutional, and others. These crossings sometimes happen in course materials or in advocacy within institutions, or activism with the public at large. But these crossings are never solitary acts. Five of our seven essays have two or more authors, and all of them outline practices and strategies to do meaningful, progressive education in ways that can only be accomplished when we work together. This might be dismantling the power structures that separate student and professor within the university bureaucracy or changing the nature of those institutions itself; it might be union activism that brings pedagogy to the public. But this work never happens alone and can only be strengthened and supported when meaningful collaboration happens together.

"The Contexts, Paradoxes, and Rewards of Multidisciplinary Teaching" by France Winddance Twine, Lisa Parks, and Kim Yasuda opens this issue of *Radical Teacher* because in many ways it can serve as a throughline to the themes and ideas found in the other essays. In it, the authors reflect on a collaboratively taught graduate-level course, "Race, Immigration, and White Supremacy in California." The course "approached California, France, and South Korea as paradigmatic sites in considering how post-colonial legacies and white supremacy shaped migration, citizenship, belonging, and the racialization of national and state borders and imaginaries." The faculty involved ranged across disciplines and traditional boundaries of knowledge and knowledge making, boundaries that the authors sought to disrupt and subvert in their teaching. Rather than idealize this multidisciplinary, collaborative experience, the authors use it as an opportunity to theorize how knowledge is made in such spaces, how to extend that knowledge making outside of the traditional college classroom, and what institutional biases and structures prevent such work from happening.

The authors describe intellectual work among themselves and their students that defied traditional academic boundaries, and created work outside of the academic context that was able to speak to a larger audience. But the authors also recognize "institutional segregation that drives deep divisions between the arts, humanities, and social sciences can be found in other public learning communities" and "(t)hese disciplinary divisions informed and shaped the expectations of the students enrolled in the course who had been socialized by different disciplinary traditions." The authors ask us to take these challenges (and "paradoxes") into account as other educators seek to create learning communities that subvert the rigid expectations of the university structure.

In "Navigating Borders During the Pandemic: A Collaborative Multi-sited Approach," the courses described by Paloma E. Villegas and Francisco J. Villegas embody the authors' goals to teach the "materiality of borders" by crossing academic and national borders of their own. The siblings and scholars used the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to online teaching as an opportunity to connect their students at institutions in California and Michigan, respectively. Both are "border states," but each symbolically and politically represent different ways of engaging with U.S. ideas of national borders. The authors write, "while we highlight that borders are enactments of violence, we highlight that they are also human constructs and we center the hope of projects to imagine and materialize their erosion." Their collaborative work within and across their courses included creating interactive maps that engaged with the notion of migration and borders, analyzed media representations of migration, and cross-course interviews with students from the different schools. The essay offers deep texture regarding how these assignments took shape that will be valuable to other educators.

More than that, the authors give us insight into both what they and their students experienced and learned through this collaborative process, through the challenges of using technology in the classroom and the fractures and inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19 for both students and instructors. In the end, collaboration--despite its many challenges and frictions--can open the minds of students and instructors.

"Racism in Argentine Higher Education: Proposals for an Inclusive Foreign Language Teacher Training" by Candelaria Ferrara and Daniela Peez Klein states "The way we find racism in teacher training programs is twofold. First is omission, a certain blindness to difference, so that difference is never in focus. Second is the way in which everyone feels and behaves and assumes that the lack of plurality was natural. This lack of racial diversity in higher education still prevails and foreign language educational institutions are no exception." Although the authors write specifically about Argentina, the racist norms they outline (as seen in the above quotation) will resonate with U.S. and other readers.

Like our other contributors, Ferrara and Peez Klein state that one significant way out of this institutional racism in the language learning context is through collaboration. In the Twine et. al. essay, the authors created collaborative public art and scholarship. Here, the authors suggest language educators move past their own institutional boundaries, to be in "dialogue with the community, in making the walls of what used to be the ivory tower of educational institutions more permeable." They advocate for "solidarity service-learning," which may include public exchanges, activities, and publication that is situated within the communities being served by language educators.

To collaborate with students in a truly radical way requires investigating and disrupting some of the cherished norms of our systems of education. If Candelaria and Peez Klein describe dismantling the boundaries between language educators and the communities they work with, Bethany Ides in "On Complicity" offers a provocative dismantling of

one of the more sacrosanct tools of boundary-making in the academy: grading. Ides writes, "To be complicit within the ethos of a modern educational institution involves becoming accustomed to its terminology and the precepts according to which they derive their significance." This complicity asks us to treat as natural the systems that classrooms and institutions use to define and limit education. Ides cites the "methods of measurement" that we use in classrooms that have their origins in "accountancy, efficiency, risk-assessment, and quality control." Grading is one of the most obvious places that this discourse of assessment (with all of its norms and standards) affects educators and students the most.

Ides describes the theoretical reflections that led her to question the norms around grading and assessment, and the ways she incorporates that into her classroom discussion and practices. Her essay resists believing that she (or we) can find an outside to this system. She writes powerfully, "Every semester, I do not prevent grading from occurring. So far, I have only suggested to students some ways that it might be – temporarily, provisionally – circumvented." But in disrupting grading--with its norms, power dynamics, and biases--Ides also asks us to think about what kind of learning communities we form in the face of often-oppressive institutional norms and expectations.

If Ides provokes us to dismantle old power structures in our institutions, "Constructing College-Level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Minors—Moving from Performative to Transformative DEI" offers us an example of how to use our college degree programs to transform learning institutions towards equity. This essay describes the process of developing two DEI minors (one national, one global in focus). The authors begin their essay with a sobering assessment of how DEI is often used on campuses to produce a "passive normalcy" where "performative DEI" represents a language of diversity, but little institutional support, investment, or change; "These actions make it appear as though there is a real commitment to DEI, when there is not." The two minors developed and described by the authors aim to produce "transformative DEI" that decenters white norms, makes meaningful space for marginalized student bodies, and builds change across whole institutions.

The change-making discussed in Chris Gilbert's "To Educate and Mobilize Voters: Digital Teacher Activism during the 2020 Elections" reflects the work educators in North Carolina did to effect political change at the state electoral level. Gilbert argues that "activism involves a broadening of teachers' pedagogical work beyond what is typically sanctioned by state institutions; In the context of this article, teacher activism consists of radical pedagogical practices, or forms of education and action occurring beyond the classroom to contest the neoliberal project and support public education." The intersection of pedagogy and political action is central to the values of *Radical Teacher* and Gilbert's essay offers examples of how, in the middle of a pandemic, educators found creative ways to reimagine traditional forms of outreach and developed new tools for educating voters on the value of public education against attacks on it by Republican elected officials. The author specifically focuses on digital outreach around voter education and mobilization. Readers will be inspired, and hopefully, motivated, by examples of embattled public educators working on behalf of their profession and students' rights in the midst of a global pandemic.

Our issue ends with an essay written from a perspective not often seen in *Radical Teacher*. The authors of "Un/Commoning Pedagogies: Moving To/Gather in Difference" are members of the Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective (UnCPC), which creates a "collaborative space in which radical anti-racist approaches to teaching and learning are explored, exchanged and elaborated through embodied modes." The body is a location of racist violence and oppression, and the authors describe the embodied work they do with students to undo that harm: "We insist that the body both holds an awareness of how racism works, and must be engaged in efforts toward more just, equitable, and joyous/joyful futures." Their classroom and studio practices work collectively, and so too does their writing. Portions of the essay are written in a collective voice, while other portions allow each contributor to look at a unique facet of their work.

Their essay also offers readers the opportunity to practice the reflective approaches of UnCPC's work. Their "grounding meditation" creates a space for readers and participants to center their bodies while asking the question, "What is pressing on you in regard to anti-racist practice and embodied teaching/learning?"

Their question offers a productive closing for this issue. Writing for *Radical Teacher* (and other similar spaces) takes time, dedication, revision, and reflection. It is a process both meditative and collective. Work often happens alone, in moments of quiet contemplation but is then shared with colleagues, friends, editors. Although such writing can sometimes feel isolating, it is ultimately a communal effort, and a chance for deep reflection to produce radical change in our classrooms and in the world. We thank both the authors featured in this issue for that labor and those of you reading, who have gathered with us to share in these transformative visions.

Neil Meyer is a member of the *Radical Teacher* editorial collective and a professor of English at LaGuardia Community College (CUNY). He recently co-edited (with Jocelyn Wills) issue 123 of *Radical Teacher*, "Teaching in a Time of COVID."

RADICAL TEACHER

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The Contexts, Paradoxes, and Rewards of Multidisciplinary Teaching

by France Winddance Twine, Lisa Parks, and Kim Yasuda

RIVANE NEUENSCHWANDER IN COLLABORATION WITH CAO GUIMARÃES INVENTORY OF SMALL DEATHS (BLOW) (INVENTÁRIO DAS PEQUENAS MORTES [SOPRO]). SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE YOUNG COLLECTORS COUNCIL, 2004

We have been teaching at the University of California at Santa Barbara and other higher education institutions for more than two decades. We offer this essay with the hope that it will provide some helpful insights for scholars and students collaborating across social sciences, humanities, and arts while teaching challenging and even traumatic issues. In 2021, we were thrilled to have been awarded a Mellon Sawyer Seminar grant to support a project titled "Race, Precarity and Privilege: Migration in a Global Context." Our Sawyer Seminar was an interdisciplinary collaboration that approached California, France, and South Korea as paradigmatic sites in considering how post-colonial legacies and white supremacy shaped migration, citizenship, belonging, and the racialization of national and state borders and imaginaries. We embraced this collaboration, which involved five faculty members across five disciplines including Art, Asian American Studies, Film and Media Studies, Legal Studies, and Sociology, with enthusiasm and humility.

In what follows, we reflect on the contexts, paradoxes, and processes that informed our multidisciplinary collaboration. Our account, which includes those of our students, conveys the rewards and realities of experimental and collaborative teaching in a public research university that is structured by disciplinary hierarchies. We identify the paradoxes and tensions that we confronted in our efforts to develop a curriculum that did not simply "add and stir" different methodologies, fields or histories, but rather attempted to carefully synthesize and layer theoretical and pedagogical perspectives across art, film & media studies, social history, and sociology. We also hoped to build a curriculum that would recognize and engage with the diverse positionalities of the seminar participants.

In Fall 2021, we co-taught a seminar entitled, "Race, Immigration, and White Supremacy in California," which launched a year-long Mellon Sawyer series. The three of us, a Japanese American, a Black Native American (and member of a federally recognized tribe), and an Anglo-American, worked together to develop the syllabus for this multidisciplinary graduate seminar. This essay reflects upon our experience as three faculty in Art, Film and Media Studies, and Sociology teaching fourteen graduate students from seven different departments–Art, Education, Feminist Studies, Film and Media Studies, History, Political Science, and Sociology.

Archival Erasures: American Indians and Indigenous People in Race and Migration Studies

In launching our seminar, we felt it was vital to begin with the migration experiences of American Indians from rural and urban areas. The experiences of Indigenous Americans have long been ignored in much historical and sociological scholarship and public education focused on migration to California. We sought to position American Indian migration histories as foundational to sociological, historical, and cultural understandings of race, ethnicity, and migration in California. Our goal was not simply to call attention to the erasure of Indigenous peoples in migration research; rather, we sought to foreground the complex histories and positionalities of American Indians and Indigenous people, specific to California. As part of this effort, we read books, reviewed Indigenous maps of the territory known as California, and consulted with Tribal Chairwoman Mia Lopez, Cultural Bearer and Educator of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation before our seminar began. We screened Chumash-produced documentary videos that exposed the violence and long-lasting impacts of the Spanish mission and ranchero systems.[1] Confronting these issues prompted a painful discussion about the US education system and its historical inability to face the harsh truths of settler/colonialism. While, in this essay, we cannot delve into all of these important issues, developing the seminar required us to confront the ongoing marginalization of American Indian studies in migration studies.

In the course we showed Chumash and Tongva videos and engaged with historical analyses and other film texts focused on migration and American Indians in California. In the process, we addressed topics of archival neglect, the politics of representation, Indigenous agencies, and the formation of hybrid cultures. We screened and discussed the film *The Exiles* (Kent MacKenzie, 1961), which examines the lives of young American Indians who were citizens of tribes in other states and migrated to Los Angeles's Bunker Hill neighborhood during the late 1950s and early 1960s. This film introduced seminar participants to the struggles of American Indians who became part of a wave of rural to urban migration during the Post-WWII era, encouraged and funded by the US government under the Indian Relocation Act of 1956. Indigenous people from rural areas impoverished by histories of colonialism and racism negotiated migration often coupled with forced cultural assimilation.

Our seminar also included local site visits and employed Zoom to engage with the historical experiences and voices of people in different regions in California. For instance, we connected with Japanese American farmers in the Central Valley and historians in Los Angeles in our efforts to consider the historical and sociological migration experiences of Asian and Black Californians, whose documents and artifacts are missing from official archives.

We also visited the local sites of Santa Barbara's Asian immigrant settlements. The city's Chinatown and Japantown settlements were destroyed in the 1925 earthquake, and those areas became part of the Spanish Colonial gentrification of the downtown district between 1925-1935, which remains the present-day El Presidio. Our class had a virtual visit with anthropologist, Koji Lau-Ozawa, who has been excavating these historic immigrant Asian settlements.

Discussing these issues also enabled us to consider our own positionalities and relationalities. One of us is enrolled in a federally-recognized tribe and is the great granddaughter of American Indians who had undergone multiple forced migrations, first from the State of Georgia to what is now Oklahoma. Another of us descends from a white Anglo-American working class family of fruit peddlers who settled in Oklahoma and migrated to California after World War II. And the other comes from a family of Japanese

American farmers who resided in California's Coastal and Central Valley. As teachers we approached these overlapping family histories as an opportunity for reflection and reconciliation, given that descendants of our Muskogee, Black, Japanese, and White/European families probably lived in the same territories at the same time. We each spoke of our complex positionalities and attempted to provide a model of reconciliation dialogue for our students to witness and contemplate.

Much of the scholarship on race, migration and immigration in the US has privileged the experiences of immigrants from Asia, Central and South America, and Europe. This literature tends to avoid consideration of the differential cultural, economic and historical conditions of immigrants who arrived in California from other countries and the violent genocide and forced migration of American Indians that took place upon their own territories. While reading about American Indians in California, we also had to confront the fact that we teach on a campus set on the unceded Indigenous lands of the Chumash Nation. Despite this, there is currently no department or unit dedicated exclusively to American Indian and Indigenous Studies on our campus. Extending these concerns beyond our seminar, two of us are currently actively involved in supporting the formal establishment of a Bachelor of Arts degree program that will be housed in a new department of American Indian and Indigenous Studies on our campus.

In the next section, we examine three paradoxes that emerged during a group conversation about our co-teaching experience. These paradoxes articulate some of the surprises, tensions, and unexpected outcomes we encountered along the way over the course of a ten-week term.

Paradox: Expertise Versus Experimentation

We began this intellectual and pedagogical project as scholars who do not identify as experts in the fields of race and immigration in California history. None of us had ever taught about these issues in the context of California, which is a bit ironic since it is the state where we all work and live. Though there were three of us teaching and leading the course, we did not cling to field expertise. Instead, we committed to creating a space of multidisciplinary learning and unlearning. This willingness to relinquish claims to expertise enabled us to establish a more open, generative, and experimental pedagogical space. Privileging experimentation over expertise allowed us to provide an alternate model for graduate education as well.

In preparing to teach this course, we learned together through voracious reading about diverse communities and their historical experiences of migration to California, and discussed these books in bi-monthly reading group meetings (see books in reference list). We took detailed notes, shared reflections, and discussed the key contributions of recently published historical and sociological research. No matter how much we read, we would obviously never be able to "master" California migration histories. Thus, we sought to prioritize histories that had been sidelined or ignored in previous curricula, and focused especially, as mentioned above, on American Indian migration experiences as well as those of formerly enslaved and free Blacks in California. In this preparatory process, we conceptualized our syllabus as a collaborative "working document" as we sought to remain open to the voices, interests, and needs of our students, who we had not yet met.

Furthermore, since our initial set of preparatory readings largely focused on the fields of Sociology and History, we needed to integrate research and creative practices from fields of Art and Film and Media Studies. These efforts were intended not to merely give these fields parity in the collaboration but to introduce important methods, questions, and pathways vis-à-vis the course material. More specifically, the integration of these fields catalyzed more *critical, theoretical,* and *practice-based* approaches within our seminar. For instance, on the first day of our seminar we entered the space of California collectively and relationally, situating ourselves within and beyond massive maps of California posted on the walls, sharing personal and family migration stories, whether clear or murky. This group exercise prioritized collective exchange and experimentation over individual expertise and allowed participants to recount their diverse paths of migration to California as well as the limits of the map in conveying these multivalent, intergenerational, and, often fraught histories.

Let us be clear: we have profound respect for academics who have built scholarly expertise on race, migration, and California history, but we did not feel bound by this expectation or demand when teaching this seminar together. We felt empowered by our partnership, our commitment to intellectual and creative work, and the investment in our own continuing education. Recent writers have referred to this co-creation approach as a kind of "collective wisdom." This approach involves "gather[ing] the voices, works, and learning of hundreds of folks from divergent walks of life" and recognizing that "co-creation becomes wise only when it is tied to equity and justice" (Cizek & Uricchio, 2022, p, 6). Only by expanding and combining our orbits of interest and inquiry were we able to create an experimental pedagogical space and move beyond the siloing and fetishization of field expertise. Many "experts," after all, had failed to account for the histories of American Indian and Blacks migrants in California. White society neglected to include traces of these migration experiences in the archives as well.

The fourteen graduate students in our seminar from seven departments brought vastly different perspectives. In addition to coming from various departments, the students had various racial/ethnic (Mixtec, Korean American, Japanese American, American Indian-Osage, Anglo-American), gender and class backgrounds. In general, we found that about one-third of the graduate students were institutionally "disciplined" to engage within a more hierarchical learning structure. These students were more reluctant about the experimental aspects of the course than others. Students from fields of Art, Feminist Studies, Film and Media Studies, and Education generally seemed more open than those from Sociology, Political Science, and History, though there were some exceptions. Those who were earlier in their graduate degree work appeared more

open than those who had already passed their qualifying exams. We also found that the other faculty PIs seemed less open and welcoming to arts-based or experiential and experimental pedagogical approaches than we had hoped. These PI collaborators were grounded in more formal teaching styles and methodological approaches on race and migration.

We discovered that our non-expertise generated a more fluid, dynamic, and open learning environment – one that prioritized and valued collective historicizing, multi-modal investigation, and critical inquiry. This space enabled students to broaden their repertoire of methodologies and research practices. Not only were students introduced to multiple paradigms and methods, across Sociology, History, Art, and Film and Media Studies, they were asked to also engage in visualization and practice-based work such as critical mapping (discussed further in the next section). After this exercise, we found that students would not be able to approach the question of method or critical practice in the same way in the future, for they would likely consider their own positionality as part of the process of conducting research and/or making creative works. The class encouraged students to engage with multiple approaches when making sense of the course topics and exploring their own migration histories.

In addition to the standardized course evaluations distributed by our campus at the end of each term, we developed and distributed our own course evaluation surveys to students during the fourth week of the class. This allowed us to receive feedback during the middle of the term. In both sets of evaluations, most students were extremely positive about the course. They expressed their appreciation for the openness and range of methodologies and practice-based forms of learning, and the choices given in terms of the forms their final projects could take. Some students wanted more time devoted to their respective disciplinary training, for example, in film analysis. During the initial weeks, our goal was to provide a shared and multi-perspectival foundation in the historical and sociological literature on California's diverse migration histories. We included films as part of these discussions but did not focus exclusively on them; rather, we situated them in relation to the socio-historical contexts explored in our readings, and discussed select scenes or segments. Suffice it to say, balancing and interweaving analytical approaches across several fields meant that we could not always go into great depth. This was a trade-off we were willing to accept.

From a pedagogical perspective, it was valuable to think about how art and practice-based approaches could enhance the research process in novel and unexpected ways. Having said this, clear preferences and differences emerged among our team of five PIs. Some were more attached to orthodoxies and conventional disciplinary and pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, these PIs attended meetings of our seminar and offered comments during our discussions at times. At other times, these colleagues appeared noticeably disinterested in or dismissive of our multidisciplinary approach, which was challenging, given our efforts to craft a unique experimental pedagogical experience for our students. After trying to openly discuss this in a meeting, we recalibrated our expectations. The three of us relinquished earlier hopes and goals of full group collaboration among all five members. We understand that at times our multidisciplinary pedagogical approach was perceived as transgressive or as a rupture of conventions. Despite this, we remained committed to our pedagogical ideals and continued to create an inviting and intellectually open space for experimentation rather than reinforcing disciplinary boundaries, methodological norms, or selective expertise.

Paradox: Art and Practice-based Work as Research Essentials

Arts and practice-based work are often perceived within academic settings as less essential to the research mission or knowledge production. Yet within our graduate seminar, they proved to be vital forces. We rejected knowledge hierarchies that privileged writing and text-based forms of inquiry over aesthetic, audiovisual, and/or practice-based modes of investigation. Art and practice-based work became catalyzing and unifying forces within our seminar, and allowed us to challenge dominant logo-centric assumptions about research, pedagogy, and learning in the graduate classroom.

The faculty artist on our teaching team introduced practice-based modes of investigation from the start. On the first day of our class, a massive map of California's territories, demarcated by county, was overlaid with those of Indigenous tribal regions. Seminar participants were then asked to get into groups and introduce themselves via their individual and familial migration histories. In the process they marked and explained the trajectories that brought them to California. Tracing and narrating these journeys linked person to place and drew out the migration patterns of a diverse cohort of graduate students, who brought forth their personal and familial diasporic movements over time and generations. This exercise was expanded later in the quarter into a critical cartography assignment that required each student to situate themselves and their scholarly research using various investigatory modalities including art, data visualization, drawing, GIS, photography, database development, and/or mediamaking. The results were inspiring and transformative: the assignment compelled students to venture beyond conventional scholarly practices and forms and articulate their primary research projects in unique ways (see critical mapping projects: https://raceandmigrationucsb.org/projects).

At times the more discipline-focused scholars and students in our seminar appeared to have some trepidation with the ways we integrated art and practice-based work into the seminar. In response, the art professor presented a lecture demonstrating that the field of Sociology has a long legacy of relying on visual arts. For instance, she discussed the early "visual sociology" work of W.E.B Du Bois who, as a Black sociologist, helped to create the field of data visualization. The artist on our team shared images from the recently published book, *W.E.B. Du Bois' Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2020) designed by the Black, Indigenous, and Queer design collective Polymode. She also emphasized the ways these

images gave new space and public attention to Du Bois's research on the US Black experience in the US during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Pedagogically, we used this occasion to speculate about what data visualizations of Black experiences in California might have revealed during the early 20th century. In short, the focus on art and visuality in our seminar led us all to think more relationally and reflexively about the design of research practices and methods as well as the exploration of visual forms.

The art-focused discussions and critical mapping projects activated new affiliations and disciplinary relations within the class, as students were inspired to rethink their racial/ethnic positionalities, their migration histories, and their graduate research. This seminar also created a space of listening and curiosity and, thus, established a more equitable and participatory climate in contrast to the more typical didactic relationship between faculty and students. While we recognize the limitations of mapping (for instance, its erasure of American Indian histories and reduction of complex migration experiences) we also found it a useful space for articulating intersectional and relational formations of race and migration in California, and complicating the invisible systems of power that pervade the map and its lines and dots. Thus, while art-based approaches are often subordinated to other disciplinary research approaches, they became guiding and unifying aspects of our seminar.

Paradox: Working Within and Beyond the University Walls

As professors working within a public university we value and embrace the concept of a university without walls. We sought to share the concerns and experiences of our seminar beyond the classroom. Toward that end, in 2022 we produced and released a podcast called *The Dream Deferred*. The first season, "Unsettling California," is based on interviews with our seminar guests, including historian Lynn Hudson, economist Manuel Pastor, artist Devon Tsuno, and film and media scholar Kara Keeling. The final episode features interviews with an array of California-based artists who participated in the "Unsettling California" exhibition related to our seminar (discussed below). Collectively, their scholarship and creative work helped us to unsettle the myth of the California Dream by providing relational and comparative perspectives on the histories of Asian, Black, Latinx, White, and queer migrations in California. We also addressed the absence of certain migration histories due to archival neglect. Our students participated in these conversations and raised crucial questions, bringing forth generational, disciplinary, and intersectional perspectives. The podcast series allowed us to assemble the voices of artists, activists, economists, historians, and sociologists in ways that modeled for the students a form of interdisciplinary teaching that served as a bridge between those working within and beyond the academy. *The Dream Deferred* podcast is available for free on digital platforms.[3]

In addition to podcasts and community engagements, as mentioned above, we curated an art exhibition that showcased our seminar's partnership with California-based art and artists. We worked with two of our seminar's graduate students, Dani Kwan and Samantha Harris, to apply for a summer cultural enrichment grant. This funding, combined with our Sawyer Seminar award, enabled us to organize two summer workshops on research methodologies and migration studies and curate an art exhibition entitled, "Unsettling California." This exhibition, which took place during August and September of 2022, appeared in the Art Department's student-curated Glass Box Gallery. It featured the work of eleven California-based artists whose artworks interrogate matters of race, migration, and California in nuanced ways.[2] The curators mobilized the concept of "unsettling" to disrupt existing narratives such as the California Dream and trouble the colonial logics of migration. The exhibition featured photography, graphic design, sculpture, painting, drawing, installations, media and performance art, as well as hand-crafted bead-work and weavings on a digital loom. These works, in various ways, provided viewers the opportunity to learn and unlearn their role in colonial histories and to reimagine and remap their place in future migration narratives and racial formations. More information about the "Unsettling California" art exhibition and our seminar can be found on our website.[4]

These collaborative outcomes of our seminar–podcast, community engagement, and art exhibition–stemmed from our desire to work both within and beyond the university. Co-creating a podcast and art exhibition allowed us to learn new pedagogical practices and enact the public university's community outreach mandate. We find ourselves at this moment wanting to be more involved with communities beyond the university, collaborating in and across disciplinary fields, while unlearning dominant and, ultimately, harmful academic traditions and practices. Through podcast technology, we recognize the value of a new form of audio-archiving, which helps to ensure that the voices and issues of our seminar can carry on and be shared as streamed content. And we feel deeply honored that the artists created and contributed artworks that reverberated so powerfully with the themes and issues of our seminar: race, migration, and California. To spotlight the artists' contributions, we held a special reception for them in September 2022 attended by students, top university administrators, faculty, and community members.

Art and artists played an essential role within the academic arc of the seminar and remained a sustained force throughout, both in terms of process and pedagogical outcomes. Moreover, a year after the seminar took place the arts continued to offer a means for sustained investigation and ways of confronting and commenting on the legacies of settler colonialism and the production and reiteration of racial and ethnic categories. There is a need for further integration of the arts in multidisciplinary research and teaching. We found that art has the capacity to break down the university's walls and open the space to crucial dialogues and further engagement with California's constituencies.

Conclusion

In this essay, we have reflected upon the paradoxes, challenges, and experiences of co-teaching a multidisciplinary graduate seminar focused on race,

migration, and California. We offer this essay with the hope that it provides insights that will be useful to scholars and students collaborating across social sciences, humanities, and arts. We shared our efforts to tackle complex and even traumatic issues, and identified and detailed three specific paradoxes that we negotiated as scholars and artists representing different pedagogical and disciplinary practices. The paradoxes and challenges we negotiated were not unique to our seminar. For example, the institutional segregation that drives deep divisions between the arts, humanities, and social sciences can be found in other public learning communities and should be contested. These disciplinary divisions informed and shaped the expectations of the students enrolled in the course who had been socialized by different disciplinary traditions. Some students entered the course without any previous exposure to the use of data visualization or critical mapping while others entered the course without any prior critical engagement with films as socially and historically-situated texts. For some students, the first several sessions were disorienting and destabilizing while for others it was exciting and energizing. We experienced a mixture of joy, awe, and uncertainty, which often accompanies pedagogical experimentation.

There were moments when our experiment in collaboration was threatened, and we feared that it might unravel. Mutual trust, deep respect, and an open willingness to accept the improvisational nature of our seminar held the space together for the three of us. The introduction of new material in the form of readings, lectures, films, art, poetry, fiction, and guest speakers created rich learning opportunities for all. While we assumed that all five PIs shared the same intellectual and pedagogical commitments, through the process of co-teaching we recognized that we did not take enough time up front--long before the fall seminar began--to rigorously discuss what we each brought to the project and hoped to achieve together. We learned that disciplinary expectations and hierarchies were firmly in place and these conditions impeded collaboration among our larger group of five PIs. During the first week of the seminar, it became clear that two members of our group did not equally value the contributions of the arts nor art-based pedagogical practices. We found ourselves frustrated by this and having to defend funding originally allocated for the arts as a vital component of the seminar. Despite the challenges, we accomplished many of our goals. We presented a model of multidisciplinary graduate education to our students, many of whom will go on to teach in the future. This model brought together public art and historical archives, the sociology of race and racism and speculative fiction, feature films and digital maps, all in the process of studying race, migration, and California. We also produced and shared several public-facing projects: 1) a podcast series; 2) an art exhibition; and 3) a series of collaborative writing and creative projects. Finally, it was encouraging to witness the ways the seminar inspired graduate students and the postdoctoral fellow, some of whom regrouped and collaborated on projects after our seminar and found their way into jobs. We hope the seminar will have a variety of untold impacts into the future as well.

Endnotes

1. These videos included *Telling the Truth About California Missions* and *Hearing the Truth about Historical Trauma*, both by Tribal Eye Productions, available at https://tribaleyeproductions.com/latest-releases; *You Are on Tongva Land: Mercedes Dorame, Angela R. Riley & Wendy Teeter*, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hfvYhbtBrk; and *Never Not Been A Part of Me*, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZycXQgLDpGA.

2. The California-based artists who participated in the exhibition include: Jessica Bellamy, Sarah Rosalena Brady, Marisa de la Pena, Mercedes Dorame, Pilar Aguero-Esparza, Margaret Laurena Kemp, Silas Munro, Hillary Mushkin, Kate Saubestre, Debra Scacco, and Devon Tsuno. Further documentation of the "Unsettling California" art exhibition can be found here: https://raceandmigrationucsb.org/exhibition

3. *The Dream Deferred* podcast is available here: https://thedreamdeferred.buzzsprout.com/

4. See our seminar website here: https://raceandmigrationucsb.org

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France Winddance Twine is a Professor of Sociology, a documentary filmmaker, and the Founder and Director of the Technologies for Justice Lab. Her work focuses upon social inequalities, gender and sexuality, feminist technology studies, critical race theory; work, occupations and organizations, and the use of assisted reproductive technologies by cisgender and LGBTQ intended parents. She has co-produced documentary films and a podcast series titled The Dream Deferred. Twine has held visiting professorships and research fellowships on both sides of the Atlantic including the *London School of Economics and Political Science* and the *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Studies* at Stanford University. Her research has been supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Andrew Mellon Foundation. She is the author and editor of 11 books including Geek Girls: Inequality and Opportunity in Silicon Valley (2022).

Lisa Parks is a Distinguished Professor of Film and Media Studies and Director of the Global Media Technologies and Cultures Lab at UC Santa Barbara. She is a media scholar whose research focuses on satellite technologies and media globalization; critical studies of media infrastructures; media, militarization, and surveillance; and environmental media. Parks is the author or co-editor of eight books, including, most recently, *Media Backends: Digtial Infrastructures and Sociotechnical Relations* (2023) and *Rethinking Media Coverage: Vertical Mediation and the War on Terror* (2018). She is a 2018 MacArthur Fellow and has held grants from the National Science Foundation, US State Department, and other organizations.

Kim Yasuda is an Artist and Professor of Public Practice in the Department of Art at UC Santa Barbara. Yasudea's creative work and public research investigates the role of art practice in educational institutions, community development and public art. Her recent projects combine teaching and research to shape pedagogical experiments across disciplinary knowledges and creative practice. Between 2004 and 2020, Yasuda established Friday Academy and IV OpenLab as temporary instructional environments and public maker-spaces situated between the university and the community. These temporary research labs maintain a separate academic calendar and publicly-engaged curricula, generating year-round, off-site and multi-disciplinary partnerships with regional organizations and government organizations.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Navigating Borders During the Pandemic:
A Collaborative Multi-Sited Approach

by Paloma E. Villegas and Francisco J. Villegas

ALYSON SHOTZ. THE SHAPE OF SPACE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE YOUNG COLLECTORS COUNCIL, 2004. © ALYSON SHOTZ

In November 2020 we logged on to a zoom meeting. Zoom, and other online platforms, had already become ubiquitous with virtual teaching. However, this class was different for us. It was held during Paloma's *Borders, Knowledges, and Identities* course time and included several students from Francisco's *Immigrants and Exiles* course, though our institutions are located 2,100 miles apart. Our students had met previously. Earlier in the term, we paired students from each class and asked them to informally interview each other: speak about their relationship to borders and migration and how course readings and discussions from their courses promoted different ways of understanding such spaces and subjectivities. Students had also worked on an assignment through a virtual platform where they analyzed media representations of borders, and responded to questions posed by their peers. That fall evening, near the end of our respective terms, we had an opportunity to debrief about the course and further engage with each other.

This collaboration was not new to us. As siblings, we have worked together countless times. We did our PhDs in the same program, at the same time, and have co-authored several publications. We have never co-taught, but we have spent a lot of time reviewing each other's syllabi and assignments as well as discussing pedagogic practices and concerns. While the pandemic caused too many losses to count, it provided an opportunity for us to collaborate on our teaching while located in very different parts of the country (California/Michigan), in different term formats (semesters/quarters), and in different types of institutions (public university/private liberal arts college).

In this paper we outline the strategies used to virtually connect our two classes in the fall of 2020. The courses examined borders, the material effects of citizenship designations, and the resultant production and consequences of non-citizenship. Thus, we explore the value of collaboration, the effects of Covid-19 in designing the courses, and the ways we navigated teaching about borders and immigration given the pandemic and current immigration landscape in the U.S.

Locating Ourselves, Our Classes, and the Border(s) Around Us

When the collaboration took place, we were both assistant professors of sociology (we are now both tenured). We also have complicated histories of migration and identities as Undocuscholars, growing up and attending higher education undocumented in the U.S (though we are no longer undocumented) (Villegas and Villegas, 2019). Because of our histories of migration and racialization, we have experienced myriad classrooms where curricula did not reflect our or our communities' lived experiences, and where deficiency and illegalization are the primary frames of analysis. We seek to address such absences in our research and teaching. To do so, we purposefully examine power dynamics and center community as a means for our work to be transformative. That is, to influence small scale, and potentially large scale, work towards justice. Immigration justice and anti-racism have always been central to our pedagogical project. Even when teaching introductory and research methods courses that may not have those ideas explicitly in their titles, our subjectivities prompt discussions about immigration and race.

Our teaching is informed by antiracist and feminist pedagogies. As noted, we endeavor to create spaces that value experiential knowledges, question hegemonic ideals, and center the most affected (Dei, 1996; Alexander, 2006). This means that when teaching courses on migration, we set the stage for our respective classes by situating borders as "open wounds" on the land and peoples around them (Anzaldua, 1987). We approach these topics with critical thinking and hope as means of transgression (hooks, 1994). That is, while we highlight that borders are enactments of violence, we highlight that they are also human constructs and we center the hope of projects to imagine and materialize their erosion (Paik, 2020; Walia, 2021).

It is important to note that we, as faculty members, and our respective students, are situated very differently socially and geographically as well as in terms of the current educational landscape. Paloma teaches at a regional university in Southern California in a semester schedule (California State University, San Bernardino). Francisco teaches in a liberal arts college in Michigan, operating in the quarter system (Kalamazoo College). Our campuses are both located a 2-hour drive from international borders, though they are taken up by the nation in completely different ways: one as a site of danger and requiring continuous surveillance given the presence of racialized (read: dangerous) others and the other as a space dividing two friendly neighbors who share relative safety through their establishment as white settler states. Both of these locations experience significant patrolling by immigration enforcement. Southern California is a primary space within the American imaginary where undocumented migrants live, and Michigan, given its proximity to the Canadian border (within 100 miles), provides the Border Patrol the ability to function virtually without limits. Paloma's students are primarily first-generation, racialized, from the local area, with many having immigration experiences in their families. Francisco's students come from across the country and span a broad diversity across race, class, and immigration experiences/histories. Both classes were primarily composed of students of color, enrolled few international students, and most students identified as women.

During the summer of 2020, we began to prepare our Fall 2020 courses. We had had some experience with remote teaching; however, we did not feel prepared to teach in this new modality. We both elected to teach synchronously. Paloma had taught asynchronously in the Spring of 2020 and had received feedback from her students about how alienated they felt not being able to interact with their peers in the ways they had face-to-face. Francisco had been on leave during the onset of the pandemic. While asynchronous teaching can be more accessible for students with internet connection issues as well as family and work responsibilities (Lederer, Hoben, & Gibson, 2020; Rodriguez-Planas, 2020; Soria et. al, 2020), we opted to prepare flexible synchronous courses with the goal of developing course communities.

Francisco's course *Immigrants and Exiles* focuses on the depictions, experiences, and limits of the concepts of immigration and exile. It pays particular attention to the methods of displacing populations across the globe and the resultant migratory patterns. Specifically, it tracks the social production of "illegality" (De Genova, 2002) as a global phenomenon that determines the politics of belonging across place and space. Further, it analyzes how differently positioned racialized, gendered, classed, queer, and trans bodies experience the boundaries of the nation. Paloma's course *Borders, Knowledges, and Identities* explores the production and reproduction of borders. While discussing physical/national borders, it focuses on how *bordering practices* operate in the world: how social, symbolic and physical borders affect social mobility and immobility, inclusion and exclusion, and how people interpret their social world, their identities, and resistance.

A primary goal for our respective classes was for students to understand the presence of multiple borders in everyday life and the ways that language about the physical U.S.-Mexico border seeps into national logics. We wanted students to collectively recognize the ways borders are present and affect some people while simultaneously appearing invisible to those who hold the power to navigate them. We also intended to examine the intersectional systems of oppression that inform bordering as a central aspect of the nation-building project that discursively employs immigration status as a mechanism to produce citizens and deportable populations through illegalization, and materially utilizes the threat of deportation as a means of exploitation and violence.

The collaboration

Developing the collaboration meant employing intentionality in how we interacted within and across our courses. Thus, it had various scaffolded layers. We worked together to design three different assignments that would 1) produce introspection regarding personal knowledges of borders and bordering practices, 2) analyze how media frames the ways borders are presented, and 3) share introspective ideas through a paired-interactive assignment for students to discuss how different borders and migration experiences had been discussed in their respective course. In this way, assignments took into account multiple subjectivities and centered the power differentials inherent in discussions about citizenship. Student collaborations occurred through a shared virtual platform (Padlet, see below) that hosted discussions and input as well as through one-on-one interactions across the classes. We also had a collaborative conversation at the end of the course.

Storymaps

The first assignment asked students to create a story layered onto a map. Students used the web resource storymap.knightlab.com to build their stories. The software works like a storybook, where one can flip the pages and see the story move across different geographical spaces. The assignment built the groundwork for our goal of having students connect their and their family's experiential

knowledge to course content. It asked students to present an autoethnographic story linking their relationship to borders and/or migration to course content. Pratt (1991) defines autoethnography as "text[s] in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (p. 35). These representations emerge out of "contact zones," that is, encounters, or relationships of power, that construct people and communities in particular ways (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Our students exist within these contact zones with varying relationships to power and privilege. The process of locating oneself within contact zones therefore demands an interrogation of social location and subjectivity. To model autoethnographic writing on borders, we shared a co-written text detailing our bordered experiences with students (Villegas and Villegas 2019). The text discusses our experience growing up and attending college undocumented, our decision to leave the U.S. to pursue doctoral studies in another country and the 10-year ban barring our return to the U.S. While there is significant literature on the experiences of undocumented college students, we included ours so students could see the ways our subjectivities and social location related to course content.

We collaborated on the Storymap assignment instructions and tutorials, building on an assignment Paloma has developed and assigned for several years and across different contexts: with precariously documented students (Villegas, 2018) and university undergraduates in the U.S. and Canada (https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/immigrantscarborough/importance-storytelling). For their Storymap, students could focus and frame their relationship(s) to migration and borders however they chose. Given the possibility of students' personal vulnerabilities and the resultant potential risks, we emphasized agency in curating and narrating stories (i.e., sharing sensitive content about themselves, their families and/or communities). We emphasized that Storymap is an online platform and if they did not want to use it, they could submit an alternative format. We were particularly attuned to this given our own experience having been undocumented college students and knowing that some of our students could be undocumented or part of mixed-status families. We offered Paloma's Storymap as an example, explaining that she chose not to include her current or previous immigration status in the Storymap (at the time of teaching the course, she had H1B visa status) despite having openly discussed it during class (https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/765ff33fec4e8ba892f4350d01d24146/my-relationship-to-migration/index.html).

We also emphasized that all students had connections to borders and asked them to reflect on those connections given the U.S. history as a white settler state. At the same time, while the class focused on borders and migrants, we were wary of the ideology of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants, particularly the ways that it inherently dismisses the histories and presence of Indigenous peoples. Rather, we hoped the assignment also demanded recognition that colonialism imposes borders across Indigenous peoples' lands. This was particularly important

to emphasize given the ways some histories of migration and racialization are more visible than others. It was also a way to push students to think through their relationships to borders when they could not identify recent immigration experiences in their families.

Some Storymaps focused on creating an emotive archive, which historian Ana Rosas (2020) describes as the curation of a record of the complicated experiences, images, and memories immigrant families face. The Storymap platform allows students to upload images, and some students included photographs of themselves and their families. One important outcome for students is the opportunity to connect with family members and learn information about their genealogy. They can also share their Storymap with family after it is finished. In this way, the Storymap can be seen as a collective process of recording local, often subjugated knowledges and histories.

Families are complicated institutions and we recognize that some students may not have wanted to discuss those relationships in a course assignment. For that reason, as mentioned above, the assignment was designed broadly, for students to have the option of discussing borders without sharing a family history. Those students discussed relationships to borders and migration in their communities. Their storymaps focused on policies and practices. For instance, one student focused on policies providing access to drivers' licenses for undocumented migrants. Another student discussed their experience as a census worker in immigrant communities. This was particularly salient at the time of the course since the nation was grappling with proposals to exclude undocumented immigrants from the census and the student discussed how this affected their work. Finally, another discussed feeling like a gatekeeper when having to engage in immigration verification at their job. The broad "relationship to borders and migration" prompt also encouraged students to think of themselves as embedded in communities.

In sum, through the Storymap assignment, students reflected on their bordered experiences and, to some extent, connected with their peers digitally despite the social isolation in place during the pandemic. It was a productive starting point towards our goal of students engaging in critical analysis and reflection. They analyzed how their personal lives and social context were related to course readings, particularly the construction of borders and how their logics are re/produced within the nation. Students connected their experiences to current events, visual representations of migration and borders and on the politics of storytelling, including the ways that borders and migrants were employed in political rhetoric during the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Analyzing Media Representations

The second assignment used a different online platform to construct a communal message board for both classes. We utilized padlet.com to curate a gallery of recent immigration and border images (photographs published in news stories, cartoons, memes etc.). Specifically, we asked students to identify an image and draw from course theories to analyze the discourse presented. Because images are meant to elicit a sense of shared understanding, we asked students to consider the assumptions made regarding the process of migration, migrants themselves, and the "impact" of migration on the nation, alongside the prescribed action suggested or demanded. We employed a common phrase to contextualize the assignment and asked students: "If a picture is worth a thousand words, what is your image telling us? How is it forming an understanding of the situation and the necessary response?" While each course assigned different texts, for this assignment, we both assigned a chapter from Leo Chavez's (2001) book *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation.*

Students were directed to look at online media representations of migration and any text attached to them. We developed one shared, password-protected, Padlet site for both courses. On the site, each student contributed an image, short 300-word analysis, and discussion question for their peers to answer. Then, a week later, we asked students to respond to questions from their peers in the other class. This facilitated a sense of shared experience and discussion across the two classes with some students engaging in a continuous back and forth dialogue. The process allowed students to directly contribute to each other's learning, produced meaningful discussion on the ways to interpret specific images, and gave students insight into the discussions occurring in the other class.

Given the continuous preoccupation with migration by government officials and the media, students did not have trouble finding images or material to examine. For example, one student identified a photograph of primarily white people utilizing what the student described as "patriotic" imagery to demand the removal of undocumented migrants and the building of a border wall. In this image, one can see various people holding American flags and images of Uncle Sam alongside red, white, and blue posters describing migrants as threats, demanding that the government consider "America first," and calling for a further militarized border. The student described the ways that the colors and flag imagery served to determine protestors' belonging to the nation and non-belonging of peoples crossing the Mexico-US border. They also analyzed the way the symbols promoted a nativist stance and, drawing on course discussions of settler colonialism, how claims to build a border wall invisibilized the fact that they were occurring on stolen land. Finally in their questions to the two classes, they asked:

> Will these people accept immigrants who 'assimilate' to American culture? Do they actually want immigrants to assimilate or just leave the country? What does it mean to assimilate to American culture?[1]

The questions prompted responses about the ways that race serves to define non-white communities as 'others' regardless of immigration status. Furthermore, the student promoted a rich examination of formal/legal and civic citizenship and its relationship to race. They recognized that although race mediates the availability to citizenship, we cannot dismiss the value of the latter, particularly given the presence of deportability and its impact on undocumented communities. This analysis produced a greater

understanding of differential citizenship within the nation for peoples who shared permanent immigration status while highlighting the consequence of being illegalized and deemed deportable by the state. Finally, it problematized the idea of assimilation as a desirable end goal (rather than as a rupture from a sense of self and community).

Another student analyzed an image describing the normalization of a militarized border. They began their post by writing:

> *The Atlantic* magazine's September 2018 [issue] displaces the commonly tweaked figure of the Statue of Liberty with a weathered nickel statue of an ICE agent on the pedestal…The nationally identified symbol of a "welcoming America" so considerably large from the "outsider" that it must now be replaced by a colossal status of an ICE agent.

The student connected Chavez's (2001) work on national grand narratives, where he outlines media discourses presenting migrants as "threats," with De Genova's (2013) concept of the border spectacle, a performative process of making borders hyper visible, to argue that:

> The compositional elements employed like ICE agent's attire, the usage of an impending-doom like background, and expressions such as "immigration crisis" all weave in-and-out of the migrant threat discourse and become materialized. However, in excluding the representation of any racialized migrant bodies on the cover, the migrant is framed as that which is already known and ascribed to ominously represent the "national threat."

The student was particularly adept at analyzing the imagery utilized to represent the ideas of a nation at risk. Furthermore, they invested significant attention on how the image of the "other" was not necessary as the creators assumed a shared understanding that those deemed as not belonging would simultaneously present a danger to the nation.

The two submissions illustrated different aspects of bordering and the implications for migrants, particularly those who are undocumented. The pervasive narrative demanding assimilation while not recognizing the ways that race plays into ideas of non-belonging, alongside the ideas of the need to militarize the border to produce safety, were presented alongside images depicting the separation of families, child detention centers, and loss of life at the border. Placing these narratives in a single platform allowed students to visually engage with their peers while recognizing the discourses emanating about the border.

One unforeseen contention that arose was a student taking exception to a broad question by their peer regarding the legitimacy of incarcerating migrants (the student asked a yes/no question about whether the state had the "right" to hold migrants in detention). As the instructors, we understood that the student who posted the question was trying to "be analytical" by teasing out the concept of national sovereignty and analyzing its parameters, particularly who has the power to determine belonging and presence in the nation through citizenship categories,

including detention and expulsion. At the same time, their question, perhaps initially considered solely in abstract terms, produced an affective response from students with closer proximity to border politics. In such students' minds, the question of legitimacy discounted the materiality of violence produced through displacement, removal, and detention. In short, what was initially framed as an "innocent" conceptual question was received as a breach of trust and callous disregard for those most affected by migration policy. Similar to the study of race, students who are aware or experience the consequences of illegalization are highly surprised at how their peers can proclaim to not know (or demonstrate outright innocence) when they inhabit a social location imbued with higher access to power (Leonardo, 2004). Navigating these tensions while maintaining the trust of students is important. We teach students to examine *how* processes of illegalization occur in society. But we are also very explicit that these processes, like racism, heteropatriarchy, and other systems of oppression, are real. And, that our goal in analyzing them is to intervene and disrupt them. While we had experience facilitating such conversations, the pandemic made the process a bit more difficult.

Cross-course Interactions

Finally, the last assignment paired students with a peer from the other class and asked them to informally interview each other. This assignment was meant to mimic informal group work within a classroom. Students were invited to ask each other about how they understood borders, if their ideas differed to those they had prior to starting the class, and if so, what had made borders more visible.

Students were randomly assigned a partner, though as a result of differing class sizes, we developed two groups composed of three students. While mathematically we could have kept all groups as pairs, it would have meant a pairing from the same course and it was important for us to foster cross-course conversations.

The course collaboration culminated with an open invitation for Francisco's students to join a session of Paloma's class in November 2020. We chose Paloma's class because Francisco's was held at 8 am EST, a time less accessible to students on the West Coast. While not all students were available to attend the session due to scheduling conflicts, it was a great way for students to meet each other as well as for us, as instructors, to meet them. And the conversation brought up important insights from students who spoke about their experiences in the class as well as their political work and immigration expertise. For instance, during that time we were unsure about how vaccination availability would be determined, specifically undocumented immigrants' eligibility to testing, medical support, and vaccine "passports." However, students brought their community knowledge to bear and discussed immigrants' experiences in Michigan and California.

During our classes and in course evaluations, students for the most part remarked that they enjoyed meeting someone from another class (and often living in a different geographic region). For example, students had the following

to say in their course evaluations. Student 1 mentioned the link between course content and their lived experience:

> The subject matter of this course was highly in tune with current events which made the course a lot more of an academic reality because a lot of the readings were informing a lot of the events that were occurring in the nation. I think it's essential.

Student 2 discussed appreciating the ways the curricular design (assignments and course delivery) came together:

> This course was challenging, but not unreasonably or to a fault. The majority of the articles were really really good. The Storymap, image assignment and Padlet posts, and interview with another student all required [us] to consider issues from multiple perspectives, and these different ways of engaging were probably my favorite part of this course, and go to show the effort that was put into considering this course.

Finally, Student 3 discussed something many of our students have asked us across our years of teaching: now what? They connected the link between course content and lived experience to a sense of how affected individuals enact change, and hopefully, how they can insert themselves in modes of transformation:

> This class required the most effort out of my classes this [term], and I think that effort has paid off. I know more about immigration as a phenomenon, why the immigration system has evolved the way it has, the purpose of immigration restrictions, and how people resist inhospitable environments.

Informally, students also commented on how the collaboration allowed them to discuss each other's classes, readings, and comprehension of the material. Furthermore, through the process of describing concepts, they could provide additional nuance to their understanding as well as discuss how they might operationalize them in a larger writing assignment. The conversation also gave students a chance to get to know a bit about the college experience of other students, and how they were negotiating the pandemic. Many discussed feeling a sense of collectivity despite their universities being so far away. Since we, as siblings, speak about each other in our classes and students read our written work, it also gave them a chance to discuss their experiences with us. However, the process was not without difficulties. Students were often in different time zones and had to negotiate each other's busy schedules, including work and family responsibilities, to meet. Internet connections were also not always ideal.

Lessons Learned

As we reflect on this experience, we have identified a few lessons learned. They center around our teaching the courses virtually during the pandemic with the goal of improving student engagement, the collaboration process, and our focus on borders. While the move to online learning was a minor inconvenience in comparison to the damage the pandemic has caused, it still presented a challenge. Given our respective institutional locations, where teaching in close

proximity is highly valued, the pandemic not only laid bare many of the present inequities in higher education and society at large, but also prevented many of our pedagogic strengths.

Specifically, the transition to online learning removed one of the most useful skills we have as professors, the ability to invite informal engagement without the need to raise virtual hands, forgetting to unmute, or stressing about overtaxed internet connections. For us, therefore, online classes severely limited the availability of community-making within the classroom. We tried to emphasize communal engagement through our collaborations and assignment choices, designing assignments that invited students to participate where they were: literally in terms of their physical relationship to borders, metaphorically in relation to their social location and subjectivity, as well as digitally, given the shift to online platforms. The use of online platforms, chats, and breakout rooms provided an additional layer of pedagogic flexibility and community engagement.

In retrospect, to produce more robust spaces of communal engagement, we realized that we should introduce students to each other earlier in our respective terms. This could lead to increased trust from students and a greater sense that they were forging more sustained relationships. One issue however, was that Paloma's term began in August and Francisco's in September, so aligning assignment due dates was difficult.

Another aspect of student engagement involved sharing students' assignments with each other. While we value traditional writing assignments as a tool to learn and share ideas, we were wary of the ways these assignments, given their often private practice, could further feelings of isolation among students. For this reason, the Padlet image assignment was intentionally designed as a virtual repository shared across classes. At the same time, to respect students' privacy, we did not share students' Storymaps across classes. Students in Paloma's class shared their Storymap links with each other and provided feedback as part of their assignment (those who opted to submit an alternative assignment did not share with their peers). Francisco's students did not share their Storymaps. We consider this a pedagogic choice informed by our readings of our classes and potential concerns about student vulnerabilities. We would not change this, particularly given that some students chose to submit alternate assignments to avoid disclosing personal information with their peers.

We are often told that each generation is more comfortable with technology than the last, and while it may hold some truth, we cannot subscribe to it wholeheartedly. Technology-related accessibility became a bigger issue during the pandemic. Thus, we recognize that asking students to learn multiple online platforms to submit their assignments might be a lot. While we used three platforms, Storymap, Padlet, and our respective Learning Management System, students were also experiencing demands to learn new software and virtual platforms as part of their other classes. It was crucial to us to limit the possibility of overwhelming students who were already managing significant stress, so we recorded tutorials for each platform,

provided examples to students, and increased our availability, primarily through flexible office hours (though we understand these tasks can increase faculty workload).

While we value the ways technology offered multiple methods of engaging with students, it was not always our friend, and technological mishaps can occur while discussing heavy material. Instead of shying away from that, we endeavor to open spaces to have difficult conversations together. To do this across both classes involved trust. Specifically, trust in each other that we would care for our respective students, and an intentional approach to develop trust within our classrooms. In that way, while learning on the fly, we sought to be honest about that process with students and treat each other with care.

We would not necessarily have done such a collaboration with someone else. Therefore, we are hesitant to promote that such collaborations can or should be mass-produced or institutionalized. However, our collaborative approach was intentional in countering practices that seek to individualize and alienate students. Such practices became heightened during the pandemic, with calls for the mass surveillance of students through exam panopticon programs. Instead, we advocate cultivating hope and trust across students, programs, and potentially universities.

The pandemic also increased instructors' workload, often with little recognition or institutional support. While some institutions offered to freeze or extend tenure clocks (Weissman, 2020), a large proportion of instructors in higher education are not tenure-track. And, even for those who are tenure-track, a temporary freezing, which defers the benefits of tenure and promotion, cannot repair the time and energy invested in teaching and researching in new modalities during a global disaster. In this context, how might cross-university collaborations be counted by university evaluation committees? Such collaborations require greater effort from instructors and while we do not want to fall into transactional ideas of developing teaching practices to receive "credit" from evaluation committees, we have thought about how to present our work to such stakeholders. It is difficult to distill our risk taking, or to describe our strategies, given expectations of condensed summaries and student evaluation tables and statistics. This signals more about evaluation of teaching effectiveness practices than anything. However, our student evaluations and informal conversations with students clearly pointed to students appreciating our efforts to provide different perspectives, collaboration experiences, and human connection.

The pandemic presented a space to consider additional aspects to the study of immigration, borders, and im/mobility. While teaching this course we saw the designation of migrant workers as essential while still considered deportable, the ongoing warehousing of refugees in detention centers or in makeshift camps in Mexico, and as mentioned above, amidst an election cycle that furthered the vilification of undocumented migrants. We also heeded important critiques raised by undocumented migrants about the prolonged social distancing and immobility they experience due to a lack of comprehensive immigration reform, a process that was occurring well before the pandemic, and that we have experienced at different points in our lives. While our two courses cannot not fix these large, complex problems, our students critically examined how power structures defined and determined citizenship, the resultant consequences of migrant illegalization, and the ways that borders further colonial ideals that produce dehumanized "others."

Finally, we reflect on three valuable aspects of our teaching collaboration. First is the cross/inter-institutional aspect of the project. Co-teaching often occurs through faculty in the same institution, though in some places it can be quite rare. Connecting students to peers in another institution and having them share their experiences related to borders adds a layer of nuance to the focus on students' experiential knowledge as pedagogical practice. The approach also exposes students to a diversity of power dynamics and experiences related to border and bordering practices that are seldom discussed or understood by those who are not directly affected. Yes, reading texts, watching videos and other practices can also fulfill that objective, and we do all of those in our classes. However, this added experience among peers from different institutions adds another dimension. Second, we paid close attention to the politics of space and where our universities are located. We recognized our universities are situated within a couple hours' drive from national borders, but with completely different narratives attached to them. Thus, we emphasized how our locations served a pedagogic starting point in our classes. Finally, our personal and professional experiences are intertwined with borders and bordering practices, and we shared those experiences with students, when appropriate, as points of departure for them to think about their experiences with borders and to analyze the effects of those borders in the media and other institutions. In sum, we intentionally produced a shared curriculum and pedagogy with the aims to promote hope and transformative action.

Endnotes

1. We received permission to share this from the student quoted, while maintaining confidentiality. We were unable to receive similar permission from students who responded in the Padlet. This is also partly caused by the pandemic as many of our students were seniors and it was more difficult to remain in touch.

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Francisco Villegas is the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership Associate Professor of Sociology at Kalamazoo College. His work is focused on migration, race, social movements, and bureaucracy. He is currently working on projects related to maneuvering local governments as a space of possible support for undocumented migrants.

Paloma E. Villegas is an interdisciplinary artist and associate professor of sociology at California State University San Bernardino. Her research and teaching examine the production of migrant illegalization Mexico, the U.S. and Canada and its intersections with borders, race, gender, nation-building, and class.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Racism in Argentine Higher Education: Proposals for an Inclusive Foreign Language Teacher Training

by Candelaria Ferrara and Daniela Peez Klein

the neighbors were
suspicious of her hairstyle

LORNA SIMPSONFLIPSIDE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHY COMMITTEE, 2007. © LORNA SIMPSON

There is a kind of obsession with rationality that does not allow us to consider any other possibility…

- Rodolfo Kusch, *América Profunda*

We are language teachers trained in teacher training colleges in Argentina. During our educational trajectories as students, we had a hunch about the way that the language and cultural studies approach was non-plural and inequitable and needed to be revised. What we could see at that time, which was later confirmed to us after we graduated, is that in the teacher training field there is a lack of diversity in many ways. At first sight, for instance, when looking at the institutional human landscape one can see a clear phenotype distinction: teachers and students or institutional management staff are mainly white, while those doing manual labor such as cleaning or technical maintenance are not. In terms of scholarly citation, most of the authors cited are written and published in the so-called legitimized knowledge centers, and primarily represent standard academic knowledge, which usually leaves behind the locally produced knowledges. Such a limited diversity in bibliography excludes the multiplicity of languages and cultures that exist on the ground, and foregrounds prestigious and recognized discourse. If language and cultural variations are included, they appear in a hierarchical manner, as folklore – that is, as unauthorized popular knowledges. When culture is addressed, it is portrayed in a general, non-reflexive, and non-critical manner, and indigenous and local cultures are not approached with the complexity that is usually brought by the humanities or social and cultural sciences.

All this maintains a higher education system that has traditionally produced, and still reproduces, an unjust social reality that is manifested in contemporary racism. Such a hierarchical educational structure generates exclusions and guarantees an unequal society. Consequently, it is necessary to develop strategies that link the field of higher education and diverse social groups.

The way we find racism in teacher training programs is twofold. First is omission, a certain blindness to difference, so that difference is never in focus. Second is the way in which everyone feels and behaves and assumes that the lack of plurality was natural. This lack of racial diversity in higher education still prevails and foreign language educational institutions are no exception.

Context

In Latin America, racism has been a problem since colonial times. Despite the construction of nation-states through an official discourse of citizenship that, in formal terms, establishes equality among people, the inequalities that link skin color and poverty are undeniable. According to Segato (2007), each country has its own unique configurations of race and racism, and this is also expressed in narrations (Fernández-Bravo, 2000) that from the 19th century on aggregate the populations in each national territory. If we consider the nation as an imagined political community (Anderson, 1993), the symbolic elements of the nation's construction almost inevitably result in exclusion. In fact, one of the dangers of a nation's image is that it is totalizing: it allows for little in the way of alternative narratives (Fernández-Bravo, 2000). In Argentina the narrative of the melting pot of races consists of an encounter between "criollos" (people who had Spanish and indigenous ancestors) and the arrival of immigrants from Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to this discourse of the melting pot of races that Adamovsky (2012) calls a myth, the mixture between a series of categories coming from the colony to indicate the appearance and social place of the person from the positions occupied by their parents (European immigrants, indigenous people, Africans, mestizos, pardos and other ethnic-racial categories of human classification in Spanish colonies in America) would result in only one of the components: the "whites." This narration would imply and sustain the division of racial categories as if the diversity of ethnic and racial differences had been erased or disappeared; there is no category of "mixed race," but rather people are assigned to, or aligned themselves with, a single ethnic or racial category. In order to avoid a description based on a negation, we have decided to create an analytical category to refer to this continent of "non-whites '' and name it as *marrones* [the browns]. We have only one category; once so much mixing has taken place that these are not distinct categories anymore. This does not imply that those that we are including in this category belong to a socially recognized ethnic group, but that serves the purpose of giving visibility to historically silenced social groups in the discriminatory Argentine context. Our wish is to be able to refer to these multiple groups in a clear way that does not negate the fact of its diversity and multiplicity.

The invisibility of the *marrones* is seen in the omission of these communities through different state practices, discourses, and instruments in the intersection between society and state. As an example, in the foundational narratives of the establishment of Argentina, in the first censuses and in the national history taught to children, indigenous Argentinians are erased. As a result, the *marrones* have been continually displaced from material and symbolic life and have been placed in a subordinated position, forced to be in a lower position outside of the hegemonic due to historical exclusion from multiple essential levels/zones in society (education, labor conditions, participation in media, to mention a few). That is, *marrones* have been "subalternized".

In the context of this essay, "subalternized" invokes both race and class, both skin color and poverty. The reasons for this are historical and anchored in an approach to racism that traces the devastating effects of those who have endured centuries of postponement, exclusion, and contempt.

In this regard, we emphasize that the racism that has effected exclusion since colonial times has, in contemporary times, spread and thus "shifted its focus from the biological to emphasize the cultural and the national;" today in Argentina racist discrimination is "based on socio-cultural grounds supported by physical characteristics" so that racial

difference is reinforced by poverty as a force for social and cultural exclusion (Mouratian, 2015). There is a relationship between darker skin and lower social position (Adamovsky, 2012b), which configures a sort of social circulation map with invisible lines in which each subject/community knows where it belongs as it configures specific social dynamics about what is possible or not, according to this intersection between race and class.

As regards state educational policies, the subaltern groups have had no direct appearance/determination/influence of any kind. As students, they rarely go beyond the primary and secondary levels, and are almost always learners rather than teachers. In higher education, this erasure corresponds to the total or partial absence of people from indigenous communities, those of African descent, *marrones*, and people in vulnerable social conditions who do not necessarily acknowledge their non-European past.

We propose that these marginalized groups be given space to claim what Black feminist Djamila Ribeiro has called *Lugar de Fala*, or a locus or place of speech (Ribeiro, 2019) – that is, their languages, epistemologies, knowledge, learning modes - within the space of universities and Institutes of Higher Education (hereinafter HEIs). This is the debt civil society owes, as the state has, since the 1990s, advanced equal rights in the legal system (Mouratian, 2015) but has been nevertheless delaying for centuries the recognition and actual implementation of those rights (Mato, 2020).

Racism in the Argentinean Educational System and Its Implications for Higher Education

In accordance with Law 24.521, Argentine higher education comprises public and private 1) universities and university institutes and 2) HEIs. Although foreign language training in Argentina is available only at HEIs, most teacher training institutions belong to this system. Teacher training is partly similar to that of the small liberal arts colleges (SLACs) of the North in several aspects: the curricular focus on the liberal arts, a student body that has completed secondary education, and a lower enrollment than other undergraduate programs (such as the traditional university programs for law, medicine, etc.). In addition, the faculty's primary focus is on teaching – although their work also includes attending conferences, publishing, and field specialization – with less space for research. In general, these teaching spaces are institutions with a small number of students (who may often have jobs as they are attending the college) and a close student-teacher relationship.

Given that these colleges train people who occupy places of leadership, power of action, and control (Mato, 2019), the issues of race and racism are central at these institutions. People trained in such institutions tend to be instructed in and reproduce the exclusionary matrix that sustains inequalities. In the specific case of teacher training, we adhere to the thesis of Sanchez & Navarro (2014), who argue that:

a campus with a strong colonial imprint materialized in the distribution of Eurocentric theories that normalized practices, and standardized the displacement of the body in the institutional space, with regimes of truth about the pacifying and integrating function of the school, which are rarely analyzed, recontextualized and signified as a way for new developments. (p.156)

Among the difficulties pointed out by the Initiative for the Eradication of Racism in Higher Education (UNESCO) regarding the obstacles to access for communities that perceive themselves as indigenous and/or of African descent, we find a number of analogues in the Argentinian experience. Subalternized students are disadvantaged by the distance of their home communities from educational centers, the complexity of moving away from their community bonds, and the hostility they receive both in the curricular exclusion of and disrespect for their cultures and lifestyles in higher education as well as situations of direct discrimination within the institutional space. These same conditions have repercussions for the rest of the subalternized groups for whom the sphere of higher education is neither welcoming nor familiar as each culture has a point of view and a peculiar conception of time. As a result, some students have trouble once they are not used to the temporal inflexibility of the university schedule, its forms of communication, organization and interaction. Institutions of higher education almost never imagine that some students do not connect to a "general epistemology" that structures the academic environment. In other words, higher education does not allow for the recognition that "the diversity of the world is inexhaustible, there is no general theory that can organize all this reality" (Santos, 2006, p.32).

From our space of action in teacher training in foreign languages of European origin, we support the task of escaping the racial and cultural reductionism already at work and thus give a place from which to speak [*Lugar de Fala*] -- and listen to –subalternized diverse groups of people including for instance students and local communities in programs and physical spaces. We also support building networks between teaching institutions and the larger community. Following Rocha's (2021) understanding of this "place of speech" we aim at:

a place within the discourse which is not restricted to the sequencing of words and personal experiences. It is a painful and powerful place because it is primarily epistemic and reflective about the subject's occupation within a social locus. The "place of speech" is to understand the social conditions that constitute a group and what personal experiences you share as a member of this group. It is thus to understand structures and experience them in different ways.

It is urgent that institutions that want to be democratic and respectful of human rights embrace pluralism. The universalizing of experience and the folklorization and "encyclopedization" that flattens and calcifies the diversity of subjects and groups damage the possibilities of respectful coexistence.

Sociohistorical Notes That "Shape" Racist Ideology and Discrimination in Higher Education

In the pursuit of progress in the life of higher education, a predominant positivist epistemology (Santos, 2006) has reinforced discriminatory and exclusionary educational practices. There seems to be no place for those who have been relegated to a subaltern position in the content, in the programs, and in the required texts and among the people who make up the educational community. In addition, critical and reflective positions on the very conditions of knowledge construction and study tend to be discouraged within institutions of higher learning.

The curricula of foreign language teacher training programs that we work with, which train students to be teachers of Portuguese and English, do not escape the historical erasure of the subalternized. We understand that "the foreign" is an inherent part of these language teaching programs, and yet these programs are strikingly monocultural and Eurocentric. The possibility of enunciating and including other knowledge built from a local or regional perspective is missing, which results in its monocultural, Eurocentric character. If studying pedagogy of a foreign language inevitably brings interculturality into play, we must then broaden the notions of culture, promote curiosity, and learn about ourselves, our surroundings, and others. Interculturality will not be, then, isolated to locations outside the national border, but made visible in the Latin American context, which is inseparable from daily life.

Teacher training presents programs and curricula as texts that aim to train future teachers by means of a set of legitimate knowledge: for instance, a standardized, "correct" version of Spanish, English, or Portuguese. Regarding the monocultures identified by Santos in his *Sociology of Absences* (2006), we find here the monoculture of knowledge and rigor that eliminates other knowledges, through an epistemicide or the systematic destruction of alternative ways of knowing, annihilating other kinds of knowledge. These programs more or less explicitly establish regimes of truth and legitimacy that organize life in higher education, and which trainees will take with them into the classroom. The curriculum regulates the training process and constrains the dynamics of exchange and study in the teaching profession. As Sanchez & Navarro (2014) point out, in teacher training ideas of exchange, listening, and inclusion of students' experiences coexist with a final hierarchical adjustment that decrees that exams and written work are the only elements that are valid and important.

Languages are taught in a Eurocentric way, limiting the "legitimate" expression of these languages to their European origins rather than their expressions in the Global South. Most of the reading material presents authors from the North, especially when it comes to teaching methodology, and local and decolonial voices have no place in language teacher training programs. It is not a matter of excluding the theoretical corpus produced in other latitudes, but of offering ourselves the possibility of centering ourselves in the world maps of knowledge, of being able to build local knowledge. Even more, the teaching of these languages tends to exclude indigenous and other expressions. As a result, we need to reject this excluding perspective that does not recognize our own Latin American reality.

We need to give a voice and space to those *marrones* who have been relegated to subalternity in the human landscape, in the contents, programs, and reading materials. We believe that service-learning (SL) could allow for a critical and reflective construction of diverse knowledge in the search for progress in higher education.

Service-learning as a Proposal for Inclusive Foreign Language Teacher Training

We have so far said that in English and Portuguese language classes in higher education there is a predominantly Eurocentric instruction and what we need is diversification, opening up discussions about racial and class differences. In this section we argue that service-learning projects can help us in that sense. We intend to decolonize the curriculum and raise awareness about the challenges marginalized communities face by addressing issues that are important to our students, the Latin American community, and the Global South. Language programs can be more porous to the local environment: the society excluded from this level of education (as students, teachers, and beneficiaries in extension courses), the programs and curricula that do not include research with the community itself, and the professional practices as a concrete bridge.

Service-learning can be a tool to connect spaces that at the same time promotes several actions that are oriented to the democratization of access and distribution of knowledge. CLAYSS (Latin American Center for Solidarity Service-Learning, a leading and international reference institution) defines SL as:

> Solidarity service is aimed at attending in a limited and effective way to real and felt needs with a community, and not only for it, with the active protagonist role of students from planning to evaluation, and the intentional planning of learning content connected with the solidarity activity. (Ochoa, 2014, p.9)

Throughout its books, texts, articles CLAYSS speaks of SL as experiences, practices, and programs that simultaneously address social and learning objectives, offering students opportunities to put into play not only the values and attitudes of solidarity, but also specific knowledge and competencies that are valuable for their training. In these experiences, the target groups of the practice are simultaneously the population served *and* the students, and focus is at the same time placed on the development of knowledge and on the improvement of the living conditions of specific communities.

Solidarity service-learning in higher education has spread widely in Latin America. Its most direct antecedents are the university "Extension" movement and the Argentine University Reform of 1918, which promoted the development of social action, especially from public universities (De Gortari Pedroza, 2005). Solidarity in the

Extension area within HEIs has a long tradition, especially fundraising, which has been a traditional practice as educational institutions try to contribute to solve the increasingly urgent problems of their communities. But the problem that arises in these cases is that the social intervention activities usually promoted by HEIs are not always connected to their teaching and research mission or to the potential of improving and enhancing the learning quality. At the same time, the teaching mission is aligned with the previously mentioned traditional transfer of monocultural and Eurocentric knowledge, mainly focused on the standard variety of the foreign language, and adhering to what foreign experts and books prioritize.

Considering the definition of service-learning and the above-mentioned issues related to HEIs we examine below a series of work proposals from the SL perspective that are oriented towards the inclusion of the *marrones*, in the physical and symbolic space constructed in higher education and in its overlapping contact with other possible and necessary knowledges. These can give place to what sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls an Ecology of Knowledge, "where scientific knowledge can dialogue with secular knowledge, with popular knowledge, with indigenous knowledge, with the knowledge of marginal urban populations, with peasant knowledge" (Santos, 2006, p.26). This perspective transgresses the tradition of teacher training in foreign languages and makes room for a *Lugar de Fala* [Speech Place] for the knowledge, ways, and voices of diverse groups, so necessary for a non-racist higher education.

Curricular Inclusion

It is imperative to rethink the ways in which we develop our syllabi and planning. Although we know much of the knowledge we need to share with students, it is not possible to know in advance with whom we will be working during the school year and what aspects, time organization, and content may need to be reformulated. From the SL perspective, it becomes necessary to dialogue with the community, in making the walls of what used to be the ivory tower of educational institutions more permeable. We must be open to allowing other knowledge, ideas, and experiences to pass through -- not only to go out into the community but also to let it in, so that what we learn in the community influences the way we teach and vice versa.

The linear and production-oriented temporality that prevails in our teacher training must coexist with other temporalities that empower and include students. We believe in working on other temporalities, following Santos's reflection on what he calls the ecology of temporalities:

The important thing is to know that although linear time is one, there are also other times. Peasants, for example, have very important seasonal times. [...] We must understand this ecology of temporalities in order to broaden contemporaneity, because what we did with metonymic rationality is to think that simultaneous encounters are not contemporary. The African or Latin American peasant can meet the executive of the World Bank: it is a simultaneous encounter, but not a contemporary one, because the Latin American or African peasant is "residual" and the executive is "advanced". The important thing, then, is to recognize that the peasant is in his own way as contemporary as the executive, and to eliminate the concept of residuality. For this we must let each form of sociability have its own temporality, because if I am going to reduce everything to linear temporality, I am ignoring all the other things that have a different logic from mine. (2006, pp.27-28)

Enabling future teachers to step out of the traditional classroom, involving students in real and concrete situations with people from areas other than HEIs by, for instance, tutoring children in foreign languages at elementary schools, interacting with immigrant adults at community centers, and contributing to professional agencies using languages for specific purposes could contribute to bringing linguistic and cultural diversity to their training. Honoring alternative temporalities could take place by making explicit the differences that emerge in each situation due to the features of each activity (time varies in a meeting/activity with children from primary school, or with an adult in a professional agency). Involving students in such varied situations and with different interlocutors could contribute to generating a map of the educational community with a receding exclusion zone.

It is necessary to include the epistemologies, knowledge, living modes, and narratives of those subalternized, both in the nation of origin (Argentine or other) and in the nation of the foreign language under study. This will require the direct involvement of those historically excluded, since it is not a matter of including content as an object of study, but of creating an ecology of knowledge that allows for co-construction among *subjects*. As an example, a frequent way in which history is taught in SLACs can be somewhat unifying/simplifying of the complexity inherent in the discipline, narrating a unique historiography, that of the victors (Benjamin, 2008), and from the point of view of the great deeds and "Heroes" (yes, in masculine and capital letters). We propose that we teachers contribute to students recovering those non-hegemonic voices not by teaching history from books, but instead by favoring onsite research strategies that could include the absent voices of those who were there and whose presence had an effect in history, but whose action has been erased. This could be achieved by establishing parallelisms between the students' own historical processes and the ones from the language being learned; teachers could organize exchanges with institutions and social groups such as NGOs from the foreign countries and even HEIs could facilitate visits to the countries for students to have real exchanges with the communities through embedded classes. To think about the relationship between the history of the target language-culture and one's own will also require broadening the sources and points of view we have. This is not only valid and applicable to disciplines other than history, such as foreign language or literature, but to interdisciplinary projects as well.

Service-learning could give students practical experience and the opportunity to address issues or problems that are important to them, to their community and the broader context. Communities that are outside the

educational sphere, not only those coming from the foreign language under study, but also the local community where the educational institution is located, could be invited to co-organize and participate in the creation of language exchanges, publications, festivals, and events, just to mention a few examples of projects in which these issues could be jointly addressed and communicated to the public, in which there could be an exchange with other organizations and social actors involved in shared pressing issues.

Communities Inclusion

Higher education can and needs to go out of its buildings and engage with the community it belongs to and for which students are being trained. The usual contact that HEIs have with the outside happens when, advanced in their career, future professionals are engaged in internships and residencies. Higher education institutions could have their students carry out practices and work to contribute not only to the training of future professionals, but also to contribute and give back to the general wellbeing through "genuine encounters, with the recognition and promotion of human rights, with reciprocal generosity and collective, intelligent work for a common cause" (Ferrara, 2021, p.14). HEIs need to advance in building new relationships between the educational community and the broader society. For this, SL could come in handy for the promotion of a dialogue with the community with which connections are established, and for joint actions that are designed allowing for the development of knowledge that would make more sense and be more effective for all the actors involved.

From the service-learning perspective, working with the community entails the establishment of collaborative networks. Therefore, broadening the scope of action towards the outside does not mean "reaching out to help" but rather developing a paradigm for social change based on institutional networks. An example of this could be a shared production of brochures that bring together stories of communities' practices, and translation of those stories, songs and poems in the construction of a written and/or oral, plural library. Acting in open and multicentric networks of dynamic exchanges would allow students and community members to maximize the potential of the resources that each one possesses and the creation of collective alternatives for providing visibility, addressing problems, or meeting needs. Thanks to the optimization of learning and the impact of members' participation, each group could be enriched through the multiple relationships they develop (Dabas, 2005). This open exchange of languages, epistemologies, knowledge, and learning modes could have a positive impact on the subalternized groups. It would make the atmosphere of higher education more welcoming and familiar, model counter-discourses/counter-practices for students, and challenge from inside racist ideology and its hegemonic ways of behaving and interacting. It would also improve the quality of education of those being trained for a more diverse and equitable knowledge development.

In line with SL, we suggest that foreign language training should establish horizontal associations in territorial networks, a type of collaboration that overcomes the traditional vertical hierarchical structures for collective construction in alliance with other institutions and organizations. Torres Carrillo (2006) states that:

> these associations contribute to the creation of popular inhabitants as social subjects, by strengthening their social and associative fabric, affirming cultural identities and creating new democratic political practices and subjectivities. (p.1)

An intercultural approach in HEIs enables inclusive and dynamic models of cultural diversity to allow for the passage of diverse forms of communication, organization, and interaction other than the traditional academicism. Community networks that allow for the HEIs curricula to be respectful of human rights and coexistence aim at shortening the distance (material and symbolic) between educational centers and community bonds, and reduce the hostility that those subalternized have historically received. These networks are intended to include, respect, and dialogue with the cultures and lifestyles of marginalized people:

> It is from these networks that we will find the collective construction that we need, with citizens with the capacity and responsibility to act and transform in an active, informed, and engaged way, generating a different mode of development driven by the desire to transform each other's living conditions. (Ferrara, 2021, p.77)

Mutual exchange proposals could include projects that promote opportunities for language exchanges in communities to learn more about indigenous appreciation of nature or diversified medicine practices that take up the traditional knowledge and advance towards Local Development (Vázquez Barquero, 2002). Osman & Petersen (2013) differentiate between service-learning as a charitable activity and service-learning as social change, the latter being related to a program of social justice proper to a society in which individuals and groups have unequal access to the opportunities and benefits generated socially. In order to address racism and discrimination the solidarity dimension should aim at promoting local development. This implies that good practices should include critical and reflexive diagnostic and reflection activities and the creation of collective and collaborative tasks between educational institutions and social and community organizations to jointly address structural issues that cannot be changed simply through the goodwill of a handful of students (Ierullo, 2017; Tapia & Ochoa, 2015).

Service-learning initiatives within language teacher training institutions could use territorial capacities (social, natural, technical, economic, institutional, and cultural) in the pursuit of sustainable development. Examples of projects that could be developed along this line would include: dissemination actions on human rights, creation of complaint mechanisms, or even the production, for example, of short films as awareness raising campaigns about the problems of racism, discrimination, and subalternity, or even the production and screening of socially engaged documentaries followed by discussions with the local community about diverse perspectives. Such community interventions incorporate the revaluation of local resources

(economic, social, cultural, political) in the search for answers to situations of inequality and injustice, from a perspective of collective construction with the objective of advancing towards socio-community welfare. Language teacher training courses can co-construct and/or actively participate in community spaces already in place and at the same time not only contribute to developing an awareness of the racial, cultural, and class differences in the local community but also introduce this issue about the countries that speak the languages being taught.

Proposals that do not separate theory from practice could include classes that take place directly in communal spaces in order to generate a gradual relationship of trust and familiarity. Students can carry out internships that enable and consolidate higher education learning at the same time that community centers help families in the area to organize family time and give children, youth, and adults access and contact with a foreign language and culture. It is key to understand that the objectives need to be adapted to each case and that teacher training should seek to establish respectful and lasting bonds with these communities.

Even if combating racism and classism in these institutions implies much more than what we propose, from our area of influence as teachers in HEIs we aim at deepening our work with the symbolic violence and contact with the outside world. The goal is to implement actions that tend to generate conditions of inclusion and sustained development with a positive impact on the traditionally subordinated population, favoring the strengthening of individuals and groups through the consolidation of social networks. The fact that an important part of the teacher training experience takes place in these areas opens the door to plural, reflective, and knowledge-producing teacher profiles. This way makes it possible for students to receive a richer education because their learning will not be limited to a single perspective on pedagogy and Eurocentric models of language instruction, but will construct knowledge that goes beyond the logic of a single academic and almost always external validation of knowledge.

Conclusions

After a brief overview of the historical peculiarities of racism and discriminatory practices in the territory that today makes up Argentina, we analyzed some aspects of higher education. Generally, higher education reflects the same invisibilization of the *marrones* and with it, of all that is non-white -- displaced from the legitimate places of knowledge. In an intersectional approach to contemporary racism, we understand these groups as an analytical category (rather than groups with a self-perceived identity) constructed in the overlap between skin color, social vulnerability, and ethnicity.

The active exercise of citizenship, focused on practice, incorporating rights and duties, overcoming the idea of the individual, and alluding to the community is a practice that needs to continue being developed in HEIs. It is possible to promote a high degree of participation of those who have been subalternized and of teachers and students passing through the doors of their institutions, broadening the

institutional framework of action and aiming at the development and exchange of knowledge through practical interventions in the community in a horizontal linkage that constitute a type of collaboration beyond academicism, for the collective construction in alliance with other institutions and organizations.

This paper is a reflection on our practices in the field of foreign language teaching of English and Portuguese, a field that does not escape the dynamics of the reproduction of racism. Faced with an exclusionary scenario and a higher education impregnated with monoculturalism, we have identified problems, difficulties, and elements that we think need to be reformulated. Finally, we propose lines of work to make our teacher training programs spaces for the construction of a better society.

We maintain that the SL proposal is a feasible path in the process of change that an anti-racist stance implies. So far, we have developed a few initial actions along this line and even if they did not actually mean significant modifications in decolonizing the curriculum, we are sure they will evolve into more concrete and impactful proposals. We think our project needs to take place to develop a better/less unfair education system and for this, we understand that we will need to coordinate not only with the broader community, but also with our peers, authorities, and students to concretize these proposals for a non-racist foreign language education in the future.

We, the higher education community, have the imagination and the required qualifications to generate and undertake these necessary changes. We need to encourage ourselves in the transgressive task of building a collaborative and pluralistic vision.

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Daniela Peez Klein (1984) is a professor of Portuguese as a foreign cultural language and holds a master's degree in Latin American literary studies. She teaches at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP) and at the Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Lenguas Vivas "Juan Ramón Fernández". She is part of the Promotional Project of Research and Development (IdIHCS, UNLP) that researches the relations of culture and society between Argentina and Brazil in the XX and XXI centuries and the PICT "Practices and cultural objects in Argentina and Brazil. A decolonial approach". With this research she has published articles in specialized journals and chapters in books published by the UNLP.

Candelaria Ferrara (1987) is the Regional Hubs Coordinator in Uniservitate, tutor of courses on service-learning in Spanish, English and Portuguese in the Latin American Center for Solidarity Service-Learning (CLAYSS)and teacher of Non-Formal/Popular Education in Universidad Nacional de Jujuy (UNJu). Fulbright Scholar in the United States (2011 and 2014) and specialist in English, Spanish, popular and lifelong learning as well as service-learning, currently studying the Masters in Humanities and Social Sciences in the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (UNQui).

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

On Complicity

by Bethany Ides
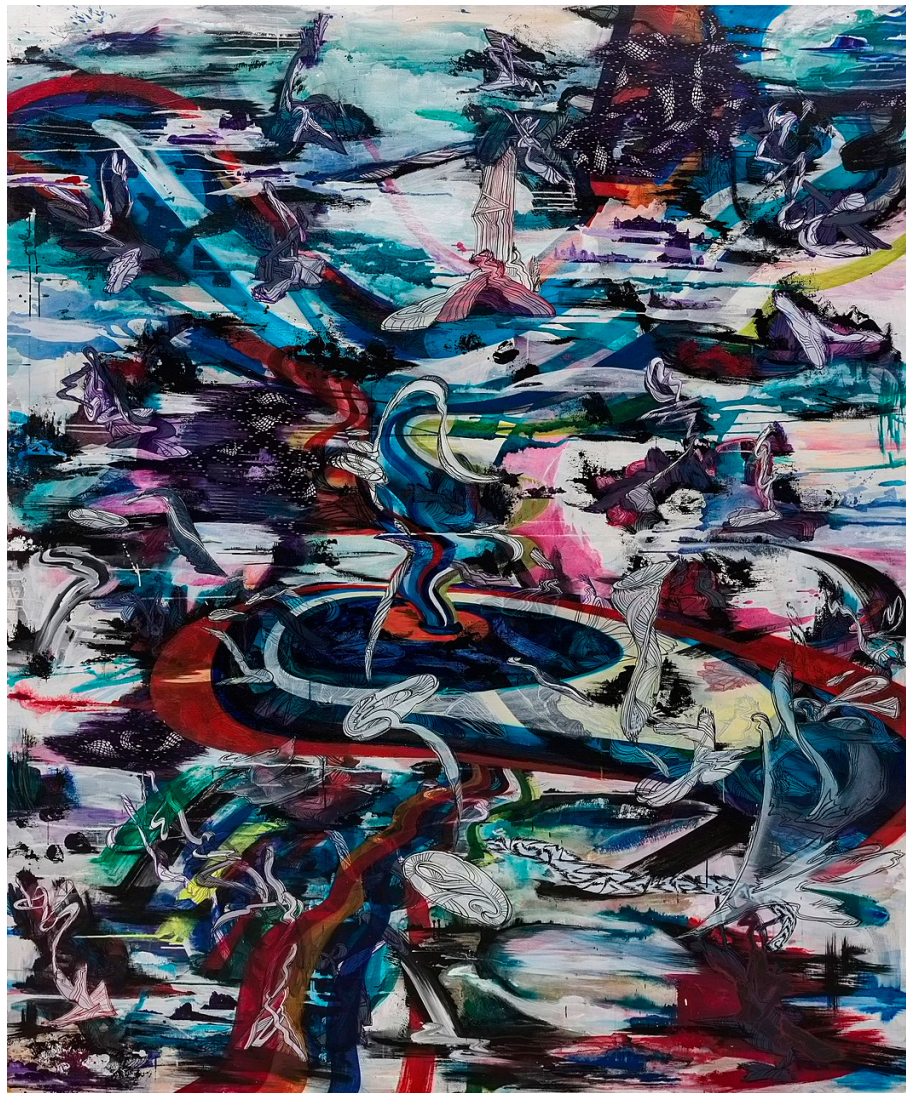
SULING WANG, CRYPTIC BUTTERFLY. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH A SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR'S COUNCIL FUND IN MEMORY OF ELAINE TERNER COOPER,. © SULING WANG

I used to play a game with students. After reading and discussing the "Docile Bodies" chapter from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* documenting the systematic and ubiquitous measurement and management of human movement practiced, produced, and enforced across the major institutions that organize modern life – institutions like hospitals and prisons and schools that condition and order individuation as a requirement for social life under capitalism – I would turn to the class and announce that the remainder of our scheduled meeting would be dedicated to "dismantling the structures of authority" present right there, in that space, right in that moment.[1] This game demanded of students that they not only conceive of their immediate context as changeable, but also hypothesize about latent and emergent hegemonies therein. In order to attempt to dismantle *present* structures of authority, students must consider how *non-apparent* structures may have produced the conditions of the current classroom. Further, they must interrogate these given conditions in order to understand how structures of authority are reproduced, even without consent or conscious corroboration. The game reconfigures the classroom as a socio-political obstacle course. Reading Foucault was just the warm-up.

From outside the doorway, I'd witness some students greet this challenge with delight while others appeared worried that it was somehow a trick. Often, a confident voice would emerge, encouraging everyone to start with the furniture. It is exciting to disrupt the furniture, that which is readily moveable and which no participant has any particular claim to or special feeling for. Keeping in mind my sole caveat, that the classroom remain accessible and fire-safe, students would find ways to reject the classroom's absorptive qualities, revealing its theatricality. Usually after 20 or 30 minutes of accelerated debate, the entire group would start to look flushed, breathless and wide-eyed. In the heat of heady investigation, every requisite seemed to reveal itself. And yet, there was no resolution; every knot was tied with strands that were themselves braided and snarled, an endless puzzle.

This game had an edge to it that might be called either optimistic, or cruel, or both. Even in reflecting on it now, I maintain a certain ambivalence about whether the effort I coaxed out of students in activities such as this was cynical, delusional, impractical, or whether to believe that what I witnessed was a group of people energizing vital and real senses for solidarity, mutuality, and political autonomy. This is the rub of acting complicitly. In order to engender possibilities for change, I must situate my provocations within a system that relentlessly expropriates those changes in order to consolidate authority.

* * * *

I picture the word "complicity" as a fibrous mass, a fabric puzzle. Its multiform dimensions can be described in terms that are either/both psychological or physical. It is imposing but also encompassing. It is supposing but also engendering. From the Latin *complicare*, to be complicit is "to fold together." Within complicity's deep creases lay more tangles, snares, riddles, complications. To wrestle with complicity, one quickly becomes confused: *Which tissues are connected to muscle and nerves that are mine and which are beyond my control? Am I stuck, or is this comfort?*

To be complicit within the ethos of a modern educational institution involves becoming accustomed to its terminology and the precepts according to which it derives its significance. Concepts like "directives" and "objectives," for instance, gain credibility (or "use-value") within a learning environment when methods of measurement are imposed. These terms bare the traces of accountancy, efficiency, risk-assessment, and quality control. The grid of the accountant's ledger – of temporal measurement and management systems, of micro-governance in cellular spatial division and surveillance knowledge-power technologies, described by Foucault – is effectively the prototype for every college course. As teachers, we issue and are issued schedules, rubrics, and contracts, each of which is contingent to the other, intimately entangled if not altogether collapsed.

While complicity is not, in itself, a strategy for liberative praxis, it is a mode of attention well suited to struggle. Considering complicity, my focus is sharpened on the ways that all my cumulative years of teaching experience, while helpful, also hinder me. Complicity reminds me of all that is *not* automatically refreshed when I meet a new class of students. Being entrenched as I am (both in the institution that presently employs me as well as in my own conception of myself as a professional whose reputational record cites various institutional employers), my activities are contextualized by its structure, which offers support and reasonable assurance that I am not inventing the need I (try to) meet. I'm interested in the discomfort that arises in me when I state this plainly: that I am motivated in part by a belief that I can become a better and better teacher, because that would mean that I will have masterful proficiency in the ways of the institution. It would be my tool, my instrument, an extension of myself.

I have often tarried over a peculiar phrase that Simone Weil found exciting, that she adapted to explain a kind of political being of total attachment to the world. In letters and notebooks (including selections published as *Gravity and Grace* and *Waiting for God*), Weil mentions this expression she says she learned from workers: "the trade entering the body." In the case of an apprentice, she writes, "the tool makes you lose one mode of feeling, replaces it by another mode." This "transference of consciousness" (Weil, 2004, p. 21) allows a person to experience an order and beauty greater than oneself (Weil, 1973, p. 132). For Weil, though, it was irrelevant whether this attachment felt like suffering, injury, or fatigue, because these sensations would affirm that connection regardless. In fact, she remarks that the expression used among workers in the trades had referred specifically to pain. Maybe feeling complicit involves a similar devotion to attention that feels at once exciting and painful.

Could complicity have potential beyond institutional growth or personal professional advancement, I wonder? I want to be imaginative about complicity as a subjunctive resource, for reconceiving a scenario as hypothetical rather than fixed. I think of José Esteban Muñoz's delicate work

with utopian thinking as a model for this. He suggests the exercise of holding a familiar concept "in a sort of ontologically humble state, under a conceptual grid in which we do not claim to always already know" as a means of staving off "the ossifying effects'' that have predominantly appropriated that same concept for oppressive ends (Muñoz, 2009, p. 22). Muñoz argues that neither utopic nor pragmatic thinking is very rational; the former because it resides in idealization, and the latter because its functionality depends too heavily on presently perceivable conditions (Muñoz, 2009, p. 30). Inasmuch as complicity's avowal of entanglement requires tending to both knowable and not-yet-knowable (or "not-yet-conscious," in Muñoz's preferred terminology) complications, perhaps it is dynamically similar to the way "multiple forms of belonging in difference adhere to a belonging in collectivity" (i.e. "utopian possibility") (Muñoz, 2009, p. 20). Which is also to say that, much like Muñoz's utopian thinking and Weil's theory of compassion, complicity is an impulse that can be observed in everyday exchanges. And, these glimpses of elegant agonies are never simple or efficient.

*   *   *   *

Whenever I first meet a group of students, I insist that we focus on the experience of experimenting together, the event we initiate together. We begin writing and reading with intermingled voices, stirring up a flurry of ideas and giggles. We try out tactics that might feel strange, or new – or perhaps somehow not-serious-enough – and often find ourselves engrossed in discussing the stakes of what we're studying together, sometimes even before introducing ourselves. This energy – this urgency – is my workaround, my means of downplaying the drudgery of so many policies and deadlines, slots and grids. I give my courses evocative names like "Adults Playing Kids Playing Adults," "What Makes Sense," and "Para- Co-/Syn-" to demonstrate how we might meaningfully combine whimsy and earnestness in our study. Before I had to teach online (as so many of us adapted to doing, with the onset of the COVID pandemic), I would typically make some quip about how remarkable it was that we all shared a common period of time each week dedicated to our mutual investigations, and – wow, hey, look! – we even have access to this swanky Brooklyn real estate as our "club house." I need for them to know that it's not only possible, but invited, that we make a little ruckus. That this is a heads-up: we are probably going to sing and/or dance together at some point, or maybe leave all of our cell phones in a drawer and go outside to search for four-leaf clovers, and that this *need not be* a simulation of some corporate "team-building" exercise when we do this. Rather, we'll be doing something human together that we may have first learned in dreaming, that requires no training. And finally, I promise students that for as long as I'm able and as long as they'll let me, I will be wholly invested in supporting their writing process. I will enter into the process with them, offering copious feedback and insight as a colleague-mentor in a style that welcomes dynamic interchange… but that I won't grade them.

I tell students what I earnestly believe to be the case: that writing is active, emergent, and regenerative. In writing and in reading, we become capable of "reorienting our geometries of attention" (quoting my favorite turn of phrase from Joan Retallack, 2003). And, this is a renewable opportunity, with innumerable variations. Writing is continually rendering the invisible visible, so it is no wonder, really, that it has so often been considered mystical. Language marks the brink – between knowable and unknowable as well as between self and world. Language is the scene of the encounter and the evidence of it having occurred. I tell students that learning is generative, and that this mystical begetting stems from rupture. A learning process welcomes the new, which also involves reckoning with not-yet-knowing. We learners set forth from the familiar only to find ourselves in a thicket of confusion, disoriented and wondering whether the difficulty was worth the worry, sweat, ache, and toil of the foray. As a teacher, I can prepare students for this difficulty, and support them through the process by validating their feelings of frustration as informative and by helping students sustain focus, but that any apparatus that purports to render the learning process more efficient denies student autonomy; curbs critical engagement; deprives people of the exhilarating *sensation* of change-in-the-making. Things that are new can also feel frustrating in the sense that they are inefficient– that is because they haven't been managed yet. I tell them that things that are as-yet-unmanageable are *definitely* worth being curious about.

I attempt to stave off the introduction to the syllabus until I'm partly convinced that we've awakened our intuitions for sensing mutuality. If we have initiated a tone of informal discussion and enough willingness to withstand the imposition to collectivity that imposes, we might be capable of encountering such a document as at least somewhat ontologically uncertain. In the syllabus, we read the statement on grading that I have printed in place of some neatly categorized division of labor and/or affect with corresponding percentages, indicating each labor/affect's relative value:

> Grading is a means of organizing relation that reverberates across so many sectors of our lives. We rate a purchase or service, we assess the value of something in dollars that may have been loved with real tears. A grade is a kind of communicational shorthand between distant educational institutions and/or workplaces. Much in the same way a ship signals to another ship over an ocean––without nuance or context––a basic message is conveyed about a person's record of success. Sometimes very much depends on a single letter or number, and it is too often the case that those who are already subject to conditions of greater precarity (in terms of socio-economic status resulting from systemic racism and colonialism, for example) find the stakes involved disproportionately high.

> Typically, a grade is determined either by a pupil being judged in contrast to their peers (by establishing a kind of relative zero-point, then measuring degrees of gradation ascending or descending away from that), or according to a rubric of predetermined objectives describing an abstract expectation for excellence. While

different in their approach, these methods have much in common. Both methods are subject to bias, either by the teacher or by the conventions of correctness that the curriculum espouses. Both methods incentivize "learning the rules" and abiding by those, even if that comes at the cost of a revelatory learning experience. Both methods prioritize the product over the process, which leaves learners more prone to feelings of anxiety than feelings of wonder, enjoyment, and human connection. And, both methods depend on the idea that excellence and failure are fixed standards, suggesting that all learners' experiences ought to fall somewhere on that quantifiable scale.

What I have found in 17+ years of teaching graduate and undergraduate students at colleges and universities across the country is that grades and learning experiences don't match very well. I've worked with students who dedicated themselves so completely to piecing together a complex puzzle, or who boldly exceeded the parameters of an assignment in such a profound way that they will never forget that class, just as I will never forget their admirable verve. And yet, by the standards of grading, those same students did not always excel. That tells me that something is faulty in the system.

My goal as a teacher is to foster ambition - not carelessly, not heedlessly, but meaningfully. I want to embolden students to organize their own relation, both to the subject and also to each other as collaborative colleagues and interlocutors. With that in mind, I commit my efforts toward developing students' thinking and writing by offering engaged feedback, posing difficult questions, and facilitating opportunities for students to identify skills they would like to sharpen. In individual meetings, I help students conceive of their work in a continuum of learning. I emphasize improvement based on how something learned in one project is applied to another. And, I ask students to be a part of the process.

This semester, I will work with each student to devise a distinctive grading strategy that both inspires and reflects intellectual rigor and artistic innovation, while also supporting the objectives of the course. Final grades will be determined with input from the student, following ongoing progress check-ins throughout the course.

In my class plan, I will allot at least 15 minutes for more general discussion, leading with questions like: *What's resonating with you? What's not? What do you want to challenge, clarify or confirm?* I listen and take notes, seeking language I can reiterate or reframe in follow-up questions. Then, over the course of the next hour or more, I will lead a series of writing and reading prompts, alternating individual and collaborative work, around a series of keywords: risk, order, mutuality, freedom, comfort, responsibility, flexibility, equality, and trust. We'll explore how these ideas are interrelated and interdependent. We'll return to our collaborative writing again and again over several weeks; rehashing, re-synthesizing, revising. We'll annotate shared documents and create poems from phrases we find there. I'll bring up the subjects of evaluation and support often in

discussion, both during class and in individual conversations, asking students what curiosities or concerns feel more knowable than they maybe did before. My objective is to foreground, rather than ignore, the problem of grading by insisting that we are capable of thinking and acting differently; that we can even sharpen our skills by applying the tools of literary and critical analysis to the problem. I'll share in our final class meeting how my hopes for the class had always been to practice welcoming complexity as means of enacting heterogeneous community. I'll ask them to keep this in mind as they become responsible members of other, future communities as well.

By the conclusion of the course, though, I will have submitted a set of grades. These grades are neither mine nor the students', though both parties are implicated in them just as we are both conscribed by them. It is so tempting to declare that they have nothing to do with us. They represent neither our keenness nor our exhaustion. However, we would be ignoring the legacies of oppression that informed the duties we assume and the tools we are expected to use as teacher and student if we do not address them. In one-on-one conferences with students, we reflect on this conundrum. Often a student will ask me what grade they deserve, and I reply by saying that I don't believe anyone deserves to be graded. But I do it anyway – in a way, I do. For now, I must because their credits and my paycheck depend on these marks being filed for the record that tally our extracted labor. Every semester, I do not prevent grading from occurring. So far, I have only suggested to students some ways that it might be – temporarily, provisionally – circumvented.

This paradox is not meaningless, however. Because, every semester I become more interested in the difficulties that gain prominence, become more noticeable, perhaps even more potent, by way of circumventing grading and revealing its irrelevance to genuine learning. These difficulties are worth tending to. When these mechanisms for measurement, standardization, and control are deprived of the privilege of transparency; when they are scrutinized as biopolitical technologies; when we open up and talk about these constraints and how they got here, we question their influence on our learning. We reconsider the range of affects that are natural to the act of learning.

* * * *

By late-fall of 2020, barely halfway through the first full semester of conducting class solely online, everyone was already inured to the negligible difference between "synchronous" and "asynchronous" instruction, or the fact that both options essentially indicated the same terminal lack of co-presence. Our meetings had been marked and mired by so many colluding forces of alienation. I led the students through a workshop in which we returned to Saidiya Hartman's prologue to *Lose Your Mother* and Mónica de la Torre's poem, "How to Look at Mexican Highways," which they had all just read during the week prior. In small groups, students experimented with placing fragments and passages from these texts into dynamic, poetic

arrangements with fragments and passages from Audre Lorde's "How I Became a Poet" (from *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*). I urged them to "think of it like a jigsaw puzzle left out on a table that everybody has access to, except there is no one 'right' way to solve the puzzle. This is not work you can do all in one sitting or all at the last minute," I reminded, asking them to keep the shared doc open in a tab that they'll return to often throughout the week.

Interspersed within these re-configurations of Lorde, de la Torre, and Hartman, I asked them next to insert their own annotational commentary. As I did not specify any specific stylistic parameters for this, students developed their approaches to writing in this complexly collaborative voice of intermingled valences. Some color-coded the textual voices to distinguish these from their own. Some groups seemed to embrace a more unified poetic tone, while others embraced rupture.

I wanted to engage the past, knowing that its perils and dangers still threatened and that even now lives hung in the balance.

You are not going anywhere

The use of "you" with short imperative sentences slows you down as if you were actually stuck in traffic.

In case someone is waiting for you, you can always explain

the delay later.

Stay there a bit longer; remember no one is waiting for you.

Blame it on the traffic, no one else knows that you chose to walk.

There is a conflict between not going anywhere and walking to see somebody late and "in case someone is waiting for you" and "no one is waiting for you", which made me confused at the first second. Also, the tone de la Torre used in this poem is urging, especially with the numbers through the poem; it feels to me like an order check-list.

purpose to their movement.

Desire is a Federacy.

I don't really understand this sentence in the poem. It feels to me a bit wired to fit in this poem but also perfectly fit in the poem.[2]

I nuzzle against her sweetness, pretending not to hear.

I think this the sentence below transitions well in terms of its connotations from "sweetness" to "flowers".

With Flowers growing out of them

With Cactuses growing out of them

*   *   *   *

Old and New worlds stamped my face

I was the proverbial outsider. My customs belonged to another country

I am a reflection of my Mother's secret poetry as well as her hidden angers

With the thought of being a portion of our parents, our identity is something that has to be built on by the foundation of your parents but something that has to be ours.

Contrast between two areas of childhood memory: beauty in her mother's "secret poetry", anger and fear within her "hidden angers"

I often imagined that the singer Johnny Hartman was my father because we shared the same last name

Interesting connection between the above four excerpts with family, nostalgia, generational trauma, etc.

Our interests are what makes a person, It's what drives our interest.

There is a purpose to their movement

No one is waiting for you.

Through the rails you will see stories unfolding on the street.

"Through the rails" - Rails usually guide or connect a person to the ground. Sort of contrasting the ideal of being free to find one's identity.

Somehow all the cousins knew that Uncle Cyril couldn't lift heavy things because of his "bam-bam-coo"

"...and the intimacy of our physical touching nestled inside of the anxiety/pain like a nutmeg nestled inside its covering of mace."

No one is waiting for you.

I had come to Ghana in search of strangers

Neither blood nor belonging accounted for my presence

In what sense(s) are blood and belonging the same in this context? Does blood (ancestry, family) hold a role in one's belonging here?

The euphemisms of body were equally puzzling

The sensual content of life was masked and cryptic but attended in well-coded phrases.

*　*　*　*

Stop it

No one is waiting for you.

You're not going anywhere

2.1. Water towers

Look down

[2.1.]It was late spring because my legs felt light and red

colorful and confusing

Pay attention

[2.1.]Who else sported vinyl in the tropics?

If there's too much pollution, look down again.

A melancholia I would never be able to overcome

Brooklyn brogue

My studied speech

Euphemisms of the body

No one else knows

Secret relationship with words

Pretending not to hear

But much more comfortable

Neither blood nor belonging

Disappointment awaited me

They are one plus one, indefinitely.[3]

*　*　*　*

This somewhat oblique approach to teaching techniques of close reading and analysis is, as I understand it, intrinsic to the overall project of endeavoring to foreground a struggle with a more pervasive pattern of resignation and disaffection that grading functions to perpetuate. I want to embolden students to enter into a discourse that is essentially social and interdependent, that doesn't revert back to conventions of private property ownership. I teach how canonization operates by conferring value to the few who extract from the many, to dominate narrative authority. Teaching against the grain of grading can entail compiling a curriculum entirely of writers who use she/her or they/them pronouns, the majority of whom are people who would be termed "minorities" by conventional canons, and not fetishizing demography by drawing extra attention to this, but rather offering that these are important texts that will advance our pursuit of the questions posed in the course description: "What must I risk in order to conceive of things differently, and is that risk worthwhile? What must first be considered stable and secure in order for experimentation to happen effectively? Does a willingness to imagine things differently distract from seeing things as they are?"

Back in the Zoom session that functions as a just-barely-usable-enough prosthesis for a class, we have dipped into Yoko Tawada's poly-translational text, "Akzent," and lingered with the pleasant senses for variation that it welcomes. To close this particular class meeting, I proposed a strategy for de-centralized conversation. I said (according to my notes): "As we continue our theme of returning and tracing the roots of a matter in order to figure out how we might do things differently, I want to invite reflection about the kind of belonging that's involved in being a student. How your history informs your understanding of that." Then, I read a series of prompts aloud, and in the chat log students posted their responses in a quiet ruckus:

What characteristics define being a student?

Obey

Humble

Messy-Organized

Balance

Community, shared sense of purpose and belonging, shared challenges relating to work, pressures

Polite

thirst

tutor and taught

"Being a student" is a weird idea, I think, because considering that attending school is a legal necessity, it's almost like "student" has the implication of being a life stage. "Students" in my head, are youths attending school, but this does not require that a student be necessarily "studious".

Expectation

Organized

When do you feel most like a student?

Intellectual independence

(re)acquiring knowledge

To question

Honest

Leading Leader

learning on my own

Curiosity

When I'm pursuing an interest independently

Peers

Independent in the sense that it was chosen as opposed to assigned.

Being a student is also being categorized as unskilled, no matter what level of student you are. There's always a slight negative to learning… despite the most positives

Growing connections

Keeping some sort of consistency/routine

What motivates your curiosity?

passing of time

Personal passions

Emotional impulse. It sort of naturally develops as a result of whatever I'm consuming.

learning helps give me resources to inform someone else

abstract goals

Success

boredom

Recognition

pressures

Achievement

acknowledgement of progress

What about being a student incentivizes passivity or inhibits self-motivation?

the societally constructed importance of a degree

Wavering risk to reward chances

Fear of failure

Thinking about life after school

Comparison

Peer pressure

expectations of what to gain

expectations in general

the idea that you need to understand at first try

What you want to learn and what you actually learn

I don't think that being told you must study something creates the same sense of urgency as when you want to know. Looking at things you don't care about can feel like wasted time

I wonder if my perception of the word "student" may have been diverted from its initial meanings. I feel being a student should mean being a person that longs for knowing things that are yet unknown to the person itself. But now I just feel like rushing in works and meeting deadlines became the whole purpose of "being a student". I felt like the pressure of work and the consequences comes with it-degree, jobs, has taken the joy and the initial incentive. The by-product of education has replaced the initial meaning of studying.[4]

*   *   *   *

What's going on in this exchange? Are these insights evidence that this group of students trust each other and me enough to be reasonably assured that their sentiments of wariness and anxiety will be believed and not held against them? That their expressions of aspiration will be embraced? Are they feeling generally assured that our discourse allows room for *not being* sure? What might these students be holding back? What else might they be willing to posit if they trusted me and each other more, despite being situated as we are within an institutional framework that attempts to depersonalize feelings of trust?

I tend to look for correlations to the problems I'm pondering in everything I see and read and listen to, to an almost apophenic extent, especially when a semester is in session. I listen to the podcast, *Ear Hustle*, recorded both inside and outside San Quentin State Prison, which is hosted by formerly incarcerated people, currently incarcerated people, and a former volunteer who taught in the prison for several years. Each episode must be approved by the exceedingly friendly sounding Public Information Officer whose warm tone betrays his allegiance to the podcasters as his commentary affirms that he understands himself to be doing good work by being affiliated with the podcast. I think about these various roles – which do I understand myself electing to play within the institution of academia, and how does that conception of myself contrast with how I am interpellated by it? In which instances am I known or knowable as the Information Officer? In which instances do I picture myself as virtuous as a volunteer? When do I act as though my consent were inconsequential, or evade my own complicity in a system by imagining myself as one whose power was as compromised as an archetypal prisoner? And, why do I pretend sometimes *not to know* what it is like to fail a course; or, to meet with the Dean seeking help when a student who wrote a fictional story about me being raped (which he then requested that I read aloud on his behalf in front of the class) was now following me around campus; or, to be denied access to counseling when a friend was murdered by another student; or, to be asked by a professor whether I was aware that someone he understood to be my boyfriend (he was) had submitted a psychotically incoherent tirade about me instead of a final paper? (I wasn't aware, but it didn't surprise me to hear. And, as a professor now myself, I have often wondered how that professor could acknowledge that I was in danger, and yet conveniently, immediately absolve himself of helping me access any help. As a student, I still had no idea that help from sexual violence and abuse was available, let alone mandated under Title IX.)

My own college experiences were traumatic, and perhaps extremely so, but I've been reminded of these memories so many times when similar events occurred in the lives of the students I work with. And yet, I catch myself conveniently assuring myself sometimes, thinking: *Well, I got through it and so will they*. But, what about the traumatic events situated within the educational arena that I have no experiential reference for? I am a white cis-woman who attended only private schools. It is fair for me to evaluate with some certainty, given the makeup of my MFA cohort for instance, that it's very unlikely I would have been admitted into graduate school at all, despite having dropped out of college with no bachelors degree, if I did not present to the world this way and if I did not have the confidence/entitlement-of-privilege that led me to apply for an MFA anyway. I may have *gotten through* not passing a course, but I can't be so sure about students who navigate the system without the benefits that I have. For these, among so many reasons, it's important that I examine how grading operates similarly to policing in terms of who we teachers are "serving" and what we are "protecting" when we act as agents of that system.

*   *   *   *

Inasmuch as grading is an administrative obligation, it reflects an entire historical ethos of the state's deployment of rights and conferring of value to that which is legible and usable by it. Grading is a menial task that requires little skill. Instead, it requires a tacit acceptance of criteria for merits and demerits, and an obliging attitude about standardization inherited from British imperial education. It requires that the teacher be amenable to the industry-consciousness that the eminently scalable enterprise of instruction and evaluation perpetuates. The division of skills detailed in a typical grading rubric reflects the same division of labor that so pleased Sir Thomas Bernard when he wrote in 1809 that "the principle in schools and manufactories is the same" (Hager, 1959, p. 166).

Historians Keith Hoskin and Richard Macve observe that while pre-modern techniques for assigning calculable value to human intelligence (and human life) engendered the idea of "book-keeping" on pupils, educational discipline culminated in the elaborate system of rules, punishment, and rewards in the monitorial instruction system designed by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster at the turn of the nineteenth century. "The mark [or grade] is a construct, like examination itself, which seems so self-evident once invented that its prior absence is perplexing," the authors observe (Hoskin & Macve, 1986, p. 126). Although a grade/mark is *not* fundamental to the process of reviewing or testing knowledge, its insertion into the educational sphere would seem to retroactively insist the opposite. Hoskin and Macve suggest that the grade's genesis belongs just as much to the history of business accountancy as it does to education practice. Profitability is activated at this intersection, they argue, and is thereafter disseminated as a principle in both sectors (Hoskin & Macve, 1986, p. 127).

Cultural anthropologist Marilyn Strathern describes a larger pattern of "the conflation of measures and targets" in higher education. Markers of academic quality are essentially self-referential. An institution assesses its own assessment procedures according to the degree to which one model conforms to the aim of its predecessor. The exercise of the audit is ubiquitous in academic culture, Strathern observes. Diverse and conflicting aims may be "the engine of intellect," but the modern educational institution demands over-simplified consensus in order to function, precisely *because* it is in the business of standards, and standards must be unified in order to be operable. Within such a system, external agency preempts internal agency. Strathern imagines producing insights that can only be excavated "when the context is right" – "delayed reaction comprehension" – so as to subvert the ever-present expectation to immediately quantify and qualify one's intellectual labor (Strathern, 1996).

Within a culture of quality standards and standardization, the threat of failure is ever-present for all involved. Any teacher who has promised herself that she will never again submit to the needless humiliation of reviewing course evaluation scores already knows that "constant examination and constant marking together maintain and maximise value from the present into the future, while they maintain and maximise disciplined work and workers along

the same continuum" (Hoskin & Macve, 1986, p. 129). The teacher is under no illusion that her pedagogical practice might be meaningfully improved from the information implied in these numeric ratings. Rather, these outgrowths of constant examination's constant acceleration make clear that there is constant demand to render her efforts reducible and calculable. So, the teacher learns to adapt to the constant noise of "quality control" as she also earnestly attempts to attune herself more attentively to the qualities of learning processes. In order to interrogate the technologies for consolidating and expropriating knowledge-power that teachers and students are both subject to, she must imagine these structures as potentially dismantle-able. She must conceive of her efforts as hypothetical at the same time that she considers them practical. This sense of precarious complicity is animated in the cognitive dissonance between the rhetoric and the reality of private, for-profit education. It is borne of resistance, of complaint, and synthesized by the acknowledgement that, as Sara Ahmed put it, "to locate a problem is to become the location of a problem" (Ahmed, 2017).

* * * *

When, in 2019, multidisciplinary scholar and writer Stefano Harney gave his entire class of 169 business students "A"s, Singapore Management University recognized this data as "bogus." Harney said that he was in a position to do so because, having already been informed that his contract would not be renewed, he did not fear further consequences from the school (Koay, 2019, referencing original article in *The Straits Times*). While I'm not suggesting his actions were heroic, they certainly function to expose another aspect to this biopolitical technology, which is authenticity. It is so easy to become inured to the assumption that an accredited educational institution represents an implicit social good, and further, that it is itself a purveyor of legitimacy! But these grounds for Harney's termination ("bogus" grades) serve to remind how pervasive that subtextual dictum really is. The university's declaration establishes that an *authentic* grade authenticates calculable performance, reproduces individuation. More interestingly, the grade's authenticity would also seem to be proprietary to the institution, the product that must not be tampered with. We employees of the academic industrial complex need not ask the institution exciting questions like "*what counts as a grade?*" because we already know that what counts is the counting.

We guard access to value much more so than knowledge. Inasmuch as "organizations can be considered as modes of attention," as Sara Ahmed suggests – that "what is attended to can be thought of as what is valued, [meaning that] attention is how something comes into view (and other things do not)" – it becomes clear how important this power to authenticate is to the way an educational institution arbitrates what is perceivable (Ahmed, 2012, p. 30). Systems of so-called "un-grading" that mandate students perform calculation procedures on their own learning (i.e. "grade themselves") only serve to obscure

disciplinary structures from view. Just as institutionalized diversity work has historically operated by way of a similar optic corrective, by "generating the 'right image'," as Ahmed puts it, to replace the wrong one, the effect is to make grading seem more palatable. It is a stopgap with disastrous implications. For students, a simulation of empowerment is temporarily achieved by reifying the the authoritarian role of the accountant as the student is made to temporarily assume this role, even though no real autonomy has occurred. This is the same method that has been deployed in institutional diversity work, to "change perceptions of whiteness" such that it "exists but is no longer perceived" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 34). The reframing has not altered either the viability of the technology nor its effect. Ahmed notes that "inhabiting whiteness (...) can be a survival strategy to learn how to not see it, to learn not to see how you are not reflected back by what is around" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 35). This is not the same as being somehow inured to whiteness or other similar methods of hegemonic authentication. We may be officially and unofficially constantly alerted to the institution's voracious attentiveness, but we cannot concede our own experience of being affected by it.

Harney and his frequent collaborator, Fred Moten, have recently been revisiting their influential 2013 book, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, in online lectures and discussions. "Radical complicity," they argue, is necessary in acknowledging the "increasing number of unseen accomplices" working cooperatively within the academic environment. In radical complicity, Harney explains, "we know that we can only leave together, because whatever wealth we have, whatever means of production we have, we only hold those in common" (Moten and Harney, 2020).

Video recordings of conversations with Moten and Harney – public conversations with each other or separately, which seem to be part of the writing and thinking process for the collaborators – have become touchstones in the discussions I have with teachers and students, people I meet within the educational institutional sphere. There is one video of Fred Moten visiting the Woodbine experimental hub and mutual aid collective in Queens in 2018 that I have watched so many times that I can almost recite it. I've transcribed long sections of it, starting and stopping the streaming player, slowing down the rate of information so I can crawl into its interstices. In it, Moten insists that complicity "that *can go either way*, is the point." I try to write through this, to intersperse my reading of his lines with annotations and remarks written with my own collaborator, in the same way I asked the students to do.

In conversation, tending to shifts and response,

and there's a different valence,

all the ways we find ourselves reoriented by desire to understand, to happen upon that peculiarity as it is happening to us.

even though the university is all fucked up and you know it, *you found your own*

individual way through this shit that allows you *not to be* complicit. Well, what we been thinking – and Stefano, especially – is like, *no*, that desire

for some kind of individualized avoidance of complicity is false.

How do we feel when we feel like "school?"

my capacity to literally own the conditions of my labor and set those conditions are under such duress, and now I'm just going through the motions, I hate it

I could say, "transform the transformer,"

a mode of *being-with* people in some sort of condition of sharing that *can go either way*, is the point.

How, justice has always been "transformative," just not in any sort of egalitarian or positivist, let alone liberative, sense.

I could write, "decolonize the colonializer,"

some individualized flight

but then I am only writing words as if their meaning were conferred by abstract images, dislocated from social histories.

the study of what people call alienation.

Neutralize the neutralizer,

alienation that manifests itself in that moment of:

Frictionless the frictionless.

I heard Fred Moten talking about how alienation probably always precedes our recognition of it. How in retrospect, we notice that it was present in the very same kernel

that the initial impetus to teach/aid/cooperate came from.

How, that ambition to learn together in some kind of radical way was always bound up with the

inevitable romanticism of radicality. How radicality feels urgent, and how

easy it is to become recklessly compelled by that feeling of suddenly being impervious to whatever might seem unsurpassable to everyone else. Radicality has a way of making us

feel so gloriously exceptional.

Because none of this shit is livable.

To amplify the "we all" that can't be abandoned

To un-use: a prospective pedagogy that actively resists reproducing means/methods of valuation.

In fact, it's better to just deepen the fucking complicity.

To become porous, which is to say social, moving, mingling, shifting, intuitive, abductive, continuous.

and figure out how to do this shit different, OK? (Ides & Rafiei, 2022, with Moten, 2018).

* * * *

What I've been figuring out about fostering a learning community in a way that intensifies a possible condition of *immeasurability* is that it is *necessarily* complex and inefficient. It requires a willingness to not make sense, or to resist the probable, which can often feel absurd. I keep Isabelle Stengers's warning in mind, about acting in accordance with "the irresistible nature of unbounded capitalism as if that were our immutable destiny" (Stengers, 2017). I try to remind myself that whatever sense is made by doing things differently may not yet be noticeable within the atmosphere of this pervasive ideology. When coercive tactics are suspended, the emphasis shifts from product to process. Though I give reasons for why there are benefits to a class staying together at about the same pace, reading texts with the expectation that others are reading them too, work is not always submitted "on time." Without impersonal rules to enforce this, motivation can occur more relationally. If I notice a student is participating with less vim, I'll write them an email to say that I believe that the work they're doing is deeply meaningful, and that I anticipate it being a joy to read when I get to do that. I must also remind myself that this is possible, this joy. I have taken to avoiding a "pro/con" style of identifying a text's usability or an author's worth by instead asking (myself or others): what kind of pleasure does this present, what kind of difficulty? I frame matters as "puzzles," in part to remind myself to be patient.

The truth is that I am in no rush for the puzzle of grading to be solved because I worry that attempting to do so too convincingly or proficiently would be ultimately just as convenient. Occasionally a colleague asks what I would prefer, and I have trouble describing the picture in my mind. It is fibrous and multiform. It is outdoors, with games and rituals and reams of literature to nestle into. It happens in real-time.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to David Buuck, who first taught me the general parameters for this "game" and whose phrasing I borrow here.

2. Here, it is likely that the student intended the word "weird"; however I'm interested in how the imagery of circuitry introduced by the word "wired" illuminates correlations between "federation" and the poem's own assemblage that a reader might not have otherwise insinuated. If this line is wired to fit the poem, is it the reader's desire to defer to the poem's authority that necessitates this fix? And, what other desires are supplanted as a result?

3. These are samples of collaborative texts collectively composed by small groups of 3 - 4 students during the week of October 6 - 13, 2020. Lines from works by Mónica de la Torre, Saidiya Hartman, and Audre Lorde are shown collaged, interspersed with lines by students. My guiding prompt for this activity asked that students set the passages from the texts and their own annotations to the texts "into conversation with each other."

4. I have removed the names of the student contributors to this chat log generated during a class conducted online over the Zoom platform, October 13, 2020. Spaces between remarks indicate separate contributors.

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Bethany Ides is a writer, artist, teacher, theater-maker and organizer. With Mahshid Rafiei and Ora Ferdman, she co-directs Doors Unlimited, a generative structure for investigative operatics and speculative folklife. Her poetry, fiction, essays and collaborative projects have most recently appeared in *Shifter*, *The Candidate Journal: Psychoanalytic Currents*, *C Magazine*, *Ear | Wave | Event*, *Temporary Art Review*, *Feminist Temporalities*, *Orange Mercury*, *fields magazine*, and in the volume *Tongue and Cheek* (Montez Press). She is an Adjunct Professor in Humanities & Media Studies at Pratt Institute, and is currently organizing a radio and writing project with Mitchell Akiyama on the problems of clarity.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Constructing College-Level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Minors—Moving from Performative to Transformative DEI

by Carole Gibbs, Nwando Achebe, Brian Johnson, Chioma Nwaiche, and Daniel Vélez Ortiz

BEATRIZ MILHAZESTHE. FOUR SEASONS (AS QUATRO ESTAÇÕES). SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK GIFT, THE BOHEN FOUNDATION, 2001.
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Introduction

In 2020 and 2021, members of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Fellows Program at Michigan State University's College of Social Science created two DEI national and global minors. The intentionality that propelled the process, design, and content of these DEI minors represents an example of transformative, as opposed to performative, DEI action. In this article, we share our process of, and the structure for, creating these minors, and how that process, in the context of our college and university, can be considered radical DEI action. The goal is not to be prescriptive about the specific DEI content of the courses. Our decision to build three new courses—a general introduction to critical DEI course and two exit seminars focused on national and global DEI—evolved and was developed out of dialogue. Our decision-making processes about content were rooted in intentionality and grounded in a particularized college and university experience. Moreover, our courses were radical in that they did not rest easy with elevating the voices of the privileged, but instead centered multiple theoretical and lived perspectives that were often at odds with received canon, to provide a transformative experience for all—teachers and learners—who engaged them. Put differently, our courses and DEI minors moved beyond performative DEI to transformative DEI.

DEI has been championed by universities and institutions of higher education across the nation as being tantamount to excellence. In other words, universities should not, and cannot, position themselves as excellent without upholding the principles of diversity and inclusive excellence. What this has meant in each space has been as varied as the institution. At our university, where our articulated core values are collaboration, equity, excellence, integrity, and respect, the narrative has been loud and clear: "we take pride in the strength of our diversity" and we cannot have true excellence without inclusion (Office of Academic Governance, n.d.). However, this talk has been less than impactful. In fact, it has been louder than any concrete action taken in this space. It appears that the more we talk DEI, the more we believe our own rhetoric. Like many of our peers, our university has engaged in what we theorize as performative DEI.

Building on previous notions of limiting diversity efforts to "happy talk" (Hartmann & Bell, 2011), "hollow diversity" (Thomas, 2020), or "just another form of public relations" (Ahmed, 2012: 17), performative DEI is DEI organizing, articulations, or work performed solely to increase the social capital of the person, organization, or institution engaged in these performances or articulations, rather than a dedication to the cause. It is surface-level, superficial, flighty, non-systemic, and noncommittal; but it is extremely visible. It is also often reactionary to public incidents that damage reputation, and it places priority on individual awareness to address DEI issues. Performative DEI is concerned with amplifying low-hanging fruit—for instance, tweeting activism and anti-racism, posting reading resources, making statements in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, i.e., #BlackoutTuesday, or condemning xenophobic actions committed against Asian Pacific Islander and Desi American communities without making programs and investments that counter such actions. It is about doing minimal work (a tweet only takes a few seconds) for maximum visible gain. In the higher education setting, it is writing anti-racism statements, it is hiring token Chief Diversity Officers, Assistant or Associate Deans for DEI, or Directors for DEI (who in most cases are untenured). It is creating DEI committees and task forces that do not have substantial power or resources to make systemic changes. DEI visibility is achieved, but resources are not committed to the work and, if it is, these resources are minimal and do not come from recurring budgets. These actions make it appear as though there is a real commitment to DEI, when there is not. Once the statements, blackouts, reading resources are posted, and token hires are made, then things go back to a passive normalcy. Like a flip of a light switch, there is no memory of commitments made and, worse still, no way to hold these leaders accountable. In short, no real work is done. Moreover, this performative DEI is often hijacked by "well-meaning" majority communities (a White Dean or Department chair, for instance) to show that they are anti-racist, that they are DEI champions, that they are doing the work. What performative DEI is not, however, is transformative or radical.

The idea of performative action, be it performative activism (Abrams, Fregne, & Awadallah, 2019), performative allyship (Hassan, 2021), or the more recent performative 'wokeness,' (Gray, 2018) is not new. One of the earliest uses of the term "performative activism" was in Barbara Green's 1997 book, S*pectacular Confessions: Autobiography, Performative Activism, and the Sites of Suffrage*, where she used it, in her discussion of women's suffrage in Australia (Green, 1997). Performative allyship is when a person from the majority, i.e., the nonmarginalized majority, "professes support and solidarity with a marginalized group in a way that either isn't helpful or that actively harms that group" (Phillips, 2020). The person that is professing their support, Holiday Phillips suggests, is rewarded for doing so (Phillips, 2020), for instance, with likes and retweets on twitter. Performative wokeness, on the other hand, comes to us from Jenna M. Gray. She writes that performative wokeness is "drowning your lecture comments with a host of social justice buzzwords—try favorites like intersectionality, marginalized, discourse, subjectivity, or any -ism—without regard to whether other people understand" (Gray, 2018). Taken collectively, these performances, like performative DEI, remain surface-level, non-systemic, and non-transforming. In short, there is nothing radical about them.

Transformative DEI, on the other hand, anticipates and addresses resistance and roadblocks at multiple levels—in short, it is systemic and proactive (Harris, 2021). The characteristics of transformative DEI emerge from growing discussions of "non-performative" diversity (Ahmed, 2012) and shifts from diversity to "equity regimes" (Thomas, 2020). In addition to moving away from tokenism (Harris, 2021) and simply counting how many "different" people are on campus (Ahmed, 2012), systematizing DEI requires a central strategy that directs DEI efforts across campus. Absent shared meaning and goals, DEI becomes everything and therefore nothing (Thomas, 2020). To be transformative, the strategy must center DEI as a cultural

norm and proactively address problematic climates (Harris, 2021), as well as make structural changes that redistribute power, resources, and decision-making such that it is participatory rather than hierarchical (Thomas, 2020; Harris, 2021). It must also embed DEI across the university missions (e.g., teaching, research, service). Ultimately, transformative DEI requires individual growth and development among faculty, staff, and students to decenter white values and culture (Oliha-Donaldson, 2021) and reduce the pressure on historically excluded groups to assimilate (Harris, 2021), but does not rely exclusively on individualized solutions.

Transformative DEI requires strong processes to implement the central strategy (Thomas, 2021; Harris, 2021; Ahmed, 2012). "Aspirational" documents that identify goals but lack processes and procedures for implementation, evaluation, and accountability are insufficient (Ahmed, 2012). Transformative DEI involves continually assessing process and measuring progress with data (Ahmed, 2012), as well as transparent communication of, and accountability for, the metrics being assessed. Universities must reveal how new policies and procedures are being implemented, such that policy does *not* become a substitute for action (Ahmed, 2012). Implicit in this emphasis on process and data is that transformative DEI produces a measurable, direct impact on minoritized populations—faculty, staff, students, and communities.

Finally, transformative DEI requires commitment and resources (Harris, 2021). Beyond figureheads or 'diversity czars' (Newkirk, 2019), DEI leaders must be supported with infrastructure and funding to implement the central strategy and processes (Harris, 2021). This funding should come from recurring rather than non-recurring pools of money, so that it is not threatened by changes in administration. In addition to well-resourced leadership, transformative DEI includes supporting faculty efforts to incorporate DEI into their research, teaching, and service. Doing so requires acknowledging that DEI is real, time-consuming work. In sum, transformative DEI requires radical strategy and change.

The Current Work

Our team of Dean's DEI fellows seeks to move beyond performative DEI by pushing the boundaries to create transformative DEI. Towards this end, the Fellows developed two DEI minors which have the potentiality of being transformative, the potentiality of being radical. As designed, our DEI minors engage with socialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, and feminist frameworks. These minors are radical in that we make a clear and distinct connection between critical/radical pedagogy and the course content as well as our process of constructing and delivering the minors. We lead students in developing a critical eye, encouraging them to combat the "disconsciousness" that comes with privilege and allows people to ignore structural inequalities (Oliha-Donaldson, 2021). We encourage them to engage in more than "happy talk," to engage in action. Through the tools of critical pedagogy, we work with our students to "develop a critical sensibility about the way things are and, second, a willingness to take action to

change the status quo" (Steinberg & Down, 2020: 5). Students are encouraged to "denounce" dehumanizing conditions and "announce" that another world is possible (Steinberg & Down, 2020).

Our team of DEI Fellows and graduate student assistant brought a diversity of perspectives, expertise, and goals to the process of constructing the minors. As such, the minors are grounded in a diversity of sources and ways of knowing, not just elite knowledge. Our objective was to create a minor that centered diverse readings and diverse speakers (e.g., "spotlights"), and, by so doing, decentered the white, U.S. centric norm. Our minors, in effect, elevated the power of difference (Kincheloe, 2008) or "a viable novelty" (Freire, 1970/2018) using a transformative lens. Rather than relying on elite knowledge, we include perspectives from social locations that lack power, exposing students to transformative insights that can change lives (Kincheloe, 2008: viii). This kind of radical learning requires humility and a recognition that we are all learners and limited in what we know. It requires that we "work with people from diverse socio-economic classes, genders, sexualities, races, and ethnicities both at home and around the world to overcome our ignorance" (Kincheloe, 2008: viii). It requires "critical knowledge networks" across geographic and social domains (Kincheloe, 2008). As a team of Fellows, we recognize that we have gaps in our knowledge and where we are lacking, we seek collaboration across campus.

Our minors are radical and transformative in that we engage interactive pedagogies, encouraging students to question sources of knowledge beyond the authority of a teacher (Freire, 1970/2018). We model democratic dialogue by encouraging students to engage diverse perspectives (Flick, 1998). We are open to challenge during the process and embed these methods into our courses. As such, our work is primarily informed by critical pedagogy (e.g., Freire, 1970/2018; Kincheloe, 2008), given the limited literature on building diversity, equity, and inclusion into higher education curriculum. Nonetheless, we incorporated recommendations from the DEI curriculum literature to include perspectives from across campus (Cook & Matthews, 2018), as well as to use intergroup dialogue and experiential learning (Raphael, 2021).

Background

The College of Social Science (SSC) Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program in which we are the inaugural members was conceptualized in the Fall of 2020 in response to a dearth of resources for DEI work in the college. The idea was to bring together a diverse group of faculty to assist the newly appointed Associate Dean for DEI to accomplish several goals around DEI in the College of Social Science. The Pilot Program participants come from diverse backgrounds—one is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and a past chair of the school's DEI committee, the second is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and former chair of that School's DEI committee, and the third, an Assistant Dean of DEI in James Madison College. Rounding out the team is the Associate Dean for DEI, an endowed professor of African History, and the Associate Dean's graduate assistant, a PhD candidate in African History.

The group worked collaboratively in deciding what tasks to accomplish in the first years' tenure, including a Dean's DEI Small Grants program during their first semester of work. This competitive small grant program will provide up to $5,000 for social science scholarship, and initiatives or innovations that engage thoughtfully with and advance SSC's mission of inclusive excellence. Funded proposals may be awarded for seed funding for DEI research that leads to (1) the publication of an article; (2) applications for external funding from a foundation/charity/non-profit organization; (3) applications for external sponsorship by a commercial business, or industry; or (4) applications for external funding from local, state, or federal governments. Funding may also be used for (5) DEI initiatives that have the potential for long-term sustainable and scalable DEI change in SSC (e.g., innovations in DEI education; initiatives to improve DEI competency, advance DEI climate, and/or retention of students and/or staff), as well as (6) DEI-focused dissertation research or completion. With the completion of our college DEI strategic plan, all grants awarded in the first five years will have to align with the goals of the plan. This small grants program, transformative DEI in action, will award up to 5 grants in each faculty, academic staff, and student category. The program has been approved by the Dean, and the opportunity launched, in the fall semester of 2023.

The second item on the agenda of the Dean's DEI Fellows was to create a college-wide DEI Minor. Greenlighted by the then Interim Dean of the College of Social Science, the impetus for the creation of this minor was SSC philanthropic alumni, who articulated concerns about the unpreparedness of average graduates to assume leadership positions in the DEI space after graduation. The alumni concerns were borne out by data which suggest that companies and workplaces that make DEI a priority benefit in every facet of their organizations. They tend to be more innovative, make better decisions, and have better shareholder returns (Padamsee & Crowe 2017). A *McKinsey & Company* evaluation of companies with various levels of workplace diversity found that companies with greater gender and ethnic diversity were 25% and 36% (respectively) more likely to outperform their less diverse peers by bringing in more sales revenue, customers, and profits. Organizations that do not implement DEI practices miss opportunities to tap into their workers' potential (Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020). Thus, the SSC Diversity minors were conceived to bring together a cocktail of diversity-focus classes with the intent of providing our students with training and skills that will allow them to be more equitable and inclusive leaders in this increasingly diverse world. Owing to the diversity of fields that the Pilot Program members came from, each was able to bring varying perspectives on how to create the minor to the table. It is the hope of these Dean's DEI Fellows that because of engaging these new DEI learning opportunities, our SSC graduates will be better placed be more competitive, engaged, and transformative leaders.

Additional impetus for the diversity minor emerged from national and campus events. Prior to the global pandemic, racist incidents regularly occurred on campus. In addition to destruction of property at the Jewish Student Center (Tidwell, 2019), in October 2019 two African American students found a toilet paper noose on their dorm room door (Walker, 2019). Much to the dismay of students across campus, the incident was dismissed as a "Halloween prank" (Johnson, 2019a). Soon after the noose incident, an associate professor of public relations and social media in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences asked students to respond to a survey with racial slurs and epithets to determine how people respond to racist speech that is frequently encountered online (Johnson, 2019a). Students considered the content warning at the bottom of the survey insufficient, and were outraged (Johnson, 2019b). These events culminated in a community forum hosted by the Black Students' Alliance, as well as a student protest in which students expressed that the university failed to respond to racism on campus (Johnson, 2019a).

Incidents continued in 2020. In February, the performing arts center placed figures of African American leaders in its gift shop. The rack from which the figures were hung resembled a tree (Das, 2020). Later the same month, students posted racist comments in response to questions posed by Black students at an event designed to encourage discussion between the university President and students (Guzman, 2020). Students were again frustrated when the incident was not investigated, as it was deemed free speech (Monroe, 2020).

Shifting primarily to virtual classes during the pandemic did not eliminate racist incidents, or student demands for the university to improve. After posting racist comments on social media in June 2020 (Berg, 2020), a university employee was fired after students petitioned for dismissal (Chhabra, 2020). In a 2021 Community Town Hall on Anti-Asian Violence, students continued to express frustration regarding university failures. In this case, concerns were expressed with a major donor's anti-Asian comments that targeted Vietnamese-owned businesses (Hall, 2021). Although this donor's name has since been removed from the business college lab, many of these events on campus were intertwined with the increased visibility of racial inequity and injustice in the U.S. during the pandemic. Against this backdrop, we began our work on the DEI minor.

Inventory of Courses and Existing Minors: One Minor Becomes Two

We began our work to deliver a distinctive and transformative DEI experience by examining preexisting programs and minors on campus. Numerous opportunities were available for students to study the experiences of specific "diverse" groups through minors offered by units in our college, in collaboration with the College of Arts and Letters, or in collaboration with the Michigan State University Center for Gender in Global Context. These included minors (and a major) in African American and African Studies, African Studies, Asian Pacific American Studies, Asian Studies, Chicano/Latino Studies, Jewish Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Sexuality Studies, Migration Studies, Race and Ethnicity in the United States, and Women's and Gender Studies. In comparison to what

was already available, we sought to design our minor to elucidate how multiple, interlocking forms of oppression impact the life experiences and outcomes of "diverse" groups in similar and in different ways. As such, students can consider whether and how various strategies to improve equity and inclusion may or may not effectively remedy the range of challenges experienced by different groups of people. As described further below, we also brought a global lens and an experiential component to further differentiate and advance the transformative potential of our work.

Our proposed minor does mirror the format of other minors in our college, which typically consist of an introductory and an exit or capstone course specific to the minor, and a set of preexisting courses from which students must select three to earn a total of 15 credits. The list of supplementary classes is meant to provide flexibility for students to tailor their coursework to subtopics of interest. To determine which preexisting courses would best represent our proposed minor, we first conducted an inventory of all existing minors in the College of Social Science to ensure that there was no major overlap in the minors, as overlap could impact approval of our proposed minor. We also developed a list of recommended courses that students could take by conducting a search for courses across the university with a DEI focus. Our process consisted of examining course descriptions and viewing key terms related to DEI in the course titles. In addition, we procured a list of DEI-content courses from the Registrar's Office.

As we began our inventory, we considered key factors to ensure that the courses we selected reflected the needs of our college. These factors would also affect the themes we later developed for our new DEI minor courses. For example, we deliberately selected courses that represented distinct types of diversity (e.g., race, sexuality, social class, ethnicity, and gender from national to global perspectives), as well as provided a critical perspective. We also wanted to ensure that our DEI minor represented our university's strong international focus, commitment to faculty that work on international issues, and significant international student presence. In the process of reflecting on the range of potential courses we identified in this inventory, we decided that it would be beneficial to have two distinct DEI minors – one national, and one global. Building our university's strong international focus into the minors presented an opportunity for more transformative DEI.

Finally, as part of the inventory process, we looked to other Colleges within the university that had launched successful DEI courses. For example, in 2020, the College of Communication Arts and Sciences created a DEI course that focused on the importance of DEI within the Public Relations and Advertising field. The course was developed by faculty with the goal of helping students examine issues of privilege, bias, and disenfranchisement systemically and within the field (Priebe, 2021). Examining current DEI courses within other Colleges provided context and insight into how to structure our proposed DEI minors.

New Course Creation Process

To develop the new courses, we began with a brainstorming session on relevant topics that we next grouped into larger themes. In the entry course, for example, themes included key concepts, theoretical perspectives (e.g., antiracist, feminist, socialist), disparities among minoritized groups (at the intersection of race, ethnicity, caste, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, socioeconomic status, and religion), various domains in which these disparities occur (e.g., political, economic, marriage and family, environment, health, neighborhoods, education), and strategies for change. Theoretical perspectives include examining how white supremacy culture and values manifest and intersect with other systems of domination to oppress multiple social groups. By examining these theories as well as strategies for change, we engage students in socialist, antiracist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, and feminist frameworks. In the exit courses, we selected a set of change processes to explore in more detail (e.g., dialogue-based strategies, healing processes, legal remedies, advocacy), encouraging them to co-construct transformative strategies for DEI, thus putting knowledge into practice.

From our list of course themes, we next reflected on how to deliver each course and construct assignments to help students develop important skillsets. For example, in addition to understanding specific inequities experienced by different target groups, we constructed the first course such that students could situate these inequities within historical and modern structural and cultural contexts. In doing so, we wanted to encourage critical thinking, adopting critical pedagogical methods to help students unpack the assumptions and implications of a particular perspective. Further, we model the process of combating "disconsciousness" (Oliha-Donaldson, 2021), using local and university-related case studies to illustrate and help students recognize inequities. We recognize that learning requires humility, decentering the white U.S. centric norm through considerations of intersectionalities and multiple viewpoints. In the exit courses, we created community-engaged and driven projects—local and international—that address issues important to the communities. This collaborative engagement allows students to work towards becoming change drivers and transforming communities, not only denouncing dehumanizing conditions, but also announcing transformative possibilities (Steinberg & Down, 2020).

Given the breadth of our group's academic, professional, and life experiences, we had far more content and ideas than we could use, requiring us to develop criteria to determine what to exclude. First, we wanted to ensure that we limited course topics such that we could cover each one in depth. Allowing adequate time to examine intra-group differences was necessary to avoid stereotypes and "single stories" (Adichie, 2009). Second, we sought to ensure that our final set of themes covered multiple target and intersectional identities and reflected the complexity of oppression at multiple levels: the personal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural levels. This systems approach allows students to see how interlocking forms of oppression present themselves in personal values, beliefs, and feelings; language and behavior in interpersonal interactions; institutional rules, policies, procedures and practices; and cultural definitions of what is right, normal, true, and beautiful (Pizana, 2017).

To narrow our potential case studies to illustrate each concept and theme, we prioritized those for which we could draw on expertise and resources at our university and within the state. We proposed creating "spotlight videos" in which faculty and staff could share relevant research or outreach projects, including those directly engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion change efforts in relevant units on campus (e.g., the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives). We also prioritized case studies in the state, again using spotlight videos to highlight local issues (e.g., the Flint Water Crisis, educational reform in Detroit). We consciously chose state and local issues to move learning beyond the theoretical into the personal, grounding the courses in issues that are central to the students' lives, encouraging them to engage in problem solving and become change agents (Kincheloe, 2008). Making these issues "real" for students also exposes them to the range of work occurring on campus, enabling them to learn from our community of scholars and practitioners. This was more than learning for the sake of learning, but rather developing critical consciousness by engaging with diverse knowledge networks for purposes of transformation.

To counter the typical emphasis on DEI in the United States (Kincheloe, 2008), we elected to spend an equivalent amount of time on national and global issues in a single, required entry course. We were intentional about retaining topics and themes that students could consider from both a national and a global perspective, as well as consider transnational issues (e.g., migration, immigration). This was transformative in that we purposefully wanted students to see themselves in the histories and current issues represented in the courses. This will also enable students to see how key issues affect individuals and groups in the U.S. in ways that may differ for those outside the U.S. For example, during two weeks on oppression at the institutional and cultural levels, students will consider how mass incarceration is driven by and perpetuates racial inequities in the U.S., and how ethnicity shaped the Rwandan and Biafran genocides. To further model inclusivity, we deliberately included case studies from every continent.

New Course Content

To accommodate what was now two minors--one national and one global—we created three new courses: a required entry course for both "tracks" and two exit courses. The introductory course ("Introduction to Critical DEI Studies") is designed to help students begin to develop a critical consciousness. This course exposes all students enrolled in the minor to equivalent amounts of material on national and global DEI issues, such that we challenge neocolonial educational structures in both tracks. At the end of this 4-credit course, students are expected to: 1) know the key concepts related to identity, power, oppression and difference; 2) understand how historical and structural relations of power and difference shape social relations and outcomes within various cultural contexts; 3) explore theoretical approaches to explain different social outcomes; 4) critically evaluate and assess disparities at the personal,

interpersonal, structural, and cultural levels; and 5) develop potential strategies for, and ability to, effect change.

In order to situate the course content within the student's own experiences, the course begins with a series of self-assessments. These assignments and class activities require students to reflect on the DEI knowledge as well as potential biases they may already possess, and on how their intersectional identities shape their worldview. The aim of these exercises is not only for students to understand their own lens, but also to promote students' confidence and willingness to participate in open dialogue around challenging issues by learning to work through discomfort and toward problem solving (Walker, 2017). We also included these activities to help the instructor(s) have better understanding of the class, as critical education requires teachers to know their students' backgrounds and other forces that shape their perspective (Kincheloe, 2008).

The two exit capstone courses are exclusively focused on strategies for change in either the national or global arena. No matter the chosen track, these reading-intensive courses have two shared themes that are allocated five-weeks each: "Change Processes" and "Understanding and Overcoming Resistance." Within these broader themes are examinations of the processes of personal, institutional, and societal change, including what has changed and what has not. The courses also explore how these changes, or lack thereof, are tied to historical and modern forms of oppression such as racism. Specific change processes considered in the national track include dialogue for change, government and legal remedies, and personal work to undo bias and proactively prevent further harm (e.g., by becoming antiracist). Understanding and overcoming resistance subthemes in this course include color blindness, exploiting fear, reparations, and activism for human rights. However, the subthemes in the global track were tailored to address global issues with case studies from different geographical locations. Limited by time and scope, the course creators were deliberate in assigning readings that capture various parts of the world. Case studies were drawn from Africa, South America, North America, Asia, and Europe.

In addition to diving into real world challenges associated with social change, both courses also require students to apply their consciousness on the ground by providing resources and services to communities. This is achieved through intensive experiential learning focused on the principles, practice, and application of DEI. Specifically, students in both courses complete a project with communities outside the university. In the domestic track, this is in collaboration with a local group or organization; the global track requires collaboration with a global organization or a local group or organization tackling a global issue.

To achieve the goals of the project, five weeks of class time is allocated to small group project meetings with the instructor(s). These meetings provide an easily accessible forum to discuss progress (through mini assignments) and how to apply the knowledge gained from class to the projects, including working with selected groups/organizations in an inclusive manner. The semester concludes with presentations of a proposal jointly drafted

with their chosen group or organization. The presentation reviews a DEI problem identified by the organization, as well as a potential solution identified by the group. Thus, rather than being passive learners, the assignments and grading structure for the exit courses require students to be involved in transformative strategies to help solve real world DEI issues.

Approval Process

The approval process for the minors did not unfold as seamlessly as we would have liked. There were numerous discussions at this early stage with the Dean of the College, the Associate and Assistant Deans of Undergraduate Studies, and the Director of Integrative Studies in Social Science about what kind of minor it would be, where the minor would be housed, who would teach the new introductory and exit courses, and who would pay for the labors of the faculty teaching the courses. It also included significant feedback regarding potential courses within the minors.

Our team first shared the courses selected for the minors with the Dean and Associate and Assistant Deans for Undergraduate Studies in the College of Social Science for study and approval. Their review made certain that we did not use courses that were already included in existing minors in the college. They also ensured that the courses did not have prerequisites that might get in the way of students successfully completing the minors. Beyond this, they asked to see and approve the three new course syllabi (i.e., "Introduction to Critical DEI Studies" and the two capstone seminars). We currently await the syllabi approval.

Once these documents are approved by the Dean and the Assistant and Associate Deans for Undergraduate Studies in the College of Social Science, the next step is to package them for review and approval by the College Curriculum Committee. We expect some back and forth between us and the Committee prior to approval of our materials, which will then be placed in line to be reviewed and approved by the University Curriculum Committee. Once the University Curriculum Committee approves our two minors, the last step is to secure approval from the University Provost. From beginning to end, we expect this approval process to take about five months. If there are members of these committees who are unsupportive of DEI efforts, they may challenge critical course content during the approval process. We are preparing to respond to these committees as needed.

Working in tandem with the approval process were the discussions with the Dean of the College of Social Science to secure buy-in and resources. Once we secure buy-in, we will need to determine which faculty member(s) will be teaching the classes. We will also need to secure resources for course releases for those faculty and to produce the spotlight videos that we are going to be using, especially in our Introductory course. We expect that there may be tension with regards to who will be responsible for buying out faculty time and paying for the spotlight videos. Willingness to provide such resources would reflect a move toward transformative DEI, as the minors would become a systemic component of the college's educational mission. Despite the lengthy approval process and hesitation to commit resources for the minors during the previous academic year, the recent release of the university wide DEI plan, coupled with the board of trustees, and alumni support, bolsters the likelihood of approval and provision of resources for these two minors. In the meantime, we offer our reflections and recommendations.

Reflections and Recommendations

First, we note a few limitations of the DEI minors. Completing a DEI minor is not required for all social science majors. Our elective approach, however, is consistent with the diversity training literature, which finds that mandatory programs are often ineffective and even counterproductive in the corporate world (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). Our goal is to inspire students to complete the DEI minors as participants and spread the word about the experiential and transformative impact. Another limitation to developing the DEI minor was that there was not a broader inclusion of members of the college, which would have meant greater investment and resources than we were allotted.

Despite these limitations, situating the task of developing the minors within the DEI Fellows program was a strategic component that gave priority and legitimacy to the process and ensured that it was structured through a transformative DEI lens. One of the key structural components of developing the minors was the inclusion of varied perspectives and experiences. As mentioned in previous sections, the Dean's DEI Fellows Program is composed of faculty from different academic programs within the university as well as in various stages within and outside the tenure system. This breadth turned out to be a balance point between emerging and established perspectives that pushed boundaries on the selection of topics and radical approaches, but also helped us remain grounded on foundational content. Beyond academic diversity, the members of the group also brought gender diversity as well as cultural diversity from their own racial/ethnic backgrounds and global group membership. Further, the inclusion of graduate students who were DEI research assistants was also crucial because they provided a unique perspective in comparison to faculty. During group discussions and task assignments, all members were given a proportionate load to contribute. Although the group had differential formal roles within the academic hierarchy, we were emphatic in making sure all members had equal voice and were an integral part of decision-making discussions. There was great transparency in the conversations even when we came across sensitive topics from an administrative standpoint as well as from cultural perspectives. Thus, through the structure of the group working on creating the minors, we modeled diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Creating DEI minors is most effective when it is a collaborative effort that exemplifies diversity, equity, and inclusion. Such collaboration must be accomplished by deliberately assembling a group of scholars and students who represent DEI membership, values, and principles. For example, our team deliberately worked to ensure that our student member, a doctoral candidate in African history, had

an equal voice in the course construction process. Her contributions to the global capstone course were particularly critical, as fewer members of our team worked in that domain. As such, she collaborated with the Associate Dean of DEI to construct this course, with the remaining faculty members merely providing feedback. Further, as ours was, this process must be inclusive of alumni and community members who are already practicing careers in diverse organizations that can inform about the gaps and priorities that their respective work markets and workplaces need to be competitive and proactive about DEI. Similarly, alumni and community members with DEI backgrounds can be better informed about the skillsets employees need as well as the gaps that currently exist in higher education programs.

Having such inclusion creates a climate where DEI can be transformative because it becomes meaningful to multiple stakeholders. Further, it establishes investment in communities inside and outside of the university, which is central to radical transformation. The service-learning component of the minors is also an element that moves the minors beyond performative DEI because it shifts the learning structure from one of authority to one that values context, culture, and difference. Lastly, it is especially important that those involved in developing transformative DEI minors are empowered with resources, commitment, and transparent access to processes that may be used to co-opt the outcomes. This is key to overcoming institutional resistance and performative DEI cooptation. An unintended consequence of performative DEI is that it can become transformative with external pressure. From our perspective, the recent release of the university's DEI plan, which encourages more DEI classes and majors, increases the likelihood that our transformative minors will be approved and resourced by the college. When performative DEI has become everyday practice, we must make radical efforts to create transformative methods that counter such performances. The work we have done in these minors models radical and transformative DEI, which can empower future generations and serve as a blueprint to critically approach DEI change.

NOTE

1. In light of our radical and transformative approach to DEI, we note that all authors contributed equally to this manuscript. To accommodate requirements for order of authorship, we alternate who serves as first author and list ourselves alphabetically thereafter.

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Carole Gibbs is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. Her research interests include understanding street and elite crime from a systems perspective and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. She is currently an inaugural member of the Dean's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellows Pilot Program in the College of Social Science. Recent publications have appeared in *Criminology* and *the Journal of Higher Education Management*.

Nwando Achebe, the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History, is a scholar-administrator and Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the College of Social Sciences at Michigan State University. A multi award winning author of six books and numerous journal articles, she is also editor-in-chief of the *Journal of West African History.*

Brian Johnson, Ph.D., J.D., is an assistant dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion for James Madison College at Michigan State University. Most recently, he served as associate institute director for Michigan State University Extension's Children and Youth Institute, and assistant professor in Human Development and Family Studies. In that capacity, he was responsible for initiating and coordinating educational programming and applied research programs in the areas of early childhood education and youth development across Michigan.

Chioma Nwaiche is a doctoral candidate in the African History Program at Michigan State University. Her scholarship, which focuses on Igbo women's history, has received several awards including the prestigious Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellowship funded by the Mellon Foundation.

Dr. Daniel Vélez Ortiz is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Michigan State University. His areas of research are in Latino older adults, cultural factors in mental health services, mental health literacy, technological approaches to cultural gaps, and structural factors relating to diversity in higher education.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

To Educate and Mobilize Voters: Digital Teacher Activism during the 2020 Elections

by Chris Gilbert
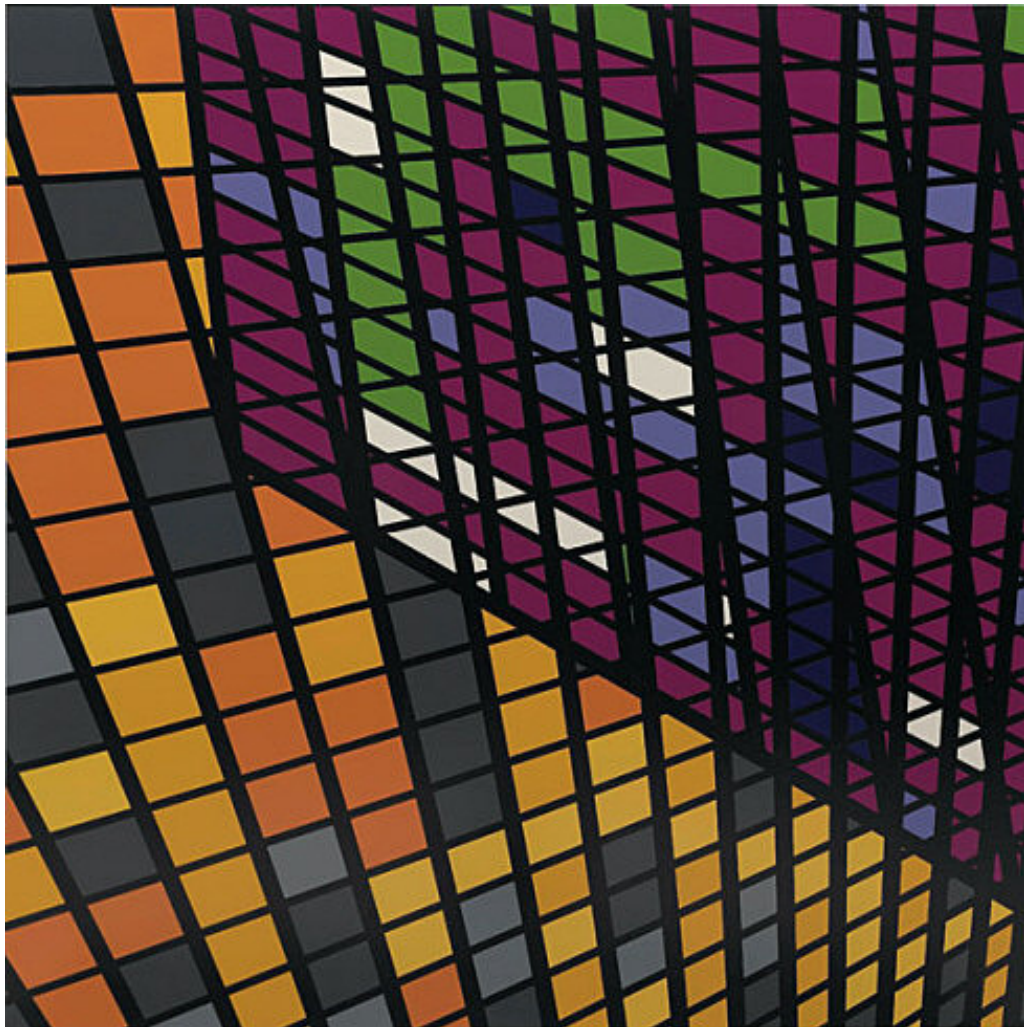
SARAH MORRISMANDALAY BAY [LAS VEGAS]. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE YOUNG COLLECTORS COUNCIL, 2000. © SARAH MORRIS

The 2020 elections were crucial for education in North Carolina. They offered public education supporters an opportunity to halt, or at least slow, the sustained attack on the state's PK-12 public school system. Since 2010, residents had witnessed the dismantling of this system, as the North Carolina General Assembly implemented a series of destructive policies. Legislators expanded school choice initiatives, removed career status and advanced degree pay for teachers, and slashed funding for teacher assistants, among other harmful initiatives. These attacks were part of a broader assault on the public sector, one deeply rooted in the neoliberal project. Fundamentally, as Harvey (2018) noted, "the [neoliberal] project…is about concentrating and accumulating more wealth and power within a very small faction of the capitalist class and corporate world." Given that public schools derive much of their funding from income taxes on individuals and businesses, public education serves as a powerful economic drain on the wealth of the corporate capitalist class and presents a threat to the neoliberal project. Over the years, business-friendly legislators in North Carolina blunted the impact of public school funding on the corporate elite via a series of tax cuts:

> Since the major tax-cut package of 2013, the Republican-majority legislature has slashed both corporate and individual income tax rates. It replaced the long-standing graduated income tax with a one-rate "flat" tax. It also dropped the state corporate income tax rate to the lowest in the nation…state fiscal analysts have calculated that the tax cuts of 2013 and subsequent shifts reduced annual revenue by $4.2 billion. (Guillory, 2021, para. 2)

Remarkably, legislators even proposed to eliminate the corporate income tax entirely, a move that along with additional cuts would potentially decrease annual revenue by around $2 billion (Guillory, 2021, para. 3). As the elections approached, it was clear that North Carolina had become a model state for neoliberal economic policy, as ever-deepening tax cuts had eroded education funding and augmented the already substantial wealth of affluent residents and big businesses.

Given these troubling developments for public education supporters, it was beyond time for change. In the run-up to the elections, educators in the state mobilized, and North Carolina's education advocacy organization, the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), got to work promoting pro-public education candidates who would challenge the neoliberal attack on public schools. Importantly, through their electoral efforts, these educators took up the role of activist and rejected the widespread cultural and institutional expectation, particularly dominant in the South, that teachers should remain apolitical; as Oyler et al. (2017) observed, "societal transformation has not, typically, been a goal of public education systems, [and] teacher activists are not what state governments…have typically desired" (p. 229). Heightened neoliberal assaults on democratic institutions such as public schools, though, have led many educators to expand their professional identity by incorporating outside-the-classroom activism into the labor process of teaching (Oyler et al., 2017). Thus, activism involves a broadening of teachers' pedagogical

work beyond what is typically sanctioned by state institutions; in the context of this article, teacher activism consists of radical pedagogical practices, or forms of education and action occurring beyond the classroom to contest the neoliberal project and support public education.

Exploring Digital Teacher Activism

As a public education advocate, former high school teacher, and someone who has both participated in and written about teacher activism (Gilbert, 2022), I wanted to learn more about the radical pedagogical practices NCAE and individual activist educators employed to get pro-public education candidates elected. More specifically, I was interested in teacher activism involving the use of digital technologies, an interest that stemmed in part from the presence of COVID-19 during the 2020 elections. Because of the pandemic, much of daily life had navigated online, and I wondered if, and how, teacher activists had also utilized digital technologies to adapt. Additionally, while some research has illuminated how teachers employ digital media, such as social media, for activist purposes (Berkovich and Avigur-Eshel, 2020; Hogan, 2018; Krutka et al., 2018; Shiller, 2015; Thapliyal, 2018, 2019), there is a need for additional inquiry in this area (Berkovich and Avigur-Eshel, 2020; Shiller, 2015; Thapliyal, 2018). All of this inspired my research into digitally-connected forms of North Carolina teacher activism related to the elections. I reviewed and analyzed pertinent activity in multiple online spaces including the social media accounts of NCAE; Facebook and Twitter accounts of NCAE President Tamika Walker Kelly; Facebook and Twitter accounts of local NCAE chapters and members; websites of two popular North Carolina teacher bloggers, along with their Facebook and Twitter accounts; and the North Carolina Teachers United Facebook group, an online community of thousands of teachers. I also communicated with several NCAE leadership figures to learn more about the organization's efforts during the elections.

I found that North Carolina teacher activists utilized digital technologies largely for two purposes: 1) to perform public pedagogy to educate voters, and 2) to mobilize voters to the polls to support pro-public education candidates. This article is organized around these two categories of radical pedagogical practice and, within each, I discuss several activist practices that were *highly visible* (i.e., promoted on multiple social media platforms) and/or *innovative* in the context of COVID-19. By focusing on a few practices, as opposed to offering an exhaustive review, I am able to highlight instructive examples potentially useful for other teacher activists while also analyzing each practice's theoretical and practical significance. Therefore, this article has two aims: to provide documentation and discussion of these practices in order to supplement existing research, and to offer ideas and inspiration to feed future activist work. I begin with the first category of teacher activist practice: public pedagogy to educate voters.

Public Pedagogy to Educate Voters

Public pedagogy refers to "spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside of the walls of

the institution of schools" (Sandlin et al., 2010, p. 1). Expanding traditional conceptions of teaching and learning, public pedagogy promotes the idea that popular culture, media, digital spaces, forms of social activism, and other informal educational phenomena 'teach' by producing knowledge, shaping assumptions, and sustaining and disrupting belief systems (O'Malley et al., 2010; Sandlin, et al., 2010). I found that North Carolina teacher activists engaged in forms of public pedagogy through Apple Cards, video interviews with candidates, and blogs, to educate voters about pro-public education candidates and their political opponents. I explore each of these practices through the lens of public pedagogy while also discussing forms of innovation and adaptation, where apparent, in response to COVID-19.

FIGURE 1. *TWEET DISPLAYING AN APPLE CARD SIGN IN WAKE COUNTY* (TUTTELL, 2020)

Voter Education through Apple Cards

Perhaps the most visible public pedagogical tool utilized by teacher activists during the 2020 elections was the NCAE Apple Card, an apple-shaped document featuring a list of NCAE- endorsed, pro-public education candidates. Each Apple Card featured the same state-level office endorsements, but the remaining content varied by region,

FIGURE 2. *DIGITAL APPLE CARD ACCESS VIA A QR CODE* (WLOS STAFF, 2020)

as voters found NCAE-endorsed candidates for local county commissioner and school board races listed on the card.

During previous elections, Apple Cards often found their way into voters' hands via physical distribution, but COVID-19 clearly complicated the hand-to-hand distribution of paper cards, and this pedagogical text thus took on a heightened hybridized existence in 2020; while paper versions were still made available, it increasingly manifested in digital form. The sign in Figure 1 provides an excellent example of this hybridity. NCAE placed these signs at numerous polling places throughout Wake County as a form of "contactless poll greeting" (Craig, 2020). Voters could obtain paper versions of the Apple Card from each sign, or they could access the card in digital form by scanning the associated QR code with a smartphone. This same QR code also appeared on picket signs during a socially-distanced rally in Asheville, as teacher activists invited voters to safely learn about candidates through a "paperless Apple Card" (see Figure 2); the use of the QR code for this purpose was a new practice for teacher activists in the Asheville area, and one employed specifically because of COVID-19 (A.P. Cathcart, personal communication, October 18, 2021). The Apple Card also appeared digitally in the North Carolina Teachers United Facebook group, as a group administrator created a post in which teachers educated each other by sharing images of cards from regions throughout the state. Finally, the Apple Card was made available in virtual form through https://ncaevotes2020.org/, a website NCAE highlighted more during the pandemic than in previous years (T.W. Kelly, personal communication, August 3, 2021).

This heightened digital manifestation of the card is significant, as it illustrates one way North Carolina teacher activists adapted to constraints introduced by COVID-19, specifically the need to minimize in-person contact. The Apple Card's digital format also matters because, as Freishtat and Sandlin (2009) noted, "Online digital media function as a form of public pedagogy" (p. 148). As a public pedagogical tool, the Apple Card served to inform and persuade, and these functions were enhanced by its hybridity. This characteristic enabled greater flexibility and portability, thus allowing voters to educate themselves through multiple formats and in various settings. The card's digital format also extended its pedagogical reach by allowing it to quickly multiply in online spaces.

At a pragmatic level, the card simply informed voters via a list of endorsed candidates; at a deeper pedagogical level, the card encouraged both resistance and hope. The significance of the card, and the candidates it featured, was located in its rejection of the current educational reality in North Carolina, one characterized by a prolonged neoliberal assault on public education. It conveyed hope by offering voters a way to participate in the construction of a new political reality in which the state's public schools could be strengthened and its teachers supported. The Apple Card was therefore a noteworthy pedagogical tool with educational, civic, and affective implications.

Card provided voters with an essential list of pro-public education names to support, #TuesdayswithTamika gave these names bodies and voices, and voters could watch, learn, and assess candidates' viewpoints in real-time or at their leisure. Further, by broadcasting live on social media, NCAE utilized the interactivity, or "multidirectional communication" (Thapliyal, 2018, p. 115) of these platforms, as viewers exchanged thoughts and resources through the comment and chat features on Facebook and YouTube. Importantly, this interactivity makes social media an essential public pedagogical space; as Reid (2010) noted, "social media have become important sites of public pedagogy, places where we go to learn, and places where we learn indirectly as we come to understand ourselves in relation to others" (p. 194). Thus, viewers not only learned from Walker Kelly and her interviewees, but they also educated each other. With #TuesdayswithTamika, NCAE
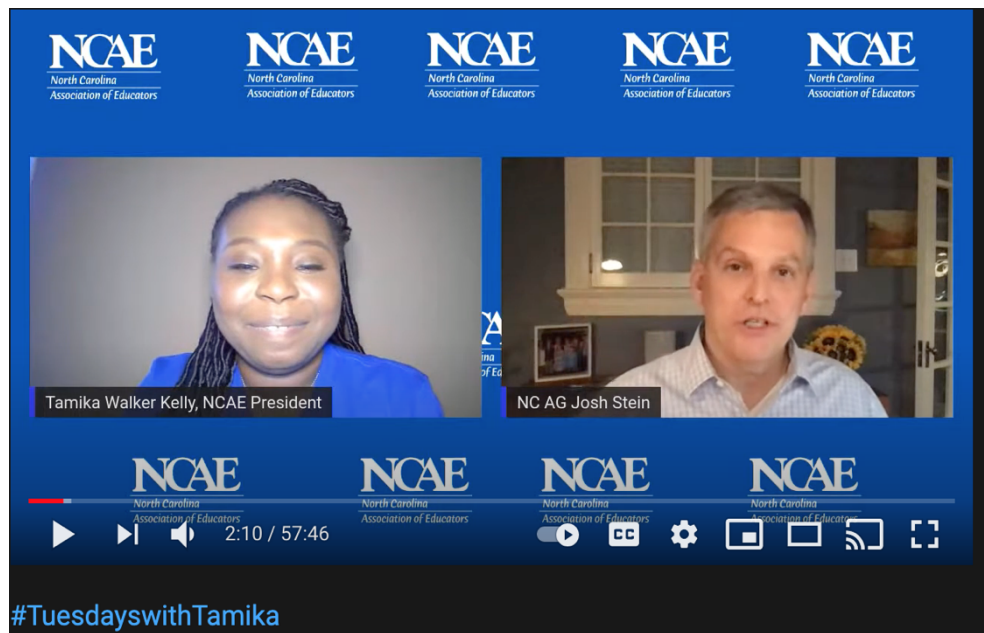

FIGURE 3. TAMIKA WALKER KELLY INTERVIEWS NC ATTORNEY GENERAL JOSH STEIN ON #TUESDAYSWITHTAMIKA (NCAEVIDEO, 2020)

utilized digital technology to inform voters while offering them opportunities to extend their learning through interaction, a noteworthy pedagogical affordance of social media, and one especially needful during a pandemic that discouraged personal interaction.

Voter Education through Video Interviews with Political Candidates

Another pedagogical tool teacher activists employed to educate voters was video interviews with political candidates. My research revealed a video interview series that was particularly visible online: #TuesdayswithTamika. #TuesdayswithTamika featured NCAE President Tamika Walker Kelly interviewing various NCAE-endorsed political candidates (see Figure 3). During these interviews, Walker Kelly asked candidates to share their backgrounds, views on public education, and other information of interest to voters. Interviews were broadcast live on Facebook and YouTube, and voters could also access video recordings through these platforms and Twitter.

Significantly, these interviews functioned as a pedagogical extension of the Apple Card. While the Apple

Voter Education through Teacher Activist Blogging

The final public pedagogical practice under focus is teacher activist blogging. My research showed repeated activity around the work of two North Carolina teacher activist bloggers: Justin Parmenter and Stu Egan. Their blog posts are frequently shared and re-shared in online spaces including North Carolina Teachers United, and by numerous individuals and groups including NCAE. Both bloggers were active around the 2020 elections, as they published several blog posts aimed at voters; Egan published two pieces that garnered noticeable attention online, and one of Parmenter's blog posts also circulated widely online. Importantly, blog

posts such as these perform public pedagogy by functioning as educative platforms that allow teachers "to publicize their professional knowledge whilst problematizing policy. They also provide valuable grounds for awareness raising with deliberative attempts to change public opinion" (Dennis, 2015, p. 287). Egan and Parmenter employed several pedagogical strategies in these posts to educate and persuade voters.

First, they advanced critiques of neoliberal leadership in the North Carolina General Assembly by calling out specific individuals by name, attributing current educational conditions in the state to their actions, and demanding their removal. Egan (2020b), for example, wrote:

> ...after watching lawmakers like Tim Moore and Phil Berger hold this state hostage through unethical measures to pass budgets, hold special sessions, and pass legislation that continuously weaken our public schools it has become apparent to this teacher that these are not the people with whom you build bridges.

Parmenter (2020) was equally direct, calling Tim Moore (North Carolina House Speaker) and Phil Berger (President Pro Tempore of the North Carolina Senate) "chief architects of the current North Carolina public schools Dark Age." Significantly, these critiques also provided alternative viewpoints to refute political talking points; Berger's website, for example, characterized him as someone who had worked to improve public schools and support teachers (Education, n.d.). Egan's and Parmenter's critiques rebuffed this characterization by offering counter-narratives, an important function of teacher activist blogging (Krutka et al., 2018; Shiller, 2015).

Another pedagogical strategy utilized by Egan and Parmenter was that of triggering voters' historical memory. Both bloggers communicated the need to replace current political leadership not because of a single action, but rather because of a long history of attacks on public schools and teachers. Parmenter (2020), for example, highlighted the history of damage inflicted during the "education policy Dark Age" that began when legislators hostile toward public schools assumed control of state government in 2010; he did so by providing a recap of multiple policies that had negatively impacted public education since then. Similarly, Egan (2020a) listed a series of reforms that had "turned a once progressive state system of public education into one of regression." As public pedagogy, this triggering of voters' historical memory underscored the need for voters to interrupt a

dangerous trend in NC's educational history and challenge the neoliberal project.

A final pedagogical strategy was the bloggers' elevation

of experiential knowledge. As full-time educators, their policy critiques are anchored in their experiences with these policies "in the trenches," and their writing is thus deeply informed by their professional expertise. In her study of teacher bloggers, Shiller (2015) referred to this characteristic as "commons knowledge...a genre that allows everyday people to challenge so-called expert, official, and/or institutional knowledge...it allows for anyone to emerge as an expert, upending the conventional notions of whose knowledge counts" (p. 14). This anchoring in "commons knowledge" (Lievrouw, 2011; Shiller, 2015) served a pedagogical function in that it taught other educators that their experiences and voices matter. The ideal outcome of this pedagogy was the empowerment of these educators and the exercising of their voices, specifically through voting. In sum, Egan and Parmenter utilized several strategies to educate and persuade NC residents to reject current political leadership and vote pro-public education.

Through blog posts, Apple Cards, and #TuesdayswithTamika, teacher activists engaged in public pedagogy to educate and persuade voters to support pro-public education candidates. To truly effect change, though, voters had to be both educated *and* mobilized, and it is to this second category of radical pedagogical practice that I now turn.

Voter Mobilization through Digital Media

In her discussion of activist uses of digital, or "new" media, Lievrouw (2011) identified the genre of "mediated mobilization," or the use of "web-based social software tools like social network sites...to cultivate interpersonal networks online and to mobilize those networks to engage in live and

mediated collective action" (p. 25). My research revealed that teacher activists initiated two innovative and highly visible forms of mediated mobilization to move voters to the polls, the first being virtual phone banking.

During the run-up to the elections, NCAE used its social media channels to repeatedly promote virtual phone banking and recruit volunteers for this task. Once committed, these volunteers received online training, signed up for shifts, and then phone banked from their homes using their cell phones. In a break from the organization's previous in-person phone banking efforts, and as a COVID-related innovation (T.W. Kelly, personal communication, August 3, 2021), NCAE also distributed a Zoom link that allowed volunteers to join other phone bankers in a virtual space to share their experiences and receive support (see Figure 4).

The second form of mediated mobilization was the #RedforEd Statewide Early Vote event (see Figure 5), held during the start of the early voting period in North Carolina. Intended to drive the pro-public education vote, this NCAE-sponsored event was heavily promoted through social media and offered participants both online and offline modes of participation. Participants could attend a number of socially-distanced, in-person rallies held throughout the state, or they could participate by joining a livestream of the rallies and sharing #RedforEd-tagged selfies on social media of them wearing "I voted" stickers.

bankers, livestream participants, and selfie sharers) to encourage offline action (e.g., move voters to the polls).

Second, these voter mobilization efforts illustrate once more how teacher activists adapted in the context of COVID-19. In the case of virtual phone banking, the use of Zoom not only provided a digital space for home-based teacher volunteers to quickly and safely receive real-time support, but it also created a shared space to combat the social isolation caused by the pandemic. Similarly, the #RedforEd Statewide Early Vote event promoted social connectivity by allowing participants to join the event via livestream, an option offered specifically in response to COVID-19 (T.W. Kelly, personal communication, August 3, 2021); thus, individuals uncomfortable with in-person contact could still connect with others and show solidarity in a safe, virtual capacity. Of relevance here is Oyler's (2017) observation that "[o]nline spaces offer educators efficient ways to connect along lines of affinity and gain support" (p. 36). Given the importance of relationships in teacher activism (Catone, 2017), this function of digital media to facilitate social connection was likely critical in the context of COVID-19. For this reason and others discussed above, these forms of mediated mobilization provide noteworthy examples of digital teacher activism to mobilize voters.

Mixed Results and Future Adaptation

As the election results came in, it became apparent that teachers' activist efforts had produced a mix of victories and defeats. Undoubtedly, there were some important successes to celebrate. Perhaps the most high profile of which was the re-election of Governor Roy Cooper, an ardent public education supporter. Other NCAE-endorsed candidates also won their races, including Attorney General Josh Stein, State Auditor Beth Wood, Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, and others. Local victories also occurred throughout the state in school board and county commissioner races. Efforts fell short, though, in the NC General Assembly, as both the House and Senate remained under the control of legislators hostile toward public education. Perhaps these mixed results underscore the limitations of digital activism and the continued importance of traditional, on-the-ground forms of political activism, some of which saw decreased use because of COVID-19. This outcome also provokes questions of scale and reach: did public pedagogical tools circulate broadly enough to educate a wide swath of voters? Were enough teachers engaged in activism to mobilize voters across the entire state? Further research is needed to explore these questions.
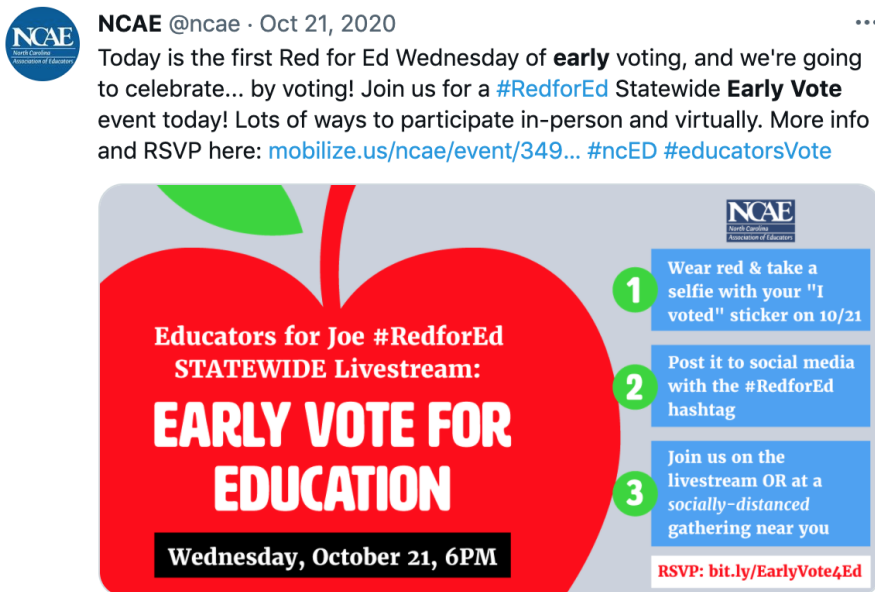

NCAE @ncae · Oct 21, 2020
Today is the first Red for Ed Wednesday of **early** voting, and we're going to celebrate... by voting! Join us for a #RedforEd Statewide **Early Vote** event today! Lots of ways to participate in-person and virtually. More info and RSVP here: mobilize.us/ncae/event/349... #ncED #educatorsVote

FIGURE 5. A TWEET PROMOTING THE #REDFORED STATEWIDE EARLY VOTE EVENT (NCAE, 2020A)

These two examples of teacher-activist initiated, mediated mobilization are significant for two reasons. First, they provide instructive examples of how teacher activists strategically employ digital media to mobilize offline activity (Berkovich and Avigur-Eshel, 2019; Krutka et al., 2018). This online-to-offline movement was evident in both forms of activism described above, as these efforts efficiently formed online networks of teacher volunteers (phone

Regardless of these mixed results, the digital activist practices explored here demonstrate how teachers utilize digital media to impact electoral outcomes. They also show that teacher activists persisted and adapted in the face of a pandemic. On top of their classroom responsibilities, which became vastly more challenging because of COVID-19, many teachers still took up activism to educate and mobilize voters to support public education. And the digital innovations that emerged during these efforts are now part of an ever-expanding teacher activist repertoire; the use of QR codes to share political information, Zoom video conferencing to facilitate phone banking, livestreams to enable virtual participation in rallies, and other creative uses of digital media may now become standard activist practices for teachers. During future elections and other political developments that call for activism, educators can employ these practices and draw upon their deepened technological knowledge to create even more innovative, activist methods. Future obstacles will undoubtedly emerge, and I suspect teacher activists will also continue to adapt. Importantly, such activism is increasingly essential given the persistence of the neoliberal project within North Carolina and beyond. Legislators in my state and elsewhere continue to implement regressive policies that funnel wealth to those at the top of the economic ladder and starve public schools of essential resources. Not only do teacher activists contest these policies through the radical pedagogical practices described in this article, but they also model forms of political engagement for educators who have not yet embraced the activist role. As the neoliberal threat persists, it is imperative that non-activist educators reject institutional and cultural norms that promote political detachment, expand their professional identity, and join with others currently engaged in activism to collectively support students, public schools, and the diverse communities these schools serve.

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Chris Gilbert is a former high school English teacher and college instructor who lives in the mountains of North Carolina. He is also an avid writer. His work has appeared in *The Washington Post's* education blog, "The Answer Sheet," NCTE's (National Council of Teachers of English) *English Journal*, Kappa Delta Pi's *Record* and *The Educational Forum*, *Critical Studies in Education*, and E*ducational Action Research*.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Un/Commoning Pedagogies: Moving To/Gather in Difference

by Dasha A. Chapman, J Dellecave, Adanna Kai Jones, Sharon Freda Kivenko, Mario LaMothe, Lailye Weidman, Queen Meccasia Zabriskie

RASHID JOHNSON. THE NEW BLACK YOGA. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY DAVID SHUMAN, 2012. © RASHID JOHNSON

Introducing: Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective

Collaboration, as Lauren Berlant described it, is a "super-intensified version of teaching" (Wang 2019). Since 2019, the Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective (UnCPC) has been creating a collaborative space in which radical anti-racist approaches to teaching and learning are explored, exchanged, and elaborated *through embodied modes*. In these times of broadening commitments to reckoning with the racism and white supremacy deeply embedded within social structures, especially with regards to our structures of education, we regularly come together to move, to discuss, to listen, to process, and to collaboratively write towards liberated anti-racist futures. We are Black folks and white folks[1] working in studios, in higher ed classrooms, and in performance spaces. Our work lineages and histories are rooted in various kinds of movement practice. We bring the moving body into our classrooms and studios whether we are teaching dance, Africana studies, anthropology, sociology, performance studies, cultural studies, or gender and sexuality studies.

other forms of oppression, while knowing that it is through the body that these injustices and violences are enacted. We insist that the body both holds an awareness of how racism works and must be engaged in efforts toward more just, equitable, and joyous/joyful futures.

We began our work together as people from various positionalities wanting to emphasize the importance of moving alongside one another while honoring difference. This anchors our labor toward crafting embodied anti-racist practices in our spaces of teaching, learning, scholarship, and performing. As a collective we foreground movement just as we embrace the time needed for each of our voices to be heard; we are friends and we are collegial; we do the work for which we are advocating—a relatively uncommon choice we continue to make in our contemporary moment of consumer-oriented production and neoliberal institutional models. In subversion, we meet regularly to just be in relation, as we also labor together to bring other modes of being into fruition: producing workshops in academic settings and at conferences, co-authoring articles, sharing movement practice, making performance together, and discussing classroom and institutional dilemmas, challenges, and successes. We involve each other in classroom/studio exchanges, where we co-teach across the borders of our various institutional affiliations.

In spring 2021, during COVID's rage and an intense spring semester, UnCPC facilitated several workshops, classroom exchanges, and a performance—all online. Inside of these varied engagements we employed a simple yet generative exercise we called *Do Something, Do Something Different.* This exercise invited participants to focus awareness and intentions towards their fellow movers in order to *Do Something,* or *Do Something Different*. Participants would follow one person's movements – *do something* – and when they had an impulse to move in a different way – *do something different* – they could follow another person's movements or offer up a movement of their own. In an online meeting setting, some movers would collectively (and wordlessly) explore what it was like to move their whole bodies within the frame of their screen, while others would experiment with a close-up perspective: a creasing forehead, a puckered mouth, blinking eyes. The simple yet challenging instruction to *do something, or do something different*—follow one person or another, be a leader, or move on one's own—illuminated a plurality of possibilities for thinking through the challenges and promises of this current moment. How do we

FIGURE 1: THE UN/COMMONING PEDAGOGIES COLLECTIVE (UNCPC) WORKSHOP AT THE DANCE STUDIES ASSOCIATION 2019 CONFERENCE, *DANCING IN COMMON*, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY. PHOTO CREDIT: JESS MCCORMACK.

As anti-racist dancer-scholars, we understand that our bodies are included in anti-racist practice, and that anti-racist discussions need to be part of the movement classroom/studio. We are inspired by the collaboration between The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) and Urban Bush Women (UBW) who integrate embodiment into the work of undoing racism. As UnCPC, we carry lessons learned from trainings with PISAB and UBW, as well as other related endeavors, to develop methods not only for talking about injustice in our classrooms and studios, but also for enacting the work of undoing it. We center the importance of the body in addressing racism and

pay attention to one another? What does it feel like to initiate group movement? How might one move as another does? What does it feel like to initiate movement to which others may not feel drawn? These questions speak to our collective's larger concerns regarding the importance of working with and across differences, while also attuning to one another, forming group practice, and feeling what it feels like to move in times of isolation, fatigue, and instability.

Here, in this essay, this exercise anchors our written reflections and our sharing of tools for facilitating body-based awareness and collective movement practice across demographic and spatial contexts, all geared towards anti-racist learning. We begin with setting intentions for collective body-based anti-racist work and provide some guidelines for collective care. From there, we move into an orienting Grounding Practice, which then bridges into a foundational question of the Un/Commoning Pedagogies Collective: How do we build spaces of connection without nullifying difference and positionality? We respond with a series of written conversations in which we provide examples of teaching that integrates and explains body-based exercises. These reflections offer engagements premised on positionality in various ways to further illustrate the power—and potential misfires—of centering the body in our work with students. Next, we introduce readers more fully to *Do Something, Do Something Different*. Each collective member offers insights they have gleaned from the exercise as we've led it in different contexts. We close with an integration practice that we use as an integral component of our workshops and classes.

Grounding: Collective Care Practices in Embodied Anti-racist Work

Community Guidelines

We always begin group processes by devising community or collective agreements. Such agreements aim to craft an intentional framework for gathering and serve as important foundations for forging anti-racist and equitable spaces, with the aim of allowing participants from marginalized socio-political locations to be fully present and heard, while also decentering whiteness. Our practice of devising collective agreements adopts strategies from Urban Bush Women (UBW), the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB), and the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA). The principles we work by are

also inspired by the authors and practitioners cited in the [re]source list. The following agreements informed our writing and can be a further guide for your reading, in addition to, of course, teaching or facilitation. These agreements are ongoing, and only the beginning of the journey.
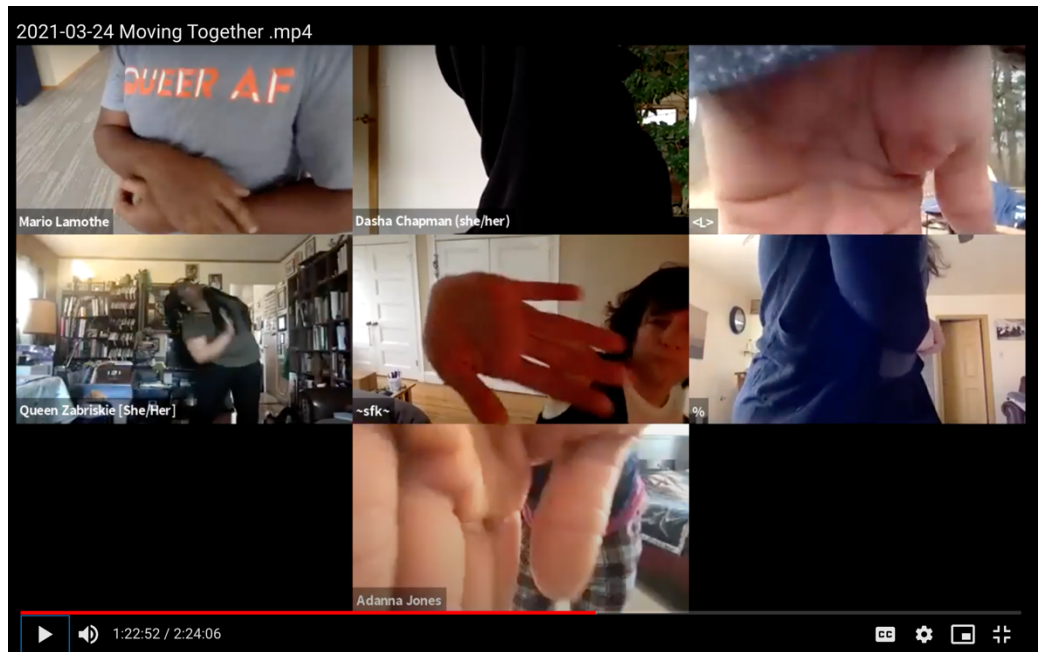

FIGURE 2: UNCPC GROUP MEETING, *DO SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT* EXERCISE. SCREENSHOT FROM ZOOM VIDEO, 2021.

1. To BEGIN:

   a. No one knows everything; together we know a lot. Trust that there is more knowledge in the dialogic exchange of information.

   b. Write/Read not as an expert, but as a part of.

   c. What happens here stays here, and what is learned can be shared.

2. On CONTRIBUTING:

   a. Step up, step back. Be aware of how much or how little space you take up in the group.

   b. Speak from the I. This allows us to hold ourselves accountable, concretize the abstract, and remain honest and embodied (i.e. deeply connected to our own bodies).

   c. Assume good intentions, but recognize impact.

3. On PROCESS:

   a. This is a space of learning.

   b. Value experimentation and collaboration.

   c. Trust the often uncomfortable process of growing.

4. On DIFFERENCE:

a. Respect and appreciate differences.

b. Listen-feel-sense for understanding, not debate.

c. Being together in our differences takes time, long-term commitment, and patience.

5. On EMBODIED PRESENCE:

a. Be present, stay engaged in your body.

b. Take care of yourself as needed.

c. Practice returning to the body.

These agreements aid us in bravely inhabiting the space in collectivity, preparing us to attend to our moving bodies.

Grounding Meditation

Grounding serves as a warm-up to more full-bodied exercises; it opens the possibility for deep listening with and through our body. We often utilize this exercise in our UnCPC meetings and in our larger community workshops.

We invite you to undertake this meditation as part of your experiential reading of our article.

In a quiet space, settle your body comfortably supported in a chair or laying down on the floor. Set a timer, take off your glasses, soften your gaze on to a single point, or close your eyes.

Ask yourself this question, and notice how it lands in and on your body in this moment in which you find yourself:

What is pressing on you in regard to anti-racist practice and embodied teaching/learning?

For one to three minutes, let's meditate on this question. Notice your embodied responses to it.

Scan your body, and ask this same question again: **What is pressing on you in regard to anti-racist practice and embodied teaching/learning?** Notice and describe your bodily sensations. Begin from the top of your body and move down. Or begin from the bottom of your body and move up. Breathe normally and pay attention to how the air affects each part of your body with every inhalation and exhalation. Bring awareness to the areas you often ignore, such as your jawline, in-between your ribs, or your fingers and toes. With each breath, note any tensions, discomfort, knots, or twinges. Describe just the sensation, or, in continuing to take stock of your body's sensation, offer attention to one body part and recover the lived moments that your body is now holding on to.

Here is an example of a body scan, though yours should and will sound entirely different. *The top of my head is open, I breathe normally, and notice how the air affects other parts of my body with every inhalation. I notice that there is tension and stiffness in my jawline. This tension feels old, prickly, stuck, yet mobile. When I wear a face mask, I push my bottom jaw forward in order to breathe better. I teach dance wearing a face mask and my students now need air breaks in addition to water breaks. What is pressing on my body is air and the right to breathe.*

We ask that you complete this activity alone as an experiential part of your reading. However, in group settings and practices, you can do it in pairs where one person is the silent witness/listener and one person is the doer/vocalizer. If you are conducting this work in pairs, a clear transition between roles is vital.

This grounding meditation exercise tilts the practice of meditation and the ubiquitous "body scan" toward urgent matters, yoking somatic practice to social context and self-reflection. In doing so, understandings of one's habits in relation to the stakes of anti-racist practice potentially reveal themselves in one's visceral, physical, sensorial form. This practice can be tilted toward any number of burning or resonant questions that might be well attended to through embodied self-reflection. The next section is framed by one of these questions that we as a collective have dwelled upon since our initial convening.

SHARING: How do you build spaces of connection without nullifying difference and positionality?

The following provides a view into written and verbal exchanges we have fostered since the early days of our collaboration in 2019, carried through 2020's pandemic circumstances and intensified movements against anti-Black racism, and through to 2021, when our concerns press upon us and our students in increasingly visceral ways. Specific exercises we have used in our classrooms, workshops, and studios are accompanied by reflections on how these exercises work in and through bodies. We each speak from our individual positions—from the I—accounting for our own movement histories and how they inform our pedagogies, acknowledging how such positions influence the ways in which each of us approaches building anti-racist spaces of connection within the academic settings in which we work.

Making Space to Show Up in Crisis

[AKJ]: As a Trinidad-born, US-raised, always ready to *bus' ah sweet wine,*[2] sometimes creole, unmarked as Latina, yet always-already recognized as "Black" and "female," I carry varied embodied and movement-centered knowledges with me into all aspects of my work. In my teaching, I am committed to carving out multiple types of spaces for sharing, responding to, and proliferating the wealth of our combined knowledge(s) through speech, text, and movement. With the invasion of COVID-19 into the most intimate parts of our lives, the very ways we understand each other and the world have come into question. Faculty across the globe were asked to transition from in-person to remote teaching *immediately*. And we, as an institution and community, had to come to terms with the inequities that were once invisibilized by the very shelter of the ivory tower (from food security to health, safety, and access to technology and tools). In effect, the first thing that I felt obligated to address was: "How has this drastic shift in

learning, connecting, and communing affected how you live, at the level of your living, breathing bodies?" From this space/place, students were asked to literally use their bodies to respond to our in-class discussions and readings (both before and during the shelter-in-place mandates). This allowed us all to show up however and wherever we were, mentally and physically. And according to my students' feedback, it allowed them to stay connected to their own bodies as well as to each other's felt experiences, even as we transitioned into remote teaching/learning.

Fast forward to Fall 2021, when my classes were no longer remote and I had to deal with the effects and affects of COVID in-person. The realities of health, death, and care—both for our whole selves and our larger community/(ies)—hit us (my students, myself, and the college more generally) *hard*. Making space for processing our realities, so that I *can* teach, learn, and show up to class, became a game of structured improvisation. The "structure"—our Class Agreements (which were modified versions of the Community Guidelines discussed above)—became the constant that I used to ground the students and the class itself. For instance, when the campus had to deal with a massive tragedy, my Afro-Caribbean dance class needed to pause and breathe outside of the classroom and my repertory dance class needed to find breath in the classroom and with each other. Our first class agreement is "Stay present/in the room," which I have further defined as: "Take care of yourself as needed" in order to be an active participant. You are expected to move and engage with your whole body, so it is important to take care of all your needs so that you can show up and be present, especially with regards to your health and overall wellbeing. Better said, I am teaching students to take the time to process and access what resources they themselves have to call upon to meet their mental and physical needs in order to show up and be active participants in-class. Upholding these agreements, from nourishing their bodies (i.e., hydrating, sleeping, eating, etc.) to nourishing their minds (taking time to breathe and process their anxieties or emotions), became a practice of improvisation. The choices we made as we moved through time and space—as dancers, students, and just humans—all became an act of meeting the moment and leaning into our strengths. What I then learned, based on my students' participation and my own experience, was that this particular way of improvising gave us permission to show up (even when it felt most raw or vulnerable) and still contribute to the class in a way that gave us access to those goals and intentions of the course which remained integral and necessary. Simply put, it is all about IMPROVE-I-sation! With that said, as a few of my colleagues mention below, not every student was willing, able, or open to such work; so I had to make space for their resistance, our discomfort, the disconnections, and the misunderstandings. In other words, I had to really lean into this idea of IMPROVE-I-sation.

Playfulness is Rigorous

[ML]: I confront this question of positionality, critically working through my positions as a Haitian-American scholar and artist educated at elite institutions in Haiti, the United States, and France. I am surrounded by caring colleagues and collaborators. Yet I navigate my interactions with students and peers with a relentless emotional and physical fatigue, laboring to hold these positions in critical dialogue and tension with my interlocutors' senses of self. I aim to deeply sense and feel bodies in spaces; my body relaxes or stiffens according to the energy they emit. We actually all do this, though some are better at gatekeeping felt-sensing interactions. Thinking of this, students and I devise rules of conduct for infusing playfulness and kinesthetic learning in an institutional classroom laden with arrogance—taking up Maria Lugones, as cited by D. Soyini Madison: "norms, rules, expectations, values, and structures are not for playing…[in] spaces inhospitable to our identity and being" (Lugones in Madison 2019, 123). I became acutely aware that the onus falls on me to underscore playfulness. Playfulness does not equate to a lack of importance, as a student formalized in her disagreement with my methods in a course evaluation. Therefore, the first week of any class, I use the following exercise (Madison 2019, 25) to aid students and me in keeping this question as our compass throughout the semester.

Clusters of at least three students each analyze an image I have pre-selected that features a group of people. It can be from a photograph, a painting or visual art piece, or an advertisement. I tend to select images that include a diversity of bodies in locations or situations that are not overly familiar to the students, so they don't rely on pre-existing meanings as they move through the exercise. Students are then tasked to "D.I.E.T."—describe, interpret, evaluate, and theorize—how individual positions and social differences are conceived, imaged and circulated. They describe the elements such as bodies and objects of the visual material and ways that design elements (shapes, forms, colors, etc.) contribute to enhancing the image. They interpret the image and consider the visual material's details, and to the best of their ability, they propose ideas the artist is trying to convey. They evaluate the image; they reflect on the effectiveness of the artist's message as well as bridge their interpretation to popular and theoretical knowledge of the social and cultural conditions of the people and objects being depicted. Last, students theorize. I urge them to think critically about the visual object's significance for viewers, and to discuss the artist's position vis-à-vis what is being documented. To nuance their theorizations, I ask them to reflect on their own position vis-à-vis the image and to explain how they register it.

The active embodied component of the exercise requires students to be living statues: they stage the photograph and facilitate a conversation between the image creator and the depicted scene. Each student then speaks from the points of view of the various objects or characters within the image using the following prompts. How are they each expressing differently what it means to be within the frame or parameters of the image? How are they expressing their relationship to the other figures or images around them? In their various voicings of what is within the image, are they giving more emphasis to one or more bodies and/or objects over others? Why and why not?

Enabling students to discuss their awareness about relationality and positionality, this is an exercise that can be repeated intermittently with them to direct attention to how they might contend with and reproduce social positions and relations. They perform stand-ins to bodies in the

foreground and background of an image and our everyday life as a means to understand the imbricated ways in which power differentials are represented, narrativized, and appropriated, while at the same time embody the effort required to shift these dynamics.

"How I Move": Towards Choreographies of Social Locatedness

[DAC]: I am a white first-generation American whose Jewish parents grew up in South Africa and Israel. My work as an educator is steeped in and emergent from over seventeen years of dance-based study, ethnography, and collaborative relationships with African, Caribbean, and African American dancers and arts-activists. With training in Africana movement modalities and Performance Studies, I teach interdisciplinary courses in dance studies which integrate practice, theory, and history. Because of my short dark curly hair and how I move through space and on the dance floor, I am sometimes mistakenly identified as light-skinned Black or mixed-race. Teaching at the intersections of disciplines, worlds, and practices, I made clear then (and now) my social identities and my social commitments to my students up front.

An exercise I've incorporated into many of my courses—all of which blur the separation between studio and seminar—investigates what white feminist Adrienne Rich terms "politics of location" in tandem with what Black feminists insist on as intersectional positionality. I encourage students to consider how one's intersecting social locations (positionality) are in fact physically inscribed, incorporated, experienced, performed, reinforced, reinterpreted. How do you move through the world, literally (c.f. Adeyemi 2017)? What disciplinary forces, trainings (broadly conceived), and circumstances make particular movements possible or impossible, proper or improper? I assign readings to prep the students in their considerations—tilted more or less toward "Dance" or social location, depending on the class. Students write short essays in relation to these readings and questions. In the next class session, we parse through their writing to find the action prompts and descriptive terms they themselves wrote. We then use those as movement prompts to explore through the body in the studio. After some individual work in relation to their movement/action terms, students string together a brief phrase or improvisational framework for their own "How I Move" choreographies. Afterwards, we reflectively write again. Throughout the semester, I return to this process and the students' choreographies in various ways—again, depending on the course. Sometimes we use the movements generated as each student's base from which to explore other concepts (such as discipline via Foucault, or the erotic via Lorde); other times the exercise becomes a consistent touchstone for students' analyses of how social formations are in fact bodily, and how this gets mobilized or rearticulated through specific dance practices.

This work can be difficult, but rewarding. During one movement session, a white student who had written from a kind of self-deprecating paralysis resulting from her white privilege felt frustrated in the studio by the immobilized inertia that her written words prompted in her body. The discursive, once reflected back to her in this way, shed light on her bodily desire to actually activate herself differently. This was a "non-dance" student and the experience powerfully marked her recognition of what embodied engagement with ideas can do.

Doing this exercise with a different class, a Black student who was highly sensitized to the consistent surveillance and policing of her everyday bodily existence, was not comfortable exploring movement in the presence of others whom she did not know well. After noticing her discomfort and checking in with her, I suggested she spend the time writing about what she was feeling and experiencing. In many ways, her inability to feel free to explore (her own) motion in the studio was an iteration of her initial writing about surveillance in everyday life, so as difficult as that was, it seemed to "fulfill" the exercise intent. This exercise prompted a recognition of the ways that this student's consistent practice of dancing in her bedroom by herself served as her daily restorative and liberatory praxis. These bedroom dances became the site of her final research project, investigating "shapeshifting" and Black women's choreographies of recuperation (Cox 2015; Knowles 2019).

De-neutralizing the Dance Studio, or the Dance Studio as an Intersectional Space

[LW]: In DAC's example of inviting students to respond to/explore positionality as a movement practice, I am struck by how the bounds of this exercise necessarily expanded beyond the classroom. Addressing identity and positionality challenges the norms of my dance training—in which the studio was presented to me as the ideal laboratory, a neutral space. This neutrality is a myth that perpetuates white supremacy.

[QMZ]: My earliest dance class memories are filled with artists, educators, and activists using Black culture and history to challenge ideas of white supremacy and undo the impact of racism on youth in my community. My family's creative life was deeply connected to the creative arts center that we lived right across the street from, Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center. My mother, Beverly Zabriskie, sold her bean pies at the center and volunteered as part of an arrangement that the center made with parents who could not afford the classes, even after receiving scholarships. The artists, educators, activists, and youth at Mind-Builders taught me some of my earliest lessons about the power of the arts and equipped me with life lessons through movement and songs that I still sing to this day. It was through Mind-Builders that I met my first West African dance teacher, Ms. Wilhelmina Taylor, who, with love and discipline, taught valuable lessons about respect, pride, and dignity. Mind-Builders, my mother, Ms. Taylor, and others at the center continue a Black aesthetic legacy which struggles for "the right of black folk to love and enjoy" (Du Bois 1926) life, themselves, their community, their heritage, and their culture.

DOING: Do Something, Do Something Different

You may repeat the cycle as many times as desired, adding new layers to the prompt. For example, in the second round: Now when making movement choices play with speed, levels in space, distance/proximity, etc.

FIGURE 3: UNCPC GROUP MEETING, *DO SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT* EXERCISE. SCREENSHOT FROM ZOOM VIDEO, 2021.

The exercise *Do Something, Do Something Different* was rooted in collective member JD's studies with white "downtown" New York City postmodern improvisers such as KJ Holmes and Jennifer Monson, and emerged as a more formal improvisation structure during their collectively devised ensemble work of the mid-2010s. While crediting the influence of improvisation studies with Holmes and Monson is necessary, it is also important to credit the often-unacknowledged influence of Black, Indigenous, and Asian cultural practices that value improvisation emergent from the collective; influences that white-historicized postmodern improvisation practices have historically invisibilized, beginning in the 1960s and continuing on in the legacy of experimental downtown dance.

Instructions for Group:

We will move together for three minutes.

Your task is to do something or do something different.

The goal is for only two things to happen at the same time—something and something different.

If you decide to do the same thing as someone else, do it exactly the same, knowing that exactly the same is impossible.

If you decide to do something different, do something really really different.

Notes for facilitator:

If conducted over Zoom rather than in person, ADD: If possible, please turn on your camera.

Reflecting: Experiences with this Exercise in our Classrooms and Workshops

[JD]: As a first-generation student, white, queer, and from an under educated, rural, working-class family, my experience in most environments, especially in higher education, is one of exclusion and difference. I also emerge from the legacy of the study and practice of white postmodern dance, which, in my experience, tends to universalize experience, decentralize identity, and invisibilize white privilege. Still mired in white postmodern dance—with its universalized experience, decentralized identities, and "neutralized" white privilege—I desire to continue to facilitate dialogues and experience around strategies, tactics, exercises, and conversations about how to be together with difference in our collective movements. How do we model something different, together in our differences? How do we exist in difference, together, with the utmost care? How do we promote inclusivity without defaulting to a universalism that is inherently white supremacist? How do we experiment and be open, without expecting everyone to have the same experience? How do we un-privilege the calm, rather than the anxious or uncomfortable?

I struggle with moments of cohering the collective in relationship to cultural differences. I desire to be part of a we from our various complex and nuanced identities, without inflicting the harm that comes from a we that privileges white supremacist, colonialist, cisgendered, classist (and other) violences. Just noticing my body aids me in moments of difference—I notice my breath, the shape of the container of my body, feel my feet on the ground, the weight of my head. Attuning to my body allows for my experience to shift. I check into my body, notice what sensations, temperatures, qualities, images, pains, ruminations are present—move through my thoughts, feelings, emotions. Integrate. I am able to approach from the calm, approach from the embodied, and respond rather than react. I have learned this approach from dancing, from meditation practice, and from experiments and experience in integrating theory and practice in my teaching. I find these kinds of integration exercises useful to approach all types of thinking and learning, and especially potent when addressing difficult subjects like racism, colonialism, equity and inclusion, and intersectional power hierarchies.

Do Something, Do Something Different is one more toy in the toybox and tool in the toolbelt for how to be in and move with difference—rather than extract from and exploit

difference. I have been teaching versions of this exercise in classroom, studio, rehearsal, and hybrid contexts for nearly a decade. Un/Commoning Pedagogies collective has employed this exercise as part of public lectures and workshops, guest lectures and class visits, co-taught classrooms, breakout rooms in our virtual workshops, as well as in process and performance. *Do Something, Do Something Different* is a physical means to practice difference, practice community, practice togetherness. The exercise encourages participants to be seen, to make choices, to lead, or to follow. *Do Something, Do Something Different* requires people to be aware of themselves alongside other people. In fulfilling a replication of someone else's movement, students/movers/people learn about the impossibility of exact replication. *Do Something, Do Something Different* enacts and embodies the inherent failure of exact repetition and the inherent failure of how being together is not the same for everyone.

Do Something, Do Something Different reveals how in trying to be the same there are choices made about what part you are copying. Participants engage in whole body movement or small gestures or everything in between. Their choice-making process is very choreographic—it focuses on an orchestration of movement through space and time. In this context, then, is it the speed, the shape, the position in space/on screen? Choreographic, here, functions also in terms of the social—how do you choreograph or arrange yourself in relationship to other people. Choreographic, however, does not mean movement arises from original invention. In fact, *Do Something, Do Something Different* presses on the notion that movement invention can be original—instead it reveals how all movement is sourced from other movements.

[DAC]: Doing this exercise as part of a UnCPC guest workshop with Dance MFA candidates, I am at once co-facilitator, participant, and witness. I notice a Black woman's assured comfort in leading and making choices around changing movement, and other people's recurrent draw to her choice-making.

In my "Dancing Diasporas: Black Dance in the Americas" class at a small liberal arts college in North Carolina, I see my mostly but not all white students looking to me for direction. Then the outspoken white male sets himself apart and creates a new stream of movement with "daps" and other gestures gleaned from Black vernacular culture—an embodied archive he is just starting to recognize as carrying forward Black aesthetics and histories.

In a small group with three students and me, we use the exercise to explore how we make choices, mirror each other, and develop empathy. What does it feel like to be inside someone else's movement? I try to recede in my screen as we oscillate between following the ease of sweep and arc expressed by a white American trained dancer, the cautious yet curious arm explorations of a white new-to-dance student from Italy, and the small intimate gestures around the face of a Black American trained dancer.

The following questions arise as I practice this exercise, and can be used as guides or prompts for discussion:

What does it mean to follow someone? What parameters define the bounds of moving with, as opposed to moving differently? Do you notice yourself hanging back, often choosing to move like someone else, or do you notice yourself always being one to change the trajectory? What might that tell you about your relationship to the/a group? What feelings come up as you follow another's motions, instincts, and inventions? How does it feel when you have the power to make others move? What does it feel like to initiate, to guide others in movement; to define the shape of group movement?

[SFK]: The invitation to move or be moved, to see or be seen, felt like an antidote to the stressors of showing-up from our confinement spaces over Zoom. The intense upheaval of the moment called for reckonings big and small and here was a way we could continue to engage, a way to move inside of anti-racist teaching and practice even while remote. Adjunct teaching makes the cadence of my work unpredictable and so during our UnCPC Spring 2021 collaborations, I was not teaching. Participating in our collective work without the pressures of teaching provided me the space from which to clarify how I situate myself as a white cis-het woman anthropologist studying, thinking, and teaching through West African vernacular performance.

Prompting each of us to move with attentiveness to our fellow movers, *Do Something, Do Something Different* shed light on how I show up in my white body even as my intention is to be present with those who were right there showing up and moving on my computer screen. It took me some time to find a rhythm; at first I wanted to make sure that my whole body was in the frame, but doing so while attending to the folx with whom I was moving was challenging—I was too far from the screen to really see what others were doing. Coming closer to the screen, moving a hand, an eyebrow, an elbow, a foot enabled a more direct and durable connection, one that allowed me to follow and be followed. Releasing my own effort towards being seen to the task of more clearly seeing and echoing back others' movements shifted my watching and listening in a way that was more attentive to the collective. Responding to my fellow movers' initiations prompted in me another way to feel into what it is to step back as a white woman: to witness and to follow with compassion and care.

[QMZ]: I have to admit, the first time I participated in this activity with UnCPC it felt fun and silly, but I did not see its power. It felt like a good activity to use to connect with others and warm up in preparation for the "real" dancing, and so I engaged with the spirit of "trusting the process" (PISAB). As we continued to explore this exercise with different parameters and I moved my body trying to follow and connect with my collaborators as well as figure out when and how to go off and do my own thing, different thoughts and memories began to surface. I often struggled with my own limiting thoughts, which I'd internalized from different dance and non-dance contexts.

When I tried *Do Something, Do Something Different* in my undergraduate Race and Ethnicity class during the

Spring 2021 semester, I did not know if my mostly non-dance students would be open to such an activity. However, my co-instructor, Dr. Sarah Hernandez, and I were having an issue with getting students in the online class to keep their cameras on, and we were worried that students were starting to disconnect from each other and the class. We often started our sessions with a grounding activity to help students relax and connect to themselves. I wanted to see how *Do Something, Do Something Different* would work as an activating activity to help them connect to each other. Much to my joy, the students turned on their cameras and moved together in similarity and difference. When discussing what came up for them in the group, one student jokingly commented that they were happy they were in their room by themselves and that no one was watching them. We all laughed in agreement. Later in class, my colleague, Dr. April Flakne, brought us back this student's comment during her critical phenomenology lecture to talk about how we often internalize ideas of others and/or standards of society and how this impacts our own actions, self-concept, and how we move in and through the world.

[AKJ]: The first time I experienced *Do Something, Do Something Different* was during one of our UnCPC "move together" Wednesday morning sessions. I remember the exercise giving me a sense of purpose at the time. I was feeling a bit all over the place and spread thin, due to my academic responsibilities. But because I needed to pay attention to everyone on the screen in order to make the simultaneous decision on how to contribute something different to the space whilst remaining in unison with my colleagues, I found myself connecting to my colleagues in ways that affirmed, challenged, and expanded their/our moment-to-moment experiences. After we used this exercise in our performance at Brown University's Festival of Dance, I had my students incorporate it into part of their final performance for the Spring 2021 Virtual Dance Concert. Because of Covid-protocols, we were still doing everything virtually. And because I experienced the success of *Do Something, Do Something Different* as a virtual exercise firsthand, I wanted to have my students try it out. They were given this task, only a week before the concert, so they only had two classes and one rehearsal to figure it out. Oh and they struggled—they felt lost, wrong, confused, efforting to find and maintain connection. It is important to mention that my students always want to be "right." If they feel awkward, then they think they're doing it wrong. So, in response, I ended up changing the rules a bit to help ease their anxieties around not wanting to "mess it up." But now reflecting on it, I see there is value in "feeling silly." So if I were to do it again, I would have them "relish" their feelings of awkwardness, "beyond the expiration date" as S. Ama Wray might say.

And I have even taken this lesson into my current classes, creating a space for students to remain in the liminality of feeling "silly or awkward," such that they do not feel panicked or anxious. Together, my students and I have learned to trust each other in a way that fosters constant improvisation, constant in-between*ness*. Their task now becomes trusting the "not knowing," the "awkwardness," the feeling of being "wrong" or "silly." In doing so, they now

have the option to show up *as they are*, with their discomforts in-hand and at the forefront of their consciousnesses. In other words, I have tasked them, and myself, with bringing our whole persons into the rooms, whilst remaining transparent about who we each are (now and in the moment). From this place of clarity, we literally move, improvise, and (re-)create our voices with dance. Instead of asking, "how do we dance when we are not OK?" I now ask, "What does your dancing need to look like, given the person you are now and in this moment?"

[LW]: When JD offered the *Do Something, Do Something Different* score in our group, it gave us an immediate way to be in movement conversation across our varied movement vocabularies and histories. I enjoyed the focused attention that I felt when joining someone in their movement, seeing and learning from their particular embodied voice, studying the details. This score asks us to jump into that learning, "Do something!" and to remain supple. As soon as I "got it," "it" shifted, and something new arose in the group. At the same time, all of our inclinations and desires were invited to the party. When we joined an action, we added volume to what was already happening. When we "did something different," we catalyzed change.

I taught a loose version of this score to the students in my course, "Moving, Making, Meaning." Instead of limiting it to two actions at a time, they could join any action that they observed, or they could offer their own. We played with doing this at different percentages: 50/50 borrowing and offering, then tilting toward more joining or more initiating. (I learned about "playing with percentages" in dance practice from Chris Aiken.) Afterward, I asked them to choreograph short sequences with movement gleaned from the shared practice. They performed the resulting choreographies a few at a time, and the students who were watching gasped with appreciation for the connections and distinctions between each person's creation/curation. Each student's dance drew on the communal memory bank that they had created together. Rather than collapse into a single movement vocabulary or unified style, they each articulated the felt experience of moving together through their own voice.

[ML]: The doctoral students enrolled in my graduate-level Anthropology seminar "Critical/Performance Ethnography" experienced this exercise 12 weeks into the semester. The embodied session "Pleasures and Challenges of Collaborative Work" in partnership with Brown University's undergraduate Theater Arts and Performance Studies students followed scaffolding work about how ethnography is implicated in many of the themes reviewed in this essay. It was an opportunity for our multi-ethnic, multi-national, physically- and ability-diverse students to rehearse how our previous discussion about critical and performance ethnography seriously considers the contingency, context, and aesthetics of interactions in the field and of quotidian life. Additionally, nine out of the ten students who participated wouldn't call themselves dancers, and one lived with mobility challenges. Yet, through this exercise, many of

them acknowledged how simple pedestrian gestures they offered and the mirroring and adaptations of those by others attended to their sense of bodily comfort in various spaces and tapped into their archive of sensory knowledge that let them "read" identity codes, and structures of power. The consensus was they experimented with the possibilities and limitations of establishing strangers' trust in a bracketed timespan, much like they would in the field. The session evolved into an expansive, unexpected, and humanistic choreography, all the more beautiful because they felt that consent was discussed prior to the exercise. It allowed them to subtly negotiate consent throughout: Some people choose to be witnesses (be off-camera and observe). Others participated as much as they desired or were able to. The choreography seemed to undulate as people flocked around a movement and broke away from it. It activated their sense of humility and appreciation for doing necessary yet potentially fraught collaborative work.

Integrating: Closing the Container

Integration is a necessary component of the work. In our processes, we aim to open people up towards courage, which can also open wells of emotion, memory, and sensation. We must therefore carefully close the portals. A closing practice supports the recognition of what came up or came through in the process, and prepares people to move out into the world beyond the container.

The following integration prompt offers a way to feel back into the inquiry and touchstones for learning, and serves as a kind of "before and after" consideration to see how the work has landed, where it has landed, what it has unearthed.

> Take a moment to bring yourself to stillness; to sit back from this text and all that it contends. Soften your gaze, turning it inward. Feel into your body once more, coming back to the body scan practice at the opening of this essay. Pick a place to start your scan: from your feet and up along your spine to the crown of your head, or from the crown of your head along the spine down to the soles of your feet. Notice points of reverberation, of tension or tenderness along the way. Stopping in those places to bring care-filled breath. You might place a hand on those places to cue your breath there or to simply bring warmth and physical support. When your scan feels complete, pay attention to your body's sensations. How does it/do you feel now, as opposed to when you first started reading this article? Take note and reflect.

We offer you a moment to attend to the places and spaces that come away feeling shored-up, or possibly tender or unraveled. Integration is not necessarily tidy; it is about bringing an awareness of the work done and the work that remains.

To/gathering: A Postscript on Moving Together in Difference

Our first collaboration as what would become UnCPC was formed to plan and facilitate a workshop for the 2019 Dance Studies Association Conference for which the "commons" was a central theme. One of the guiding questions for our workshop was, "How do we forge common ground without nullifying difference?" In the three-plus years since, we have continued to ask this question while engaging in frequent dialogue, co-leading workshops, co-writing and co-editing articles, exchanging teaching, sharing movement practice, and creating a virtual performance. Meetings often include time to talk about what is coming up in our individual teaching and research as well as our familial and professional relationships. Tiredness is a theme, but this takes a different toll depending on how we are situated. When, as part of our collective work, we began a shared movement practice in 2020 across Zoom squares, an exercise in repetition and duration brought by one of the white collaborators yielded a powerful conversation about how the stakes of pushing and exhausting oneself land differently for bodies racialized as Black or white.

In the world and in our classrooms, we each hold quite different positionalities in relation to race, gender, power, and privilege. Our urgencies look and feel distinct from one another. And, while we share a rootedness in dance and consider embodiment integral in our teaching, many other aspects of our teaching, our relationships to institutions, and our fields of study diverge. We find resonance together, but not as a single voice. While somewhat unwieldy and slow at times, our seven-person collaborative writing, moving, and facilitation work reflects our pedagogies. This work helps us dig into how we want to hold space for others in workshop environments and craft space for the body-in-difference in academic environments. As we continue to ask, "What is urgent in regard to anti-racist practice and embodied teaching and learning?" we are aware that the necropolitical effects of racism on Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color mean that the stakes of anti-racist practice are located at thresholds between life and death.

It was during the meeting in which we were finalizing these essay revisions and also processing a difficult semester that we found out the news of bell hooks' transition. In the midst of processing two of our Black colleagues' intense challenges navigating white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist structures, continually reinforced as they are by people in leadership within institutions where they work and circulate, one of them saw the devastating news and vocalized it to the group: "bell hooks passed at the too-early age of 69."

The space we hold for each other enacts an insistence that we gather in difference. We also recognize the vital importance of affinity spaces in which people of similar racial identities commune for support that can only be worked out amongst themselves. Affinity spaces offer valuable opportunities for metabolizing, healing from, and gaining new insights into racialized experience. We utilize this necessary practice at times. However, as Un/Commoning Pedagogies, our call for "moving to/gather in difference" mobilizes us to convene in ways that allow each of us in their fullness to shine in relation; that is, to activate and put into motion what hooks, following Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called "beloved community," "where loving ties of care and knowing bind us together in our differences" (hooks 1996, 263-264). As hooks advised: "Beloved community is formed

not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world" (hooks 1996, 265). We work inside a practice that centers our never-neutral, socio-historical, political, and politicized bodies. We reclaim our connections to embodiment that have been severed due to, as hooks articulated so well, the entwinement of white supremacy, cis-heteropatriarchy, and neoliberal capitalism. We believe this effort can provide routes toward "care and knowing" each other and ourselves in transformative ways that make us better comrades in the work of visibilizing, challenging, and undoing white supremacy in our respective spheres of influence, labor, and love.

Notes

1. While still up for debate between us, our decision to capitalize the "B" in Black and not the "w" in white was influenced by the debates of the time in 2020. See Coleman 2020; Pika 2020.

2. Trinidadian saying, meaning to seize the moment and *wine*, which is a rolling hip dance that includes, but is not limited to, dexterous and vigorous rolls, gyrations, thrusts, and shakes of the hip, pelvis, and buttocks.

[RE]SOURCE LIST

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Dasha A Chapman (PhD, NYU Performance Studies) works at the intersections of African diaspora theory, critical dance and performance studies, ethnography, and the queer Caribbean. Dasha's solo and co-authored writing appears in a number of peer reviewed journals. Dasha collaboratively develops place-based performances with artists in the US and Haiti, and co-convenes Afro-Feminist Performance Routes and the Haitian Studies Association's Queer/Sexualities Working Group. Currently, Dasha is Assistant Professor of Dance at Kennesaw State University.

J Dellecave (PhD, UC Riverside, Critical Dance Studies) is an interdisciplinary performance maker, scholar, and educator concerned with how bodily experience intersects with external fields of social, cultural, and political knowledge. They are an Assistant Professor of the Practice in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University, where they are working on their book manuscript *Activating the Inside*s: *How Embodied Arts Expose Imperial Violence in the 21st Century.*

Adanna Kai Jones (PhD, UC Riverside, Critical Dance Studies) is an Assistant Professor of Dance and Dance Studies in the Theater and Dance Department at Bowdoin College. Her current book project uses multi-sited, transnational ethnography to track the ways in which the Trini-styled Carnival and winin' play an integral role in the support and preservation of contemporary black/Caribbean identity politics. Adanna is also a Steering Committee Member of Coalition of Diasporan Scholars Moving.

Sharon Kivenko (PhD, Harvard University Anthropology) is Lecturer in Anthropology at Tufts University. A scholar and performance artist, Sharon works at the intersections of performance, embodiment, and social belonging and is informed by her dance training with professional West African dance artists in Mali, France, and the United States.

Mario LaMothe (PhD, Northwestern Performance Studies) is an Assistant Professor of Black Studies and Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Mario's research involves embodied and affective pedagogies of Afro-Caribbean religious rituals, performance practice, and queer lifeworlds. Mario is a performance artist and curator, and his writing is featured in various peer-reviewed and commercial publications. He also co-convenes Afro-Feminist Performance Routes and the Haitian Studies Association's Queer/Sexualities Working Group.

Dance artist, teacher, and editor **Lailye Weidman** (MFA, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign) is Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance at Hampshire College where she creates space for students to build relationships with one another through movement and creative process. Lailye co-edited *Contact Quarterly* and was a 2018 Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellow in choreography.

Queen Meccasia Zabriskie (PhD, Northwestern, Sociology) is currently a Resident Fellow at the Coretta Scott King Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom and a Visiting Associate Professor of Social Sciences at Antioch College during the 2023-2024 academic year. Zabriskie is also an Associate Professor of Sociology and core faculty member in Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at New College of Florida, where she held the MacArthur Endowed Professorship from 2019-2023. A scholar, performance artist, and anti-racist community organizer, Zabriskie's research examines the use of artistic, creative, and performance practices in struggles for cultural equity. Zabriskie is co-author (with Dr. Harvey Young) of *Black Theater is Black Life: An Oral History of Chicago Theater and Dance, 1970-2010* (Northwestern University Press 2013).

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Note

Teaching Racial Reckoning:
The CRT Panic as a Challenge and an Answer

by Matthew Jerome Schneider

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W e are living in a time of racial reckoning. As a scholar of racism, antiracism, and whiteness working at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, a minority serving institution with strong historic and contemporary ties to the local Lumbee tribe and a large percentage of students identifying as American Indian (12%), Black or African American (29%), and Hispanic or Latine (9%), I feel incredibly privileged to be working through current events alongside my students (UNCP, 2022). Regular media coverage and social media discussion about Black Lives Matter, prison abolition, racialized police violence, and voter disenfranchisement have meant that students arrive to my Race and Racism sociology course already primed to discuss and reckon with questions of racial justice and racial oppression and privilege.

However, as political scientist Hakeem Jefferson and sociologist Victor Ray have written, "White backlash is a type of racial reckoning, too" (Jefferson & Ray, 2022). With renewed support for Black Lives Matter prompted by the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 (Pew Research Center, 2020), we have observed a groundswell of white Americans mobilizing in defense of white supremacy. Although this reckoning has been long in the making (Belew, 2021; Belew & Gutierrez, 2021), recent successes of a violent and increasingly mainstream political movement have created new challenges for instructors teaching about racism. Since 2020, we have seen peaceful racial justice protesters frequently met by armed counter-protestors "protecting private property" (Jalal & Schneider, 2022). A theory of a "great white replacement" promoted online by prominent media personalities and by conservative politicians has fueled white anxieties and has been connected to mass shootings in places like Buffalo, New York and Christchurch, New Zealand (Noack, 2019). For well over a year, storylines about Critical Race Theory (CRT) have been prominently featured by news outlets, with conservative media wrongly framing CRT and its supposed incorporation into the American education system as a form of anti-white racism and an assault on American history (Tensley, 2021).

Again, this has created challenges for university instructors who integrate critical perspectives on race and racism into their courses. How does one effectively teach about racism when students enter with strong opinions about what racism is and is not? How does one effectively teach about racism when, on a day-to-day (if not minute-to-minute) basis, ideas about racism and its relevance to contemporary American society are negotiated, modified, and reenforced in ways that often fail to account for the social and historical context that brought us to this moment?

The CRT bans in places like Texas, Florida, and Arkansas and news coverage of CRT, in particular, have proven effective at shaping popular understanding of what constitutes appropriate or reasonable conversation about racism. This movement against CRT, as the eminent legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw has been quick to point out, attempts to limit discussion of racism, both past and present, and in turn limits understanding of and effective responses to persistent patterns of racial inequality (Crenshaw, 2021). While very few people outside the social sciences and humanities understand what Critical Race Theory actually is – an academic theory originally advanced to explain the ways in which unequal racial outcomes are built into the criminal legal system, not a form of anti-white hate nor an assault on American history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) – anti-CRT stances have seemingly become an accepted, if not legitimate, political opinion. In fact, as someone who teaches about race and racism at the university level, I have found that even sociology majors at my minority serving institution, many of whom have strong orientations toward social and racial justice, have come to view CRT as divisive without a full understanding of what it is.

In the first week of my Fall 2022 Race and Racism course, I asked my students to complete an informal and anonymous knowledge assessment. Tucked into the assessment was a series of opinion questions asking them whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Critical Race Theory (CRT) is divisive."[1] While the students completed their knowledge assessment, a few of them raised their hand and asked me to define Critical Race Theory, highlighting that many knew there were blind spots in their knowledge. Yet, despite these gaps in knowledge, in a class of 18 students, only three of whom were white, eight (44.4%) indicated that they agreed that CRT was divisive. Four (22.2%) disagreed, and six (33.3%) strongly disagreed. While no one strongly agreed, it was clear that when asked to take a position, at least some students defaulted to ungrounded and, in my opinion, harmful political messaging about race and racism.

It is important to recognize that an informal knowledge assessment of 18 students in a sociology course at an MSI cannot lead us to generalizable conclusions. Still, *the fact that eight of 18 students in a sociology course titled "Race and Racism" at a minority serving institution – perhaps the last place one might expect to find anti-CRT opinions – agreed with this statement speaks to how deeply seated racism is in American society.* It was uncomfortable to see that a sizable group of Black and Brown students could be swayed to view a well-supported theory of racial inequality as divisive by a moral panic politically engineered to stoke white racial anxieties (Tensley, 2021).

Incidentally, that race (and our ideas about it) is derived through social processes and that racism is a normal and ordinary part of everyday life, built into our interactions, culture, and social intuitions, are among Critical Race Theory's core tenets. Thus, in this way, the wide discussion and (mis)understanding of CRT can also serve as a learning opportunity. I had not exactly planned it, but it was an opportunity on just the second day of the semester to show my students how our perception of race and racism are swayed by social and political discourse. After we finished reviewing the knowledge assessment as a class, I asked students to open their course syllabi to the first page and read a rather benign set of course objectives and goals:

By the end of this course, students will have built a strong foundation for understanding race and racism in contemporary US society. In particular, students will be familiar with critical perspectives on race and racism. They will be asked to consider:

1. The social construction of race.

2. How the process of racialization varies across time and place.

3. How intersecting identities, including race, gender, sexuality, social class, etc., shape one's experiences and their access to opportunities and resources.

4. The ways in which racism is a normal and ordinary part of everyday life.

5. How racism is to the material, social, economic, political, and psychic benefit of the dominant racial group (i.e., people racialized as white).

After reading them aloud, I asked if the course objectives seemed reasonable. Did my students think exploring such ideas was a worthwhile use of time in a college course? Most nodded in affirmation. Some looked up or down in pensive consideration. The class offered no objection. These were appropriate goals to work toward and likely not at odds with their understanding of race and racism in the United States.

Next, I offered some version of "What if I told you that these were the core tenets of Critical Race Theory?"[2] A few jaws dropped. They sat silent for another moment, now feeling the discomfort of knowing that eight of them, likely without fully recognizing what position they were taking, had objected to such simple and reasonable ideas about race and racism in the United States.

As I have written elsewhere, the point of activities that hide the main takeaway and implicate students in systems of white supremacy is not to shame them for being complicit. Rather, such lessons are meant to expose the ways in which a failure to critically question our thoughts, beliefs, and actions can support systems of oppression and privilege, often without our knowing, through ambivalence, or even despite intentions to do the opposite (Schneider, 2022). Thus, the panic over CRT represents an interesting case for instructors to work through as a class. While the popularity of anti-CRT narratives creates some challenges for instructors trying to provide critical perspectives on race and racism, these same narratives also provide fertile ground for students to consider the merits of critical race scholarship. As we navigate this time of racial reckoning, backlash against CRT serves as a concrete and relatable example of how cultural narratives and state policy shape our understanding of the world around us. In this case, frames that cast CRT as divisive also serve to limit productive consideration of race and leave systems of white supremacy unchallenged. In my class, however, asking students to directly consider the "divisiveness" of CRT demonstrated to them the validity, and I would say necessity, of critical race perspectives. Likewise, creating space for open and honest discussions about the teaching of Black history, the historic function of policing and incarceration, and the Black Lives Matter movement could also prompt students to revisit and question what they "know" about systems of white supremacy and racial inequality.

To be sure, most of us (instructors) use a broad range of tools to ensure our students are able to walk away at the end of the course having had a useful learning experience, and the experiences and perspectives our students bring with them to discussion play a huge role in this effort. That said, if the goal is to prepare students to effectively engage with their communities and to act as agents of change, this experience shows the importance and potential of directly integrating, questioning, and responding to politicized opinions in our courses on race, racism, and antiracism, as well as in our courses on (in)justice and inequalities more generally.

Notes

1. Meant to get students thinking about the ways in which racial meaning is made and remade through the social world we navigate daily, this was just one of a handful of questions/statements to which students were asked to respond. For example, students were also asked for their opinions about affirmative action, "law and order," and notable events/figures in American history.

2. Tenets were adapted from Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (Delgado and Stefancic 2012)*.

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Matthew Jerome Schneider is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. He has academic interests in race relations, environmental sociology, civic and community engagement, homelessness, and urban space. His current book project, *Serving the Street: Charity, Racial Justice, and Poverty Tourism in St. Louis, MO* (University of Georgia Press), explores how volunteer group position and privilege inform grassroots homeless service activities and interactions. Schneider's recent work can be found in *Qualitative Sociology, The Sociological Quarterly, Human Geography, and Inside Higher Ed.*

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Note

Discourses on War and Peace in a Professional Ethics Classroom

by V.K. Karthika

ERNESTO NETOWE. LIVE IN A SYMBIOTIC LOVE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR'S COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

Introduction

Teaching in premier science and technology institutes in India is an entirely different experience for teachers of humanities subjects owing to the secondary status that they 'enjoy' and because of the sheer lack of interest the students have in learning them, which they cast off as the least important subjects. Most of my students had excellent academic track records. All of them scored high in the qualifying Joint Entrance Examination (JEE). Many of them were from urban backgrounds, having done their schooling in prestigious institutions. 20% of the classroom population was from rural backgrounds but academically sound enough to challenge their urban peers. 25% of the total classroom strength constituted female students; the male students were the majority in class. Being an English teacher assigned to teach a Professional Ethics course for a semester as an alternate, temporary arrangement (owing to faculty shortage) proved to be a rewarding experience for me.

The course content comprised topics ranging from morals, ethics, values, dilemmas, and decision making to engineering disasters, corporate social responsibility, and weapon development. Students always prioritise their core courses (engineering courses) and though Professional Ethics was a compulsory course, my students had a negative attitude towards it because they perceived it as 'irrelevant to their stream of study.' From an initial, informal discussion with the students, it became evident that they considered it a privilege to be a part of the premier institute, an institute of national importance and one that ranks high in the ranking hierarchy. However, it was also evident that the students never believed they had any responsibility in paying back to the society or paying forward for the privileges they enjoy using tax-payers' money. Most of them chose engineering studies because they wanted to enjoy the social status they acquire once they graduate and secure a job. Many of them had plans to go for higher education or work abroad and settle in countries like the UK, US, Australia, and Germany. Contributing to their immediate society never featured in their list of ambitions. Rooted in this background, teaching them professional ethics was problematic, especially in the context of the teachability of ethics itself being debated. Loui (2005) in his research asserts that engineering students often acquire their professional identity from their relatives and colleagues and, as Stappenbelt (2011) argues, their professional ethics mostly are an extension of their personal ethics. However, in my class, it was appalling to find my students with excellent subject specific competency lacking ethical concerns, empathy, critical thinking skills, and a mindset for collaboration.

Through focus group discussions, I understood that most of the students did not perceive it as an ethical responsibility to use their engineering skills in contributing to the development of the society. Several discussions and Socratic seminars were carried out to engage them in thinking about the very purpose of engineering education. The comfort zone of campus did not make them aware of their importance in building a better humanity. Throughout this course, discussions were carried out on various topics and case studies were analysed. The final discussions before

their examinations, which required them to reflect on their preliminary statements about their ambitions and perceptions as engineers, were very revealing. There was a clear transition towards giving back to the society from being mere beneficiaries of privileges. This gradual change was owing to the multiple rounds of critical questioning and discussions that we as a class engaged in, as stated by one of the learners in the feedback form. As an example, I will illustrate how their perceptions changed about war, peace, and the ethics of weapon development over a few hours of discussion.

Initial Perceptions on War, Peace, and Weapon Development

The students were advocates of weapon development and they articulated their nationalist sentiments in their statements. For them weapon development was part of their national pride and they perceived it as a mandate for ensuring the nation's security. They were not concerned about the ecological cost involved or the economics of it. They largely perceived war as a phenomenon that happens "elsewhere as far away as in Ukraine." Some of them expressed concerns about their relatives who were stuck in Ukraine. There were a few students who reflected on war as a threat to humanity and they iterated that "nobody wins a war." However, most of them came up with clichés like "everything is fair in war and love" and could not understand the magnitude of terror that any war generates. It was important to make them start thinking in humane terms.

Discussions on War Memes

The Russia-Ukraine war was the context for discussions, though the World Wars were also referred to. There were several war memes being floated on social media and the students were asked to collect them. A few of them gathered some war memes and we began discussing them. The discussion on the selected memes challenged their casual ways of dismissing memes as funny and made them think critically. Socratic seminar, in which several questions are asked to promote thinking, was used as students needed prompts most of the time.

With prompts from peers in their respective groups (6 groups, each with 6 students), they discussed the underlying meaning of the memes. In the discursive realm, some of them were able to problematise the insensitivity of meme makers because several memes glorified the war, taking the side of one of the nations engaged in war. Some other memes dealt with war in a simplistic way, miscalculating the perpetual impact of war on humans and the ecosystem. However, the meme above was discussed in detail as the students found it to be an interesting deviation from the ones populating social media. The students engaged in critical discussions about how human beings tend to alienate themselves from disasters and dismiss them as "events

when you're laughing at ww3 memes and start to wonder why the sun is coming out at 9Pm

way, my students were defining personal ethics for themselves. Their interactions with me outside the classroom indicated a positive signal that endorsed their willingness to change. As a teacher, I found some reassurance about the possibility of an attitudinal change among the students if the teachers make efforts.

For the next session the footfall was greater and surprisingly all the newcomers (the hitherto regular absentees) were well informed about the classroom tasks. They brought more memes and had discussions, and I could see a lot of autonomous students evolving in my class. After scrutinising several memes, the group leaders together selected one meme for discussion.

Some sample responses extracted from the individual

happening elsewhere." With such a turn in the discussion, as a teacher, I could see some of them reconsidering their previous statements about war, and two of the students who associated nationalism with weapon development now stated that "there is much more beyond nationalism, and we don't realise it as we live in our own safe cocoons." Although I did not use any standardised psychometric tests to analyse their attitudinal change, I could clearly see a thinking public emerging with more civilised mindsets. I found that the memes and the Socratic seminar served as a congenial ground for their transformation from a careless bunch of teenagers into a group of critical thinkers with better civic sense.

Towards Establishing Peace and Foregrounding Ethical Questions

Other than the changes observed in their attitudes, I noticed that they began to monitor their language use. The usual rude comments/remarks were restricted, and I could find them processing their cognitive load, attempting to express it in a peaceful style. In a sense, they were trying to communicate peace and discourses around peace through a more convivial lingua. The class as a learning community positively responded to this change in environment and transactions. In a minute

"Though this is in the shape of a meme, it is a bigger philosophy. Something about the idiocy of humans. We are a small spot somewhere in the universe. Just like dinos we can fade away if we continue such meaningless wars"

"We don't need weapons. We need peace. If there is peace across borders then why would we want weapons. Wars mean destruction. We don't think about the millions of birds and animals that lost their lives in Hiroshima or Nagasaki. We only count human deaths. But that too with insensitivity"

"I am not sure what an engineering graduate can do about establishing peace, dismissing war and all. But we can begin small. Maybe we should try to be compassionate with others. Like how they teach in schools, to be kind and all. I thought all of such things as silly but our discussions on these memes and the social media posts related to the Ukraine-Russia crisis did something to me. We should discuss more of such topics"

"I think as an engineer we should be more ethical. When it comes to weapon development, we should try to develop weapons that are accurate so that the effect or magnitude can be controlled to a particular spot to be attacked so that innocent people don't die. But whatever it is, weapons are dangerous and just like words we say it hurts people. And many a time we can't revert them. So if weapon development research and the engineers who create them focus on accuracy and more features like reverting them if required can benefit people. But war is war. And it involves killing. Weapons are tools for it. So I am not sure"

"We are always building walls and say that this side it is for us and the other side is for them. This meme is kind of an eye opener. I discussed it at home and my father was telling me how powerfully it conveys our significance. I understand that we are actually voiceless even if we shout if we think from the point of view of a bigger particle somewhere in the universe. Our voices are feeble. Our claims of my space and your space and their space and our space are not relevant. I understand that we should all be a little more concerned about out moral responsibility. It is important to have a meaningful life if we can help it. I am hopeful"

SAMPLE RESPONSES

essays they wrote after their group discussions are given below.

It is evident from their responses that they became more conscious about not only our human vulnerability but also about the ecosystem's vulnerability when it comes to wars. They were given a short newspaper article to read titled "When Art Goes Nuclear." Discussions on this article further fortified their faith in the humanness with which one must approach science and technology. This article emphasised the transdisciplinary critical inquiries into life and living and the students were able to comprehend and communicate possibilities of courses like professional ethics, liberal arts, or theatre contributing towards the scientific temperament. As a follow-up activity, the students were given "On the Nature of Reality" -- the transcript of the

conversation between Albert Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore -- to read and discuss.

Implications and Conclusions

The discussions and the Socratic seminar galvanised by select memes and texts clearly brought a change in the students' perceptions, which was evident through their classroom transactions. I found that many questions were engaging the students metacognitively as they had to think and rethink their own thinking patterns. Perception-generation or modification is not an easy chore. What I was trying to do in my class was to create assemblages. Assemblage of ideas, which is a posthuman theoretical construct, is a useful tool in educational contexts. When

materials were assembled and questions were triggered the ideational assemblages emerged. Through active engagement in a critical discourse analysis of the memes, students formulated certain assemblages about the human predicament, war, and the importance of "peace across all boarders." These formulated assemblages were further invigorated through the reading texts and the discussions that followed. When the topic to be taught was approached differently by taking students beyond the syllabus barriers, I could see affective assemblages being created. Through this classroom task, a platform for students was facilitated to germinate critical assemblages in order to deconstruct their biased and narrow thinking prospects. This revamping resulted in their acknowledging the role of discussions on philosophy and ethics in an engineering classroom as a compulsory component because knowledge is no longer restricted within any boundaries, and we are truly in the age of transdisciplinarity. This task proved to be one of the ways in which we can radically reform our classroom environment, making it conducive for multiple affective assemblages that facilitate learning becoming fundamentally meaningful.

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V.K. Karthika teaches English at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Tiruchirappalli, India. She is interested in cultural criticism and philosophy of education, and her work focuses on communicative peace and sustainable development goals.
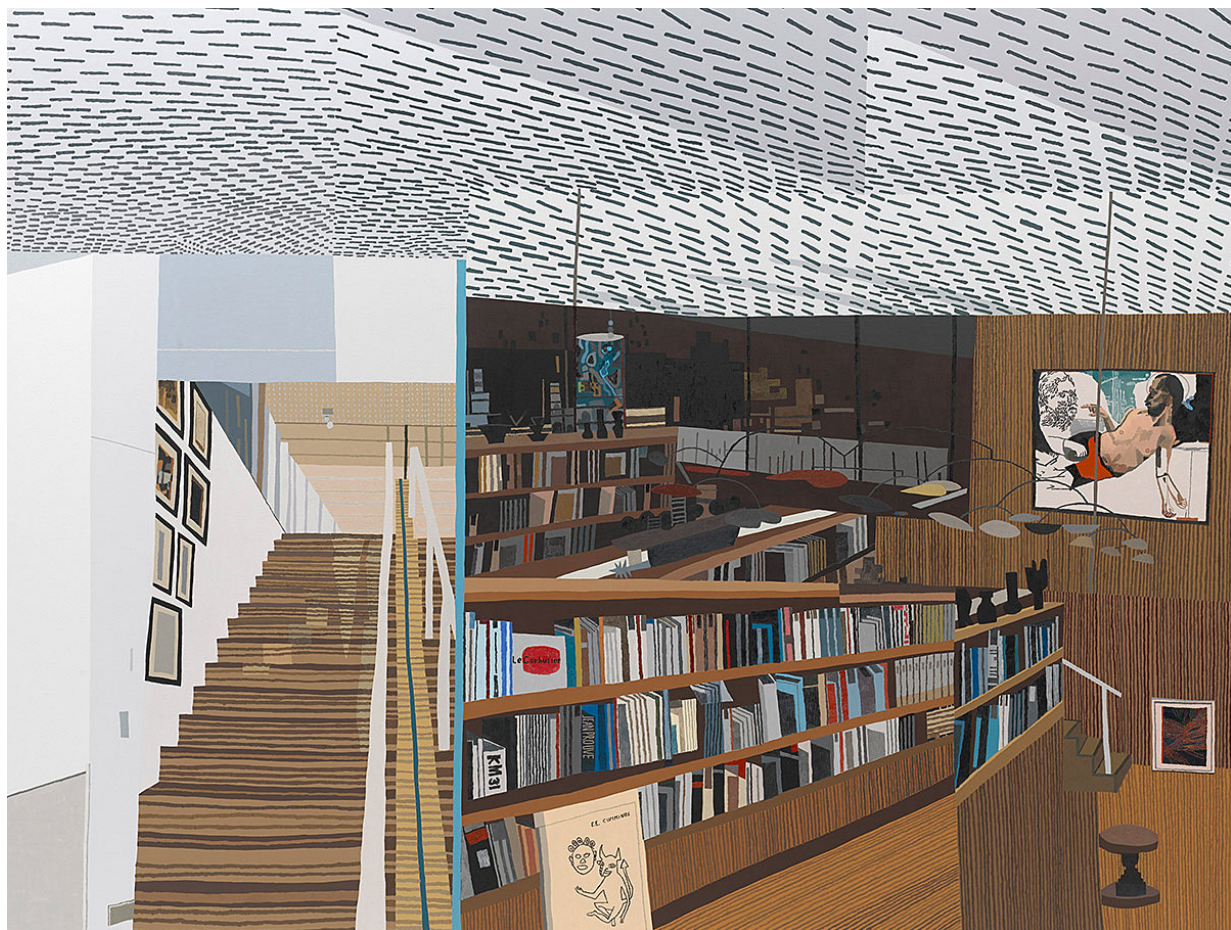
RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Note

Dancing Our Way Beyond Work: Playlists and Zines as Teaching Tools to Imagine a World Without Work

By Marguerite van den Berg and Ozan Nadir Alakavuklar

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Teaching Refusals of Work

George Clinton used to say that we needed to dance our way out of our constrictions (Kelley, 2022: 204). Members of social movements trying to bring a new world into being often sing and dance together. In this spirit, we asked students to suggest songs for a playlist to be assembled for a class on alternative forms of organizing and economic transformation. The playlist was used as a basis for a workshop in which we made a zine to imagine futures beyond work. The basic idea for the class was to imagine worlds to which we can say "yes." We drew inspiration from the Zapatista organizing slogan that we need "One no" and "many yeses" (Kingsnorth, 2012). The Zapatistas, in organizing their alternative to the Mexican neoliberal, capitalist, and colonial state, formulated a clear "no" to that state while insisting on engaging in the political work that is necessary to formulate "many yeses." Steering clear of one revolutionary alternative, then, engaging people in imagining worlds (plural) to which we can utter 'many yeses' is a radically democratic process.

Students in contemporary higher education in the social sciences, though, very often have had much more practice in formulating "nos" or offering critical analysis of capitalism, sexism, racism, and "our constrictions." To break away from that default, and to invite students to move beyond their practiced skills set and engage in something new, we used music and visualization in the form of the assemblage of a musical playlist and a zine of collages. This was inspired by reading Robin D.G. Kelley's *Freedom Dreams*: *The Black Radical Imagination* (2022) in which he traces the many ways in which Black radical social movements dreamed of alternative worlds and sang songs in that process. It was also inspired by the work done in feminist pedagogy on zines (for an overview of that literature see Creasap, 2014) and critical research and teaching about work and organizations through music (Rhodes, 2007; Simpson et al., 2021)

The context is a class for 12 students in a brand new Master's program in Organization Studies at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. The Master's program is called *Organizing Social Impact* and is focused on bringing together grassroots organizations, NGO's, and other organizations working towards societal change with students in teaching and research. The program, in its first year, has attracted a group of students from varying backgrounds, both international and Dutch. Nine students identified as women, three as men. All students were open to the feminist readings and discussions in class. Up until the moment of the playlist assemblage and in the context of this course, the students had studied capitalist organizations of society (Harvey, 2017) and alternative forms of organizing, drawing arguments and theories from degrowth (Kallis et al., 2018), commons (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014), diverse economies (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2020), and cooperative organizing (Cheney et al., 2014). They were, therefore, already prepared to think of alternative worlds and to imagine ways to arrive there.

The week of teaching we are writing about now was scheduled to address work and labor and more particularly struggles to refuse or abolish work. Readings for this week included Silvia Federici's *Wages Against Housework* (1975),

Precarias a la Deriva's *Adrift Through the Circuits of Feminized Precarious Work* (2004), and a podcast with Ruth Wilson Gilmore on abolition and organizing (Adler-Bolton, 2022). The first meeting, which took place for 3 hours on a Monday morning in January, consisted of structured discussions of the literature and viewing of Precarias a la Deriva's film *Adrift in the Circuits of Women's Precarious Lives*. This film resonated well with this group of students, who like most students today work themselves to pay for their studies and to make ends meet, primarily in hospitality (restaurants and bars), but also for the university itself as student assistants. Students related their lives and experiences to the narrated and visualized experiences in the film.

Playlist and Zine-making

The second meeting was structured around music and visuals. Before the class, students were invited to suggest a song or piece of music that, to them, engaged the themes in the readings of the week. We assembled a playlist from these suggestions and shared this with the students a day before the workshop. Through this assignment and by making a selection of songs, students engaged the themes of work and exploitation before the class and were able to connect their private playlists to the theories discussed in the course. In class, each student made a page for the zine based on their chosen song. The zine was to advocate for liberation from work. To kick off, students discussed their song selection in groups of 3 and 4 and discussed potential visual representations. The zine pages were guided by a question that was inspired by the work of and interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022): "What world do we need to bring into being in order to abolish work?" The assignment was not graded. After the initial discussion, we played the playlist in the classroom and made room for a creative space for zine-making. With a pile of magazines and pictures, pens and markers, scissors and glue, we set out to create a page per person for our zine.

There were two main ways in which music allowed us to formulate "many yeses": the affective richness of songs and their lyrics and the social connections in the classroom that the music made possible (see also Rhodes, 2007). First, conversations around work and its alternatives took on a different affective language. Because the zine pages that the students assembled were based on a particular song, and the lyrics to these songs often contained the language of love and hate, talking with each other about work in these terms also became possible. The songs gave license to the presence of these affects in the classroom. We talked about how, in capitalism, gendered unpaid labor is often presented as "love," and how we may think of love differently as a result of a conversation about The Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night." A conversation ensued about the passionate Chaka Khan song "I'm every woman" in the new light of Federici's *Wages Against Housework,* therefore problematizing the idea that women should be "every woman/ it's all in me" and indeed our student Nikki Stekelenburg created an alternative poem or lyric to the song: "I'm every woman/ every woman I want to be/ I'm every woman/ not the woman you want me/ to be." At the same time, the music

offered us the freedom to talk about work in the language of "hate." The song "Fiebre del Viernes Noche" by the collective Los Chicos del Maiz allowed for the recognition that "your boss is a jerk" and offered an alternative in hedonism: "Dance, damn, dance/ because your boss is a jerk/ Dance, damn, dance/ we all need to escape/ escape the routine/ embrace hedonism/ Dance, damn, dance/ You know/ The circus of capitalism" (English translation from Spanish by Amaia Yoller Masedo). By allowing these strong affects in the classroom, students' experiences of working alongside their studies were validated, and a connection was made between their experiences and the studied literature.

Second, because we played the playlist in the classroom, and the materials for zine-making were scattered across the room, movement, social exchanges about the assignment, the music, the materials, and other things were more easily initiated and sustained. Kimberly Creasap (2004) writes about how the practice of zine-making facilitates the connection of biography to theory and does so in a collective practice, rather than the individualized assignments that are often required from students. Adding the collective listening to music is powerful because it de-sanitizes the classroom and makes it easier for apprehensive or shy students to engage in an informal conversation about the songs and the teaching materials. A togetherness was forged this way, and a welcome refuge from the seriousness and often depressing nature of teaching materials that often center on critique and a "no." Formulating "yeses" together with the help of contemporary music created room for other affects and stories about lived experiences. But most importantly, music created the freedom to move around the room, to have chats and share laughter, and to share our freedom dreams. So to conclude: contemporary music became a critical pedagogical tool in our teaching practice. It allowed us to go beyond critique and the familiar world of work and organizations, and facilitated an affective, creative, and aesthetic movement towards "many yeses" in the form of a zine to refuse work.

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Marguerite van den Berg is an urban scholar who studies improvisation, precarisation, informal organization, and refusals of work. She works as an Associate Professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, where she teaches in the Bachelor's and Master's Programs.

Ozan Nadir Alakavuklar is an Associate Professor of Organization Studies at the Utrecht University's School of Governance. He teaches about and studies postcapitalism, alternative organizing, and academic activism. He is the coordinator of the Master's program "Organizing Social Impact" and the transdisciplinary network "Anders Utrecht," both bringing together community organizations, students, and academics for mutual learning.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Review

Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory

Reviewed by Radical Teacher

COUNTERSTORY: THE RHETORIC AND WRITING OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY. BY AJA MARTINEZ. (2020). NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.

***Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory*. By Aja Martinez. (2020). National Council of Teachers of English.**

Aja Martinez's 2020 book, *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory,* has been widely reviewed in writing, composition, and rhetoric circles, as it should be. We're reviewing it here not because it needs another review but because we want to share its message and methods with the audience of this journal: radical teachers that work at a wide range of institutions—from universities to prisons to community organizations—who might otherwise never come across this book's many useful insights.

Of course, to start: What is "counterstory?" And why might it be useful to those committed to the theory and practice of antiracist, socialist, and feminist teaching? As Martinez presents it, counterstory is both a methodology emerging from the widely misunderstood field of critical race theory (CRT) and also a new tool in her hands. As she explains, "Counterstory is a methodology that functions through methods that empower the minoritized through the formation of stories that disrupt the erasures embedded in standardized majoritarian methodologies" (3). She uses the concept in an ambitiously dialectical way, navigating theory/practice and teaching/scholarship while weaving together academic debates, sociopolitical critique, intersectional analysis, and autoethnography to produce a racial analysis that functions as a form of pedagogy, a set of creative practices, and an invitation to engage.

Martinez's project draws on and critiques traditional white-dominant modes of rhetorical practice and theory—including liberal ones (which are so often couched in the language of antiracism while reproducing racism's harms)—and she draws inspiration mainly from three CRT exemplars who blow up legal and academic genres: Richard Delgado, Derrick Bell, and Patricia Williams. But she doesn't just *describe* the method: She *enacts* it. Each method she explores—narrated dialogue, allegory/fantasy, autobiographic reflection, letters—is one she uses to deliver her analysis. In other words, when Martinez says counterstory is scholarship, she means it—while also providing usable examples for you (and your students) to mean it, too.

Her clear-eyed analysis, her creative deployment of storytelling to disrupt "master narratives," and her compelling pedagogical accounts make this book required reading for radical teachers who want their students to *do* rather than merely understand CRT. Her methodology accepts no easy assumptions about what allows some forms of writing to be considered "academic" while others are not. In challenging that distinction from the start, she exposes the presumed, habitual, and harmful whiteness of the academy while also injecting the vital creativity of counterstorytelling into a complete reframing of academic writing as a critical, liberatory space for students, faculty, and scholars.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Review
Let Our Children Soar! The Complexities and Possibilities of Educating the English Language Student

Reviewed by Janet Zandy

COUNTERSTORY: THE RHETORIC AND WRITING OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY. BY AJA MARTINEZ. (2020). NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.

Bolgen Vargas (2023) Let Our Children Soar! The Complexities and Possibilities of Educating the English Language Student. Melton, Woodbridge, UK: John Catt Educational Ltd.

I am not of the exceptional. I am rather of the fortunate.

- Elizabeth Catlett[1]

Books saved my sanity, knowledge opened the locked places in me and taught me first how to survive and then how to soar.

- Gloria Anzaldúa[2]

A six-year-old boy living in a remote hamlet of the Dominican Republic climbs a tree. Holding a branch with one hand, and reaching out with the other, he plucks "the ripest and sweetest mango" to give to his mother as a loving gift. She responds,*"Gracias, este es el mango mas dulce"* (16). Now imagine that boy grown into a man who worked—not on plowing land or caring for animals—but to pluck every opportunity that came his way to acquire learning and academic degrees. To assume, however, that this is another "look how far I've come" narrative, misses the intent and beauty of Bolgen Vargas's individual and communal life story, *Let Our Children Soar!*

Vargas develops a hybrid form, moving his personal story into wider circles of reflection and experience by concluding each chapter with what he calls a "Reflect and Imagine Activity" intended for educators and administrators. Vargas—who never held a pencil in his hand until he was seven years old—slowly, patiently, and with a powerful work ethos, acquired high school and college degrees as well as an Ed.D. in educational leadership[3] from the University of Pennsylvania. He went on to become a school counselor for twenty years in the Greece, NY school district, then a Board of Education member for eight years in nearby Rochester, followed by four years as President of the Board and then five years as Superintendent of Schools there, and finally three years as Superintendent of Schools in Manchester, NH. Is there a harder job than being superintendent of a large urban school district such as Rochester where 89% of the students are considered "economically disadvantaged?"

Vargas saw himself as "frontline worker" rather than a school district boss, and he understood that changing the lives of children in the most impoverished neighborhoods takes not only good sense but power from the top as well as respect for education workers at every level.

"But the University of Pennsylvania?" he writes: "This was as big a leap as changing my mode of transportation from donkeys and horses in my hamlet to the subway in Manhattan. But, as my mother often said, dreams become real if you dream at night and work hard during the day— and in my family, that also meant taking advantage of the harvest moon to work a little longer" (93).

The most memorable and moving parts of Vargas's *bildungsroman* are his immigrant journey and his emphasis on the importance of seeing children whose first language isn't English as students possessing strengths rather than deficits. Vargas was the youngest of eight children born to Octavia and Jesus (his father was called Maria) Vargas. Every day the parents would quarrel over their children's futures—the mother urging them to leave and get an education; the father wanting them to stay on the farm and do things his way. About his loving mother, Vargas writes: "She was strong and brilliant in her environment, but she couldn't sign her name. I am still haunted by that" (19).

Vargas cautions his reader that his experience and family circumstance should *not* be construed as representative of all English language learner (ELL) students. Indeed, this book is a reminder of the crucial importance of factoring class differences into the broad-stroke category of "immigrant."

One particular rhythm of Vargas's early life was his relationship to the natural world: "Nature found its way to warm the heart, humble us, and make us appreciate what very little we did have." Vargas's family may not have had electricity or running water, but they had a large mango tree that would shade the family gathered beneath it: "Everyone in the family…remembered her [i.e., the tree] when they were growing up" (17). And, of course, there was baseball: "When we die, if we were to see two trails, one leading to heaven and the other to a baseball game, most Dominicans would follow the trail to the baseball game" (23).

Vargas's life circumstances, common to many other ELL students, was a desire to learn despite poverty, the lack of books at home, and the realization that his first language was not the language of either school or the wider world. But this is larger than language differences. Vargas recognizes multiple literacies and pre-literate language strengths, such as an orality of prayers, sayings, and his mother reciting "decimas Dominicana," a form of folkloric poetry, which widened what he calls a "special experience of words" (51). Vargas's book can be situated in a lineage of class-conscious pedagogical writing, especially with his emphasis on common sense, respect for non-institutional knowledge, and the critical necessity of hope. He cites Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary,*[4] still requisite reading for those who teach the least privileged. I'm also reminded of Paulo Freire's politically informed analysis of literacy: "Being illiterate does not preclude the common sense to choose what is best for oneself, and to choose the best (or the least evil) leaders" and that "We can learn a great deal from the very students we teach. For this to happen it is necessary that we transcend the monotonous, arrogant, and elitist traditionalism where the teacher knows all and the student does not know anything."[5]

Bolgen Vargas brings to the surface often unnamed and bourgeois assumptions about the self. His self is not singular; he carries what I call "the *we* inside the I." On one level it is the traveling memory of the lived conditions of one's family that had limited access to education. On another level is the real, crucial, material support systems that sustain other family members. Vargas could not have left the Dominican Republic without the money sent home

by his older brother Arsenio or his efforts in acquiring the necessary papers for the family to enter and work in America. Indeed, work is central to this book. Or, as Vargas puts it: "From a young age, I had derived my self-worth from work and the contribution that I made to my family" (70). He worked full time as a dishwasher and busboy while attending high school in NYC until his mother gained access to subsidized public housing with reduced rent and fewer rats. He still worked odd jobs and family members pooled their earned money.

Although not a classroom teacher, Vargas respects teachers' work lives. He knows how lucky he was to have the right teacher at the right time. He remembers and names his important teachers: "maestro" Juan Ramos in the D.R. whose grade-school curriculum was supplemented with radio lessons; Diana Acosta, counselor and bilingual teacher in NYC's Seward Park High School, who understood the difference between fluency and potential; Judith Goldberg, who allowed him to stay in her advanced English class where he was mistakenly placed. From her he earned not just a hard-won C, but an appreciation for how literature can shape lives. Outside the classroom he acquired something else: his precious New York City library card and a place where it was warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Like work, Vargas also reflects on time—hamlet time, city time, and teacher time. He acknowledges the importance of teachers learning about the lives of their students and their families, but also the equal importance of administrators seeing the burdens on teachers' own time, exacerbated by bureaucratic pressures as well as workload. "I believe that the most effective way to improve outcomes for students is to improve the lot of teachers," writes Vargas (138).

Teachers and students face a wall of tests. Although not an overtly political book, one can hear, beneath the memoir's surface, a political hum. This is most evident in Vargas's commentary about "No Child Left Behind" and its test-driven approach to learning and teacher evaluations, not to mention school districts' dilemma in facing unfunded federal mandates or having funding depend on adopting state or federal (so-called) standards. As Vargas argues, "Even though I could agree that the education system needed significant change and reform, I did not believe this approach to reform would address the most important goal on our own local education reform agenda: *to create for our most vulnerable children all the opportunities that were available in middle-class communities throughout America*" (126).

Education is a class issue and a class struggle. Vargas's short, communal memoir has quiet resonance. I am less enthusiastic about his infrequent use of such education jargon, as "gateway protective factors" (107), but then I was always allergic to those required education courses in my 1960s teachers' training college. And I wish there were an index.

Let Our Children Soar! is an important addition to the work of Mike Rose, Ira Shor, Paulo Freire, Walter Ong, Richard Ohmann, and many others. They would no doubt appreciate how Bolgen Vargas never forgets the child in the remote hamlet who plucked a sweet fruit for his mother.

Notes

1. Quoted in Melanie Anne Herzog, *In the Image of the People* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2005), 15.

2. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/aunt lute, 1987), Preface.

3. Unpacking that academic category, "educational leadership" is a task for another writer. The content of such an academic path is unclear to me, but it seems to be a requisite for administrative authority in schools.

4. Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

5. Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*, translated by Donaldo Macedo, (Granby, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey, 1985), 176, 177.

Janet Zandy, emerita professor of English, Rochester Institute of Technology, is the author of *Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work*, *Unfinished Stories: The Narrative Photography of Hansel Mieth and Marion Palfi*, and other books on working-class culture.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poetry
At the Door

by Tony Reevy
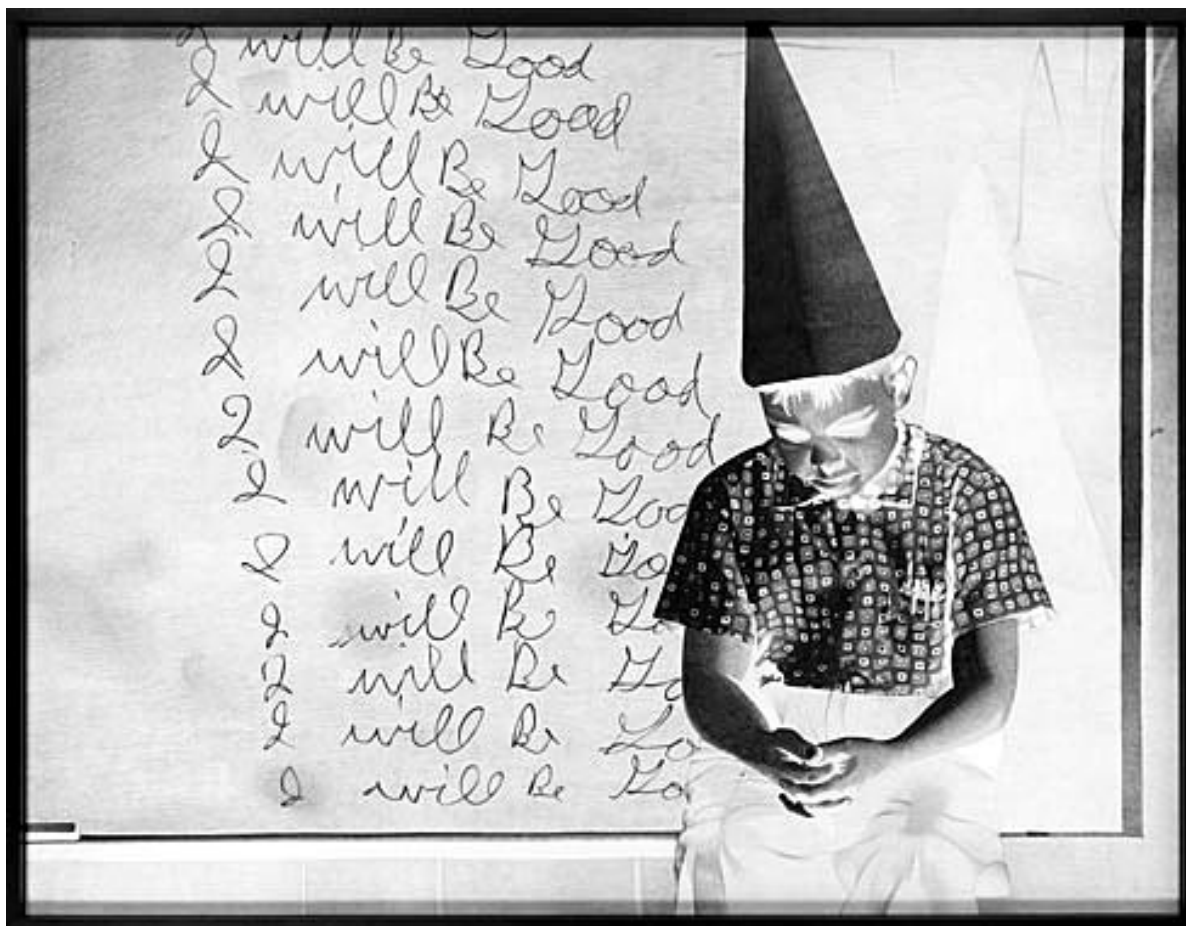
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At the Door

We see our doppelganger,
the beast we created.

Once starving, destitute, unloved,
it fattened in the new order—

growing innumerable arms,
hands, heads and feet.

Stalking the halls of our dreams,
and dreaming itself
of American Kristallnacht.

Opposed by a few, who
were given no shoes.

Who had to walk
the broken glass, leaving
bloody footprints
while the monster roared.

As if in a dream—
we are there, facing
the beast, seeing darkly
through shattered panes.

A trick of the failing light
captures a reflection
in the shards.

We see the heads
of the beast
crowned by our own
familiar faces.

Tony Reevy's previous publications include poetry, non-fiction and short fiction, including the non-fiction books Ghost Train!, O. Winston Link: Life Along the Line, The Railroad Photography of Jack Delano and The Railroad Photography of Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, and the full books of poetry, Old North, Passage, Socorro, and Turbulence. He resides in Durham, North Carolina.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poetry
The Poets of Myanmar

by Paul F. Cummins

BASIM MAGDY. INVESTIGATING THE COLOR SPECTRUM OF A POST-APOCALYPTIC FUTURE LANDSCAPE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE MIDDLE EASTERN CIRCLE, WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY ABDELMONEM BIN EISA ALSERKAL AND LAMEES HAMDAN, 2017. © BASIM MAGDY

The Poets of Myanmar

"With the farming of a verse,

Make a vineyard of the curse"

— W.H. Auden

Blessings, my brothers, to you—

To Chan Thar Swe who was executed

By the state—a bullet to the head,

His tortured torso torn apart, why?

For writing poetry.

Blessings too,

To U Sein Win,

Incinerated by gasoline, why?

For the subversive art

Of writing poetry.

You see, Mr. Auden, poetry does make things happen,

It survives not just "in the valley of its saying,"

It survives in cities, countries, terrifies dictators

Who imprison, torture, murder those who dare speak truth

By writing poetry.

Yes, poets are being killed in Myanmar,

So blessings to you, Khet Thi,

Arrested, mutilated, eliminated, why?

For writing poetry.

Yes, you "enemies of the state"

We meet only in scant news,

How then to convey outrage?

How to honor your courage?

Perhaps, by writing poetry.

Oh, gentle souls of Burma,

Please shower these poets upon your people,

Float them upon sacred rivers and streams:

Memorize and recite over and over their lines

Write out their poetry.

You who knew and loved these poets,

Sing their poems in town halls, temples, schools,

Scatter their lines and images in every village,

Teach the young to revere their souls, how?

By writing poetry.

Paul F. Cummins's poems have appeared in numerous publications including The New Republic, Poetry LA, Whole Notes, Exquisite Corpse, Coracle, Black Buzzard Review, Rattle, and Cloudbank. His publications include an autobiography, Confessions of a Headmaster, three other books on education, two children's books, four collections of essays, a biography of a holocaust survivor, Dachau Song, and three volumes of poetry.

Following classroom teaching 1960-71, he went on to the founding and co-founding of six schools — including private schools such as Crossroads School, TREE Academy, and Camino Nuevo Public Charter School. Through the creation of educational outreach programs such as P.S. Arts and The Coalition for Engaged Education, Cummins has been a champion for quality education, especially for at-risk, foster, and incarcerated youth.