Volume 23 Number 1 Fall 2024 Winter 2025

Professing Education

Special Issue
Critical Imagination, Transformation, and Poetry

Guest Editors

Julia A. Lynch, Shawn S. Savage, Amy H. Senta

Editors

Mary Kay Delaney, Gretchen Givens Generett, Paula Groves Price

Society of Professors of Education
www.societyofprofessorsofeducation.com

Professing Education 23 (1)

A Journal of the Society of Professors of Education

Professing Education is a journal of the **Society of Professors of Education**. The Society was founded in 1902 when the National Society of College Teachers of Education was first formed in cooperation with the National Education Association. Among its early presidents were Charles DeGarmo and John Dewey. The Society is an interdisciplinary, professional and academic association open to all persons, both theoreticians and practitioners, engaged in teacher preparation or related activities. Its purpose is to serve the diverse needs and interests of the education professoriate. The Society's primary goal is to provide a forum for consideration of major issues, tasks, problems, and challenges confronting professional educators. We invite you to join us. Visit www.societyofprofessorsofeducation.com for more information.

Call for Papers: *Professing Education* publishes articles focused on the practice of teaching in education. Recognizing that the field of education is inter- and trans-disciplinary, the editors seek essays and studies from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, on all matters related to teaching, "education," and pedagogies. Further, we also value and encourage creative forms of writing. Submissions are peer and editor reviewed. Manuscripts should generally be 4000-7000 words in length, 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced, APA-style, with 1 inch margins. In support of the Society's goal of stimulating and sustaining dialogue among its members, all accepted authors must be members of the Society of Professors of Education, or join prior to publication. To view the membership form, go to www.societyofprofessorsofeducation.com/membership.html.

Society of Professors of Education
http://www.societyofprofessorsofeducation.com/

Contents

From the Editors

We are very excited about this special issue of *Professing Education: Critical Imagination, Transformation, and Poetry*. The issue includes articles, poetry, and essays written from a diversity of starting points including classrooms, critical imagination reflections, curriculum theory, mentoring, conference sessions, and studies of the contexts of education. Much of the work in this issue also started in creative collaboration. Because of this, many of the works consider process and content together, that is, the importance of attending to the journey. The contributors all look toward a liberatory, humane, and just world.

The call for papers for *Professing Education* explains that the journal publishes "articles focused on the practice of teaching in education." It continues with, "Recognizing that the field of education is inter- and trans-disciplinary, the editors seek essays and studies from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, on all matters related to teaching, 'education,' and pedagogies. Further, we also value and encourage creative forms of writing…"

This issue of *Professing Education* embraces multiple forms of expression, and thus, opens new conversations and potential areas for study or perhaps, new avenues and dimensions of existing conversations. As we open conversations and embrace multiple forms of expression, we also welcome new voices. In this way, this special issue embodies the aims of this journal of the Society of Professors of Education: "to stimulate and sustain dialogue among the members of the Society of the Professors of Education about teaching in education. We see and hear in ourselves and colleagues a need for a forum to discuss teaching in education—the aims, craft, histories we inherit, challenges, approaches, content." We also see a continuing need for new conversations and new voices in the conversations.

Any work of art or book or journal issue happens in the contexts of real lives. During the evolution of this special issue, editors and contributors experienced the range of human experiences—birth, joy, success, isolation, sickness, loss of loved ones, play and work—all of it. We take a moment here to honor all of this and to honor the loved ones of all who contributed to this issue.

We thank the guest editors--Julia A. Lynch, Shawn S. Savage, and Amy H. Senta--who undertook this collaborative work with deep knowledge and humanity. We are grateful for their amazing work in lifting up authors' voices by curating a coherent issue out of many separate but related works. We thank each and every author-contributor. For sharing your analyses and hearts, we are grateful to all.

--Mary Kay Delaney, Gretchen Givens Generett, and Paula Grove Price

Introduction from the Guest Editors

Julia A. Lynch
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

Shawn S. Savage
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

Amy H. Senta
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

My body tells me where I am.
Silvia Bettez

and I artfully engage with it
mentally
listening… feeling…
the
multiplicity of actions engaging with debris-
yet…

from debris we write —
Shawn S. Savage

in case no ONE soul is listening
feeling
or dreaming

In past instances of social unrest, education challenges have consistently been evident, often rooted in the grassroots struggle for equality. Yet, equally as present was the will within Communities of Color to imagine, hope, and dream of new possibilities in education. We have witnessed these dreams as civil rights leaders, educators, and allies fought for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955), which attempted to address the inequities within the United States Department of Education following the numerous civil rights movements in the 1960s. During those times, scholars created new possibilities of hope with the rise of multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally sustaining pedagogy era (Banks, 1994; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Paris, 2012). Despite these efforts, education has continually faced opposition, as formal mechanisms of inequitable and exclusionary educational policies and practices persist resulting in unresolved state-sanctioned segregation (Rothstein, 2017). In this special issue, we use poetic praxis as a genre of critical imagination that encompasses hope and transformation to examine the current and the possible within education. Drawing from our Afrofuturistic roots, we engage this poetic praxis of envisioning and re-envisioning alternative futures and collective resilience that enable social transformation and healing within and among our communities. Our imagination is sparked from within the Afro-diasporic aesthetics, where Black cinema, speculative fiction, and poetry serve as educational instruments for liberation-confronting racism, reclaiming narratives, and enabling the examination of identity and power dynamics (Luckett, 2019). Poetry, taken up as "possibility," underscores the creative potential of the authors (in our case, poets) to combat racial injustices through factual and fantastical elements, thereby redefining educational possibilities and how education-related issues can be taken up in multiple genres effectively. These perspectives not only celebrate the transformative capacity of imagination but also address the realities of racial inequality because imagination is a crucial instrument for resistance and reclamation.

Inspiration for this Issue

Critical imagination generated possibility during a poetry session at the 2023 American Educational Studies Association (AESA) annual meeting. Activists and educators, intersecting as experimental poets around the shared purpose of advancing justice, shared their work with attendees. The session description invited attendees to bring their poetry. The pedagogy of

the session, which involved three successive ways of being with poetry and with each other, brought together the presenters' poetry, the attendees' poetry, and the feelings evoked during the experience. Elements of the session created something new from complex knowledges and texts; imagination was relational, and individual generativity was awakened.

When attendees were invited to share what they noted in the presenters' poetry, the two lines first noted were "Who is us?" and "Enough." A collective began to form, and poetic imagination of possibilities for liberatory education materialized from there. During the session, those present individually wrote lines of poetry and then collectively strung them together in oral poetic performance. Each voice segued from the previous person's lines to their own. We engaged each other's contributions, constructing then and there-- entangling a multiplicity of presences in the world with critical imagination for transforming the familiar into what might be possible for education.

A metaphor that effectively illustrates the current social context emerged, "debris." The discussion continued beyond the poetry session, and this metaphor seemed to speak with themes from an essay session on critical imagination from that same AESA meeting and various writings constructed for the audience of The Society of Professors of Education. Debris, specifically the debris of vast racial inequality, is taken up and down in this set of creative works with a liberatory aesthetic for social movement action. This issue illustrates the arts' capacity for the multiplicity and complexity needed to advance racial equity.

Vision of this Issue

Against the background of our contentious times, curricular commitments, and understanding of the role of poetry, prose, and purpose in our humanity in this current climate, we advance this issue to provide insights into how scholars are (re)imagining schooling and society through poetry and prose–often simultaneously, sometimes coherently, other times incoherently. Specifically, as we indicated earlier, this issue emerged from a poetry session at the 2023 American Educational Studies Association (AESA) annual meeting. The cento co-constructed from that session serves as our guide for the titles and division of the sections of this issue. Despite our own clearly defined (primary) purpose, we also intend that this issue will evoke what it may for each reader, listener, thinker, poet, and persona. That is, consistent with reader-response theory, we understand that this issue has a life of its own that may conjure different experiences and perspectives from those who engage with it (Brooks & Browne, 2012; Harkin, 2005; Iser, 1972, 1978).

We also intend for that multiplicity to be true, as we do not expect this issue to be static or monolithic (albeit organized on linearly sequential pages as is typical of Western publications). Instead, like the polyvocality of the poems and the varied positionalities evidenced in the essays and articles, we intend that the pieces individually and collectively reflect the multi-perspectival nature of thinking, learning, teaching, listening, and liberatory imaginings and praxes. This polyvocality provides a way to experience how human and non-human factors influence, confront, and interact with one another highlighting that their intertwined nature shapes understanding of educational phenomena (Tian, 2023).

Therefore, this issue aspires to this vision by attempting to distill several thematically linked poetry and prose pieces in sections. Yet, it also acknowledges the artifice and limitations of such sectionalizing. Nevertheless, we hope the various rigorous processes we engaged in to curate and organize the contributions to this issue prove illuminating. The issue invites everyone to engage with the ideas and pieces while also bringing their own genealogical, lived, and epigenetic experiences and lenses to bear in their engagement with the works that comprise this issue.

Our hearts and lives have experienced significant life-altering, death-invading, and healing-necessitated circumstances over the last few years. Such circumstances include the onset and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately impacted Communities of Color (Gracia, 2020; Tai et al., 2022); shifts from face-to-face instruction to online-only instruction, and then back to face-to-face again across K-12 schools and universities (El-Soussi, 2022; McQuirter, 2020); and loss of life and love (Carson et al., 2023; Schnipke, 2020).

Recent developments

Additionally, these circumstances have been worsened by the continued perniciousness of divisive politics that tried to overturn the results of a free and fair election and unleashed a mob on the United States Capitol (Dalsheim & Starrett, 2021); ban books (Burmester & Howard, 2022; Langrock et al., 2023); and prioritize certain identities over others, such as Christian over non-Christian (Davis et al., 2024) and the male/female binary over transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people (Lee et al., 2024; Reis, 2024). Together, these circumstances have exacerbated the state of our health as individuals, as a profession, and as a society.

Further, several recent decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) and state legislatures have made the precarity of our times even more pronounced and, in many ways, more problematic and regressive. For instance, the SCOTUS overturned race-based affirmative action while it upheld legacy admissions (*Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 2023), primarily favoring a specific racial group (White) over others–whether the court advertently intended to do so or not. Relatedly, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices have been (and are being) dismantled across several states (Feder, 2024; Movement Advancement Project, 2024). Even promises and financial commitments to construct a center for racial justice, after George Floyd's murder in 2020, have been broken and reneged upon, respectively (Flaherty, 2022).

Moreover, the SCOTUS made several decisions impacting public health, particularly the related law and policy environment (Krisberg, 2023; Williams & Gostin,2022). For instance, as Hodge et al. (2023) delineate, the affirmative action ruling will implicate health disparities in research and care. Similarly, Hodge et al. (2023b) argue that the court's ruling seemingly relieves social media companies from liability for the impact of misinformation on their platforms or otherwise complicates the state's ability to hold them accountable, which could perpetuate mental and other health harms from misinformation and social media platform enabled artificial intelligence, increasing risks to public health and safety. The court's decision on cyberbullying and protected speech complicates the burden of proof in domestic violence, cyber harassment, and other acts that affect public health and safety. (Durkee, 2023; Lorenz, 2023) Elsewhere, rulings regarding women's bodily autonomy, access to Mifepristone, and overall reproductive health, among a slew of other rulings (Danco v. All. for Hippocratic Medicine, 2023; Forouzan et al., 2024; Jones et al., 2022), all underscore how decisions by the nation's legislatures and courts, especially the SCOTUS, implicate the health and well-being of peoples across the U.S. (Hodge et al., 2023a).

Most recently, the SCOTUS decision granting a president some presumed immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts conducted as president (Breidbart, 2024; Karaim, 2024) has further underscored the dangerous state of our health as a democratic republic that once prided itself on the notion that no one is above the law. The presumed immunity ruling and its potential implications reflect the precarity of our democratic futures. Further, SCOTUS's decision to weaken the federal government's ability to investigate and address state-level corruption (Weiner & Petry, 2024) also complicates the sociocultural contexts in which

we all now live, teach, and research. Relatedly, the tenuousness of our democracy was underscored by yet another recent decision by the SCOTUS to allow the purging of voter rolls in the Commonwealth of Virginia six days before an election, a seeming contradiction of the long-standing federal law prohibiting such purges 90 days before an election (Totenberg & Dutton, 2024).

Unsurprisingly, the perniciousness of anti-Black, anti-woman, anti-immigrant, alleged culture wars, and the pro-Christian nationalist socio-cultural realities have catapulted the 45th president back to the White House to serve as the 47th president, despite the potential negative impacts that the, now, president-elect's proposed plans, judicial appointments, and overall presidency may exact on the United States and the world. Notably, the policy and practice of mass deportation may result in more substantial separation of families. Any effectuated policy or practice to dismantle or limit the Department of Education (ED), on which we rely for relevant data about schooling, including educational disparities or shifts, may result in unprecedented changes to what education looks like in the United States–with worrisome consequences for public education. In fact, if enacted over the next four years, the five espoused educational priorities--dismantling the Department of Education, expanding private school options nationally, rolling back Title IX protections for transgender students, targeting DEI efforts and supposed "unpatriotic education", and challenging undocumented students' right to a free K-12 education--would severely impact education and so many lives (Schultz, 2024). The potential use of the Department of Justice (DoJ) for political retribution would substantially shift the role of the post-civil- rights DoJ in consequential ways. Moreover, the potential appointment of numerous personnel who are unqualified to work as Secretary of Education, Secretary of Health and Human Services, or head of the Environmental Protection Agency, to name a few, all underscore the continuing declining health and precarity of our politics and policies as well as our democratic, educational, and health futures. Undoubtedly, the results and related consequences of the 2024 presidential, senatorial, congressional, and gubernatorial elections could upend and/or enhance the lives and possibilities of so many people in our schools, universities, communities, and the wider world.

Turning to poetry, prose, and continued work toward shared dreams

This journal issue invites readers to explore several pertinent matters. Notably, society's politics, policies, and laws impact what happens (or might happen) to our hearts, literally and figuratively. The confluence of multiple concerns and harms in the existing sociocultural and geopolitical contexts ultimately suggests that the current heart of our profession (country and the world) desperately needs a transplant. We hope that a heart transplant will renew us, sustain us, and help to make us whole (Okello & Savage, 2024). In the meantime, however, we turn to poetry, prose, and our shared dreams for transformational futures to help us process where we are, and reimagine where we might be and how we might get there. With these re-imaginings interwoven in poems, essays, and articles, we invite readers to indulge their own re-imaginings as they engage with this journal issue.

About the Guest Editors

The three guest editors of this issue are faculty members at the same public, predominantly White institution (PWI) in the Southeastern United States and are all members of the American Educational Studies Association (AESA). Although we are situated differently in academia, we are committed to equity-focused curricula that further justice, liberation, and freedom. As faculty in a college of education, we move through our work poetically–gathering, building, and facilitating learning communities to create curricula, policies, and practices that thwart efforts of educational epistemicide.

Dr. Julia A. Lynch is a Black-Scholar Poet who uses an art-based inquiry approach as an innovative teaching practice and methodology that combines elements of culturally sustaining literacy pedagogies and arts-based inquiry, which are both firmly grounded in the beliefs that literacy is not merely a mechanical skill, but also a tool used to provoke critical thought for personal and social transformation.

Drawing on his Jamaican and arts-informed background, Dr. Shawn S. Savage is an interdisciplinary scholar investigating access, equity, and justice issues in K-12, teacher education, and higher education by engaging methodological innovations in qualitative research, including with the arts and athletics.

Dr. Amy Senta's work involves long-term critical film-making with elementary through middle school youth, qualitative research methodologies, the social foundations of education, poststructuralism, critical whiteness studies, and teacher education. Woven together, our diverse body of interdisciplinary scholarship is arts-based or arts-connected.

Our work underscores how social realities are inherently filled with possibilities for harm, processing, and healing. Given our commitments to education, equity, and justice, we affirm that relationality and healing are critical to collective justice in education and society, writ large. Thus, we hope this issue will help with both relationality and healing, as we engage critical imagination and social transformation through multi-genre lenses, especially poetry.

A Road Map for this Issue

Our shared commitments noted earlier helped with the framing of this special issue. Therefore, the poems, essays, and articles selected in this issue reflect the editors' commitments to justice, liberation, and freedom. The contributions offer critical reflections in a praxis of love that resists a hegemonic, whitewashed curriculum, and advances re-imaginings for educational possibilities. Because (social) justice is a cornerstone of education and the foundation of societal practices, we intentionally curated and combined pieces that address and embody multiple related perspectives of justice in our contemporary contexts. Together, the contributions speak to the violence of schooling, the beauty in the struggle, epistemological pluralism, the uncertainty of imagining new possibilities, and the criticality of hope.

So that readers do not get lost in the translation offered by the fusion of theory, poetry, and praxes in this issue, we provide a brief road map of the issue. The issue contains six sections, each titled from a line in the collaborative cento poem written and performed collectively at the 2023 American Educational Studies Association (AESA) annual meeting.

The issue begins with the people who contributed to this issues: introductions to the contributors through their biographies. Thereafter, the issue is organized in sections. Each section opens with a series of lines from the collaborative cento poem and then segues to articles, essays, and/or poems that share thematic connections. The six sections are: 1) Building new worlds…Imagination and Teaching; 2) Someone is singing…Critical Imagination and Autobiography; 3) Refuge we write…Continued Critical Imagination and Autobiography; 4) We are enough…Poetry in/as a Community; 5) We dance…Poetry as a social praxis. We conclude this issue with section 6) Seeking doorways of becoming.

In **Section 1, Building new worlds…Imagination and Teaching**

Carol A. Mullen and Charles L. Lowery discuss how engaging with poetry and educational philosophy can enhance learners' intellectual and aesthetic growth, particularly by addressing complex issues through a poetic lens. The article, written collaboratively by the two faculty members in educational leadership, aims to promote deep listening, critical thinking, and creative expression among students. Focusing on "pandemic poetry," a genre that emerged during

the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors explore how poetry can express the emotional dimensions of life, such as loss and hope. Carol A. Mullen's poem invites the reader to engage with the intimate relationship between the observer and the living world by envisioning a dynamic, fertile world of growth and renewal, where life is interconnected and ever-evolving. This section closes with a dynamic performance of imagination and teaching by Seungho Moon. In "Maxine Greene and Relational Imagination: Interrelationality as Discourse in Critical Imagination," Seungho Moon reflects on his evolving interest in relationships and the interconnectedness of people, nature, including intangible energies like *qi*. Personal experiences, particularly with their spouse and daughter, have reshaped their views on relationships and imagination. Moon highlights a significant moment when his daughter placed a cherished toy, a pen, and an "I love you" note in his bag before a conference, deepening the author's connection to the concept of "relational imagination." This idea, which was influenced by Maxine Greene's work, encourages exploring the interdependence between individuals, others, the cosmos, and the spirit beyond conventional religious boundaries. Together, these performances embody Greene's concept of imagination's ability to envision the world as it could be while engaging with social realities through diverse perspectives.

In **Section 2, Someone is singing…Critical Imagination and Autobiography**, Asillia Franklin-Phipps, William H. Schubert, Robert J. Helfenbein, João M. Paraskeva, and Isabel Nuñez share essays illustrating the intersection between autobiography and critical imagination. Asilia Franklin-Phipps reflects on a childhood memory of riding an elephant, drawing parallels to her experiences navigating various social, professional, and cultural spaces as a Black woman educator. She explores themes of belonging, criticality, resilience, and imagination through the metaphor of straddling worlds. William Schubert traces his lifelong journey in education, describing how his awareness of being educated has continuously evolved through the process of self-education. Schubert emphasizes the importance of imagination in his educational development, and he also reflects on the concept of "the theory within," a guiding force that has shaped his educational philosophy for nearly 80 years. Robert Helfenbein emphasizes the political dimensions of reading, guided by McKittrick's insight that communication and citation should not aim at mastery but at sharing knowledge and experiences, especially in the context of Blackness. This aligns with viewing education as an ethical, imperfect, and evolving process that strives toward more ethical ways of living. In the DeGarmo Lecture of the 2022 Society of Professors of Education annual meeting, "Itinerant Curriculum (as) Theory Now!" João M. Paraskeva argues for the need to decolonize curriculum theory and practice, suggesting that educators must adopt a fluid, itinerant perspective that resists the imposition of fixed knowledge and instead fosters critical transformative learning experiences. The manifesto critiques dominant neoliberal and Eurocentric paradigms in education and advocates for a curriculum that is not confined by rigid structures but is constantly evolving and responsive to the diverse, unpredictable realities of learners' lives. This section closes with Isabel Nuñez giving a counterexample of criticality and imagination, reflecting on her perceived lack of criticality and imagination, which causes her to seek diverse perspectives by reading the news, engaging with critical scholarship, and participating in justice-focused organizations. Together, these performances underscore the diverse ways educators navigate the intersections of criticality, imagination, and education.

In **Section 3, Refuge we write…Continued Critical Imagination and Autobiogra**phy, authors Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon, Brian D. Schultz, Susan R. Adams, Barbara Junisbai, Reggie Bullock, and Brian Charest explore the

possibilities of lives that exist within the safety of refuge and/or challenge places or states of refuge. This section begins with a poem from Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon. His poem highlights the journey of love intertwined with struggle, resilience, and longing—where the journey is a metaphor for surrendering to the uncontrollable currents of emotion and the enduring pull of affection amidst life's adversities. Brian Schultz's autobiographical piece expands on Bill Schubert's ideas about "theory within," previously mentioned. Schultz describes his transformative journey into experiential education through the lens of rock climbing. This metaphor helps readers understand the ways a struggling rock climber steps into unfamiliar and challenging circumstances, but those circumstances foster personal and educational growth. Susan Adam's piece highlights the importance of mentorship, emphasizing how mentoring should be extended beyond academic work to shape a mentee's scholarly identity and approach to mentoring their students, and should foster critical scholarly imagination and exploration. This section closes with an article by Barbara Junisbai, Reggie Bullock, and Brian Charest, who foreground the impact of prison teaching on educators, emphasizing their crucial role as change agents in advocating for educational access within and beyond prison walls. Together, the writings in this section offer a rich exploration of personal journeys, transformative experiences, and theoretical challenges, using metaphors of love, rock climbing, mentorship, and advocacy to highlight the power of education and theory in shaping identities and fostering growth.

Section 4 We are enough…Poetry in/as Community is a spirit-filled collection of poems from a collective writing group consisting of Mary Kay Delaney, Michal Rubin, Liza Bevams, Sheree Mack, Trystan Popish, and Christina Fiflis. This collection also includes poetic performances by Zariah Nicole and Noah Nelson, who journey readers through the mental, physical, and emotional days of being a teacher, offering their loving critique of being in between two worlds: one where they love teaching but recognize they work for an oppressive system and the other that imagines a new world of educating. The work in this section reflects what Delaney, Rubin, Bevams, and Mack highlight in their essay, "Poetry as Essential Praxis for Social Imagination" in citing Ada Limón : "'Because "[w]e are in reciprocal relationships with the natural world,' poet Ada Limón explains, 'It is our work together to see one another.'" Among the poems in this section are poems written by a writing group collective, an international group of poets presenting their original works and a collaboratively created choral poem specifically written for a session at the 2023 American Educational Studies Association (AESA) annual meeting. Through a dynamic performance blending in-person readings, live Zoom participation, recordings, and visual imagery; they cultivated an educative space—a place for diverse perspectives, deep reflection, complexity, and emotional engagement. Together, this collective community of poetry allows us as educators to re-arrange our language and authority to begin building new worlds.

Section 5, We dance…Poetry as a social praxis is a collection of poems from Siliva Bettez, Maddie Neufeld, Carol Schoenecker, Josette Ferguson, Shawn S. Savage, and Julia A. Lynch. Silvia Bettez's poem invites us to explore the intimate connection between body and self-awareness, illustrating how physical sensations and bodily cues guide us through repeated cycles of tension and release. Relatedly, Maddie Neufeld's poem exemplifies embodied awareness as she reflects on the physical toll teachers and students may endure while subtly urging readers to see structural and systemic challenges. Carol Schoenecker's poem critiques standardized legislative initiatives like No Child Left Behind, acknowledging the boundaries they create in the pursuit of educational freedom for students. Josette Ferguson relies on her intuition as a self-preservation tool, shielding herself from the

exploitation and betrayal fostered by a capitalistic society. This section closes with a poetic performance through which Shawn S. Savage and Julia A. Lynch lead us into the embodied injustices of the educational system and into a vision of social praxis as a constant struggle of life, evoking our hearts to a more just and liberatory education. Together, these performances highlight the profound interplay between embodied experiences and the pursuit of educational justice.

Section 6 Seeking doorways of becoming concludes with the collaborative cento poem by poetry workshop participants including Zariah Nicole, Shawn S. Savage, Julia A. Lynch, Josette Ferguson, Carol Schoeneker, Amy Senta, Vicki Boley, Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon, Maddie Neufeld, Tania Ramalho, Travis Crowder, Silva Bettez, and Paula Groves Price, and other workshop participants. This collectively written poem invites readers to grapple with the current educational landscape and move forward in community with each other to activate collective social imagination and activism.

Invitation to Imagine

This issue emerges as a testament to the relational power of poetry, collectivism, and prose to reimagine schooling and society amid the challenges of our contentious times. Rooted in the poetry session from the 2023 AESA annual meeting, the issue challenges us to make sense of "what is" while collectively and collaboratively imagining "what could be" by using the co-constructed cento as a framework for our musings and motifs of critical imagination and transformation in education. This openness to multiplicity and diverse engagement underscores the non-static, polyvocal nature of the issue, which resists monolithic representation. Instead, it mirrors the ways art-based methods of inquiry facilitate the complexity of thinking, learning, teaching, and liberatory praxis. As a collective endeavor, this issue uses the arts 1) as a tool of self-reflection, 2) to inquire into systems of oppression, 3) as embodied activism for change, and 4) as a transformative potential of poetry and prose to provoke new insights, foster connection, and inspire continued critical and creative reimaginings of education and society. We invite our readers to engage with these works as reflective pieces and as catalysts for dialogue and action that question existing paradigms. We challenge our readers to creatively seek out the possibilities of a just education system through the use of their social and speculative imaginations. Considering their reflections in this way helps educators create new worlds of possibility for how educators and society broadly can co-create dynamic spaces for liberatory thought, action, and then, freedom.

References

Banks, J. (1994). *An introduction to multicultural education.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Breidbart, S. (2024, October 1). The Supreme Court's presidential immunity ruling undermines democracy. *Brennan Center for Justice.* https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/supreme-courts-presidential-immunity-ruling-undermines-democracy

Brooks, W., & Browne, S. (2012). Towards a culturally situated reader response theory. *Children's Literature in Education, 43*(1), 74–85. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-011-9154-z

Brown v. *Board of Education of To*peka (1), 347 U.S. 483 (1954). https://www.oyez.org/cases /1940-1955/347us483

Brown v. *Board of Education of Topeka (2)*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955). https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/349us294

Burmester, S., & Howard, L. C. (2022). Confronting book banning and assumed curricular neutrality: A critical inquiry framework. *Theory Into Practice*, *61*(4), 373-383. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2022.2107343

Carson, J., Gunda, A., Qasim, K., Allen, R., Bradley, M., & Prescott, J. (2023). Losing a loved one during the covid-19 pandemic: An on-line survey looking at the effects on traumatic stress, coping and post-traumatic growth. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, *88*(2), 653-667. https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228211049683

Dalsheim, J., & Starrett, G. (2021). Everything possible and nothing true: Notes on the capitol insurrection. *Anthropology Today*, *37*(2), 26-30. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12645

Danco v. All. for Hippocratic Med., 143 S. Ct. 1075 (2023).

Durkee, A. (2023, June 27). Supreme Court overturns stalker's conviction in first amendment case over 'true threats,'" Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2023/06/27/ supreme-court-sides-with-stalker-in-first-amendment-case/?sh=18c0ecf66534

Feder, T. (2024). State anti-DEI laws sow uncertainty in public colleges and universities. *Physics Today*, *77*(4), 22-25. https://doi.org/10.1063/pt.xkpj.fvsv

Flaherty, C. (2022, October 27). Penn State breaks promise to open center for racial justice. *Inside Higher Education.* https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2022/10/28/penn-state-breaks-promise-open-center-racial-justice

Forouzan, K., Guarnieri, I., Fairbanks, M., & Curhan, T. (2024, December 16). State policy trends 2024: Anti-abortion policymakers redouble attacks on bodily autonomy. Guttmacher Institute. https://www.guttmacher.org/2024/12/state-policy-trends-2024-anti-abortion-policymakers-redouble-attacks-bodily-autonomy

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gracia, J. N. (2020). COVID-19's disproportionate impact on communities of color spotlights the nation's systemic inequities. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, *26*(6), 518-521. https://doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0000000000001212

Harkin, P. (2005). The reception of reader-response theory. *College Composition & Communication*, *56*(3), 410-425. https://doi.org/10.58680/ccc20054001

Hodge, J. G., Barraza, L., Piatt, J. L., White, E. N., Ghaith, S., Hollinshead, S., Krumholz, L., Puchebner, M., & Smith, E. (2023). Supreme Court impacts in public health law: 2022-2023. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, *51*(3), 684-688. https://doi.org/10.1017/jme.2023.105

Hodge, J. G., .Barraza, L., Platt, J. L., White, E. N., Hollinshead, S., & Smith, E. (2023b). Public health risks of Artificial Intelligence: Law & policy implications, O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, July 6, 2023, available at <https://oneill.law.georgetown.edu/public-health-risks-of-artificial-intelligence-law-and-policy-implications/>Iser, W. (1972). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. *New Literary History*, *3*(2), 279-299. https://doi.org/10.2307/468316

Iser, W. (1978). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jones, R. K., Nash, E., Cross, L., Philbin, J., & Kirstein, M. (2022, December 1). Medication abortion now accounts for more than half of all US abortions, Guttmacher Institute, https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2022/02/medication-abortion-now-accounts-more-half-all-us-abortionsDavis, J. T., Perry, S. L., & Grubbs, J. B. (2024). Liberty for us, limits for them: Christian nationalism and Americans' views on citizens' rights. *Sociology of Religion*, *85*(1), 60-82. https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srac044

Karaim, R. (2024). Democracy under threat. *CQ Researcher*, *34*(34). https://doi.org/10.4135/cqresrre20240920

Krisberg, K., "Changes to Race, Ethnicity Data Collection Will Impact Health," The Nation's Health 53, no. 4 (2023): 1–19, available at <http://www.thenationshealth.org/content/53/4/1.2>

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Fighting for our lives: Preparing teachers to teach African American students. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(3), 206-214. https://doi.org/10.1177/002248710005100300 8

Langrock, I., LaViolette, J., Goncalves, M., & Spoon, K. (2023). Book bans in political context: Evidence from US public schools. *Available at SSRN 4618699*.

Lee, W. Y., Hobbs, J. N., Hobaica, S., DeChants, J. P., Price, M. N., & Nath, R. (2024). State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *8*(11), 2096-2106. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-01979-5

Lorenz, T. (2023, June 29)"Supreme Court's Ruling on Online Harassment Outrages Victims, Advocates," The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/06/29/ supreme-court-harassment-ruling-first-amendment/

El-Soussi, A. (2022). The shift from face-to-face to online teaching due to COVID-19: Its impact on higher education faculty's professional identity. *International Journal of Educational*

Research Open, 3, 100139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2022.100139

Luckett, S. D. (Ed.). (2019). *African American arts: Activism, aesthetics, and futurity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv128fp88

McQuirter, R. (2020). Lessons on change: Shifting to online learning during COVID-19. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, *29*(2), 47-51. http://dx.doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v29i2.840

Movement Advancement Project. (July 2024). *Dismantling DEI: A coordinated attack on American values*. www.mapresearch.org/2024-DEI-report

Okello, W. K., & Savage, S. S. (2024)."Wholeness is no trifling matter:" Toward an epistemology of care, touch, and celebration in education. Education Sciences, 14(3), 217.. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14030217 Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93-97. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Reis, E. (2024). Anti-Trans (and Intersex) laws and the harms of protecting the binary. *Journal of Women's History*, *36*(3), 19-23. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2024.a935698

Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America.* New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Schnipke, B. D. (2020). Love in the time of coronavirus. *Current Psychiatry*, *19*(5), 17-19.

Schultz, B. (2024, December 6). 5 Trump education priorities for a second term, Education Week.Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 600 U.S. (2023). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199_hgdj.pdf

Tai, D. B. G., Sia, I. G., Doubeni, C. A., & Wieland, M. L. (2022). Disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States: A 2021 update. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, *9*(6), 2334-2339. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-021-01170-w

Tian, M. (2023). *Arts-based research methods for educational researchers*. Routledge.

Totenberg, N., & Dutton, I. (2024, October 30). Supreme Court allows Virginia to purge individuals from voter rolls. *National Public Radio*. https://www.npr.org/2024/10/30/g-s1-30644/supreme-court-virginia-elections

Weiner, D. I., & Petry, E. (2024, July 2). Supreme Court weakens safeguards against state public corruption. *Brennan Center for Justice. https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/supreme-court-weakens-safeguards-against-state-public-corruption*

Williams, M.A. and Gostin, L.O., "Will There be a Supreme Assault on Public Health?" STAT, Oct. 3, 2022, available at https://www.statnews.com/2022/10/03/will-there-be-a-supreme-court-assault-on-public-health/

Introductions: Contributor Biographies

Susan R. Adams, PhD, is Faculty Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Professor at Butler University. A former ESL teacher and instructional coach, her scholarship is featured in such publications as Theory into Practice, English Journal, The New Educator, and Currere Exchange Journal. She is co-author of *Race and Pedagogy: Creating Collaboration for Teacher Transformations* and co-editor of *Exploring Meaningful and Sustainable Intentional Learning Communities for P-20 Educators.*

Silvia Cristina Bettez is a Professor in the Cultural Foundations program at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Dr. Bettez has her Ph.D. in Education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her scholarship centralizes social justice with a focus on fostering critical community building, teaching for social justice, and promoting equity through intercultural communication and engagement. Her work includes articles published in *The International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Equity and Excellence in Education,* and *School Community Journal,* and a book titled *But Don't Call Me White: Mixed Race Women Exposing Nuances of Privilege and Oppression Politics*. She loves to teach, believes in the power of incorporating the arts, and is grateful for all she learns from her graduate students.

Liza Michelle Bevams (she/they) is a poet, maker, fabricator, and visual artist. Her creative practice is rooted in improvisation and experimentation. She believes liberation can take the shape of a poem and can also evolve in the process of creating a poem. A longtime volunteer and teaching artist in her local arts and bookmaking communities, she is also an assistant editor at little somethings press and a 2023 graduate of the Poetry Collective at Lighthouse Writers Workshop. Her work has appeared in various media and publications, including *Newfeathers Anthology* and *Obsidian: Literature &Arts in the African Diaspora*.

Reggie Bullock is an advocate for transformative education, criminal justice reform and social change. A member of the first cohort of Pitzer College's Inside-Out Pathway to BA program, Reggie has a degree in Organizational Studies. A recipient of the highly selective Jesse Unruh California Assembly fellowship, he has direct experience with the legislative process, public outreach, and constituency support in the state senate. Reggie has also served as an ambassador for Pitzer College's Justice Education initiative, during which he organized an academic conference, as well as co-facilitated a college course in the Organizational Studies major.

Brian Charest is associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Redlands, where he also serves as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Co-Director of the Center for Educational Justice (CEJ). Brian is the author of *Civic Literacy in Schools and Communities: Teaching and Organizing for a Revitalized Democracy* (Teachers College Press, 2021), as well as coeditor of *Unsettling Education: Searching for Ethical Footing in a Time of Reform* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2019).

Mary Kay Delaney served as professor of education at Meredith College and visiting clinical professor at the University of Denver. In *In Search of Wonderful Ideas: Critical Exploration in Teacher Education* (Delaney and Mayer, eds, 2021), she turned to philosophy, culturally-responsive pedagogy, and Genevan methods to document, with the pre-service teachers, pre-service teachers' thinking about learning and teaching toward advancing equity. Mary Kay holds a Ph.D. in Social Foundations of Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is co-editor of *Professing Education*. Now

an independent scholar and poet, Delaney finds in poetry a capacity to carry complexities connecting our everyday lives to social justice/injustice. She is a 2022 graduate of Poetry Collective, Lighthouse Writers Workshop, Denver. Find her new poem in *Ekphrastic Review* (10/2/2024).

Josette Ferguson, Ph.D. Pronouns (they/them). Queer nonbinary Guyanese African American womxn. North Carolina native, avid educator, facilitator, political and community organizer, advocate, and creative. They completed their Ph.D in Educational Studies with a concentration in Cultural Foundations from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2024. Josette uses their identities and political background to connect with marginalized communities in North Carolina and expand the multiracial electorate in the state.

Christina Fiflis lives in Boulder, Colorado and Gallup, New Mexico. Her writing is inspired by auspicious encounters with beauty, earnestness and grace, in person and in place. The strength of family elders and her work as a lawyer have gifted her a strong measure of grit useful for writing through equally present encounters with life's treacherous currents. She believes everyone, just by being human, is a poet, should they choose to accept it and that it is in the poetry of nature and our mere existence that we can become wonderstruck, a uniquely human experience.

Asilia Franklin-Phipps graduated from the University of Oregon with a Ph.D. in Critical Sociocultural Studies in Education in 2018. She is an interdisciplinary scholar working as an assistant professor in Educational Studies and Leadership at SUNY New Paltz. She is co-coordinator of the Social Justice Educational Studies graduate program. She holds affiliate appointments in both Art and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and teaches classes on contemporary art, popular culture, literacy, and geography. Inspired by art, film, and popular culture. Asilia's work explores affect, pedagogy, race, gender, sexuality, and visual culture. Asilia is currently working on a book project about visual art, arts practices and Black feminist care and recovery.

Raúl Olmo Fregoso Bailón is Assistant Professor of Equity and Diversity in Education, Department of Educational Studies, College of Education and Human Development at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is member of the International Advisory Committee of the UNESCO Chair in Democracy, Global Citizenship and Transformative Education and his scholarship has either been published or is forthcoming in edited collections, including *Handbook of Theory and Research in Cultural Studies and Education* (Springer), *Keywords in Radical Philosophy and Education* (Brill) and journals such as *Bilingual Research Journal, Revista Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana, Policy Futures in Education, Contextualizaciones Latinoamericanas*, *Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação*, *Curriculum Perspectives* (Springer), *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (Sage), J*ournal of Intercultural Studies* (Taylor and Francis) and other forums.

Gretchen Givens Generett, PhD, is Dean and Professor in the School of Education and the Noble J. Dick Endowed Chair in Community Outreach at Duquesne University. Her most recent scholarship includes the co-authored books, *The American dream for students of color: Barriers to educational success* (with Amy M. Olson, Duquesne University) and Five Practices for Equity-Focused School Leadership (with Sharon Radd, St. Catherine University, Mark Anthony Gooden of Columbia University, and George Theoharis of Syracuse University), which takes a systems view of educational inequity, and has twice been recognized as a "Best Book for Educators." Dr. Generett holds a bachelor's degree in English from Spelman College and a Ph.D. in Social Foundations from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Rob Helfenbein is Professor of Curriculum Studies in the Tift College of Education at Mercer University. Dr. Helfenbein has published numerous research articles about contemporary education analysis in urban contexts. His current research interests include curriculum theorizing in urban contexts, cultural studies of education, critical geographies of education, and the impact of globalization on the lived experience of schools.

Barbara Junisbai is associate professor of Organizational Studies at Pitzer College, which is a member of the Claremont Colleges. Barbara collaborates closely with the Center for Teaching and Learning, including piloting the Claremont Colleges' first cross-campus faculty peer observation program and serving as faculty advisor for the innovative Learning Experience Observer program. She is author of *The Pitfalls of Family Rule: Patronage Norms, Family Overreach, and Political Crisis in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (Cornell University Press, 2025).

Charles L. Lowery is an Associate Professor in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Virginia Tech. He holds an EdD in Educational Leadership and Secondary Education and has an extensive background in bilingual education, social justice, and rural educational leadership. His research focuses on critical literacies, place-based education, and the development of scholar-practitioners as moral democratic agents. Dr. Lowery has co-edited several books and published widely on topics related to Deweyan democracy, critical theory, and educational leader response to crisis and conflict in education. He is currently working on a co-edited book exploring the role of political literacy in educational leadership.

Dr. Sheree Mack, Creatrix: she who makes with a practice which manifests through poetry, storytelling, image and the unfolding histories of black people. Sheree engages audiences around black women's voices and bodies, black feminism, ecology and memory, nature and grief and healing. Sheree advocates for black women's voices, facilitating national and international creative workshops and retreats in the landscape, encouraging and supporting women on their journey of remembrance back to their bodies and authentic selves.

Julia A. Lynch, EdD, University of North Carolina Wilmington. Dr. Julia A. Lynch's interests are guided by a focus on the identity of the Black women teachers and students and their lived experiences across their educational experiences. Generally speaking, her scholarship explores teacher identity and pedagogical practices within rural education contexts. She operates primarily from a BlackMothering framework to engage in critical qualitative research that promotes equity and social justice in rural education teaching and learning. A Black poet scholar, she engages in critical qualitative research that attempts to center the lives and experiences of other Black scholars while also disrupting normative research that doesn't honor the authenticity of the researcher or culturally sustain the community of participants.

Dr. Seungho Moon is a professor of curriculum studies at Loyola University Chicago. He theorizes transnational curriculum discourses of self-other relationships, social transformation, and innovative approaches to community-school-university partnerships. Outstanding book publications include *The Flows of Transnationalism: Questioning Identities and Reimagining Curriculum* (2022), *Three Approaches to Qualitative Research through the ARtS Initiative* (2019), and *The Curriculum Foundations Reader* (Ryan, Tocci, & Moon, 2020). Seungho is an associate editor for *Multicultural Education Review* and a scholar whose work bridges philosophy, theology, and education. Growing up in Korea, he developed a deep interest in the intersections of curriculum and culture, which he pursued

through studies in philosophy (with a minor in theology), educational foundations, and curriculum & pedagogy. He earned his doctorate in Curriculum & Teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University, in 2011.

Carol A. Mullen, PhD, is a professor of educational leadership and policy studies at Virginia Tech, Virginia, USA, and a J. William Fulbright Senior Scholar alumnus. Her research in educational leadership on mentoring and professional development uses equity, justice, and policy lenses. Publications include the *Handbook of Social Justice Interventions in Education* (Springer) and *The Risky Business of Education Policy* (Routledge), both winners of the Society of Professors of Education's (SPE) Outstanding Book Award. Her books on mentoring theory and practice include *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Sage). Her guest-edited special issues on mentoring appeared in *International Journal of Mentoring &Coaching in Education* and *Mentoring &Tutoring.* She is Editor Emerita of *Mentoring &Tutoring* journal. She was honored with UCEA's Master Professor and Jay D. Scribner Mentoring awards. She is Past-President of ICPEL, SPE, and UCEA. Her PhD is from the University of Toronto.

Noah Nelson is a doctoral student in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. Rooted in passion for Black youth, teachers, and community, he found his calling as a dedicated teacher in Atlanta. Noah's focus extended beyond the classroom, advocating for Black liberatory programming, shaping lives inside and outside educational realms. Similar in work, his scholarship is concerned with Black teachers across the diaspora as practitioners of liberation through their pedagogies and social movements around them.

Maddie Neufeld is doctoral student and instructor in the Department of Curriculum & Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research focuses on the ways that whiteness haunts places, practices, and times of teaching, as well as affective and embodied experiences of teaching inclusively. She is particularly interested in non-representational methodology and poetry as research practice.

Zariah Nicole is a young, Black woman raised in a low-socioeconomic, Black neighborhood in a colorblind medium-sized city. At the cost of being her full authentic self, Zariah's journey through education was easily perceived as a successful counter-narrative. From this realization, learning grew from a reality escape to a vehicle for change. Zariah's scholarship is concerned with the experiences and education of Black folx, examining education as socialization, fictive kinship, and Black language.

Isabel Nuñez is professor of educational studies and dean of the School of Education at Purdue University Fort Wayne. She holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies from the University of Illinois, Chicago; an M.Phil. in Cultural Studies from Birmingham University; and a J.D. from UCLA Law. She has been a classroom teacher in Los Angeles and Birmingham, England; a newspaper journalist in Tokyo; and a visiting professor at the University of San Francisco. She has published four books with Teachers College Press and authored chapters in books from Peter Lang, Routledge, SAGE, the Oxford University Press, and the Cambridge University Press. Her work has appeared in *Curriculum Inquiry, Educational Studies*, the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, and *Teachers College Record*.

João M. Paraskeva is a Mozambican-born public intellectual, pedagogue, critical social theorist, and professor of education at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Paraskeva was born in Maputo, Mozambique, where he completed his elementary and high school education. He pursued higher studies at the Portuguese Catholic University and the University of Minho

in Portugal. Paraskeva has held teaching positions at the University of Minho and in South Africa, Brazil, Spain, and Italy before moving to the United States. He also served as a Visiting Professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Paraskeva is among the leading educational researchers in educational and curriculum studies. He is known for creating the Itinerant Curriculum Theory (ICT), which, in contrast to fixed or standardized views of education, emphasizes the fluidity and diversity of knowledge, suggesting that curriculum should be adaptable, open to diverse epistemologies, and sensitive to the unique cultural, historical, and political contexts of different communities. [Biography from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/João_Paraskeva]

Trystan Popish is a disabled poet from Colorado. She inherited the poetry gene and her middle name from her grandmother. She credits her ear for meter and levity, however, to her mother reading the works of Dr. Seuss to her as a child, in particular *The Sneetches*. As a result of this early and repeated exposure, Trystan writes poetry and will never name all her sons Dave. She is currently an editor for Twenty Bellows, and her work appears in *Pleiades*, *Santa Fe Writers Project Quarterly*, *Rogue Agent Journal*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She lives with her husband, their one-year-old, diabetes, depression, two dogs, and two hairless guinea pigs.

Paula Groves Price, Ph.D., is the dean of the College of Education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T). Prior to her work at NCA&T, Price was an associate dean for diversity and international engagement; professor of cultural studies and social thought in education; scholar in residence for the Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center; and associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, at Washington State University. As associate dean, Price coordinated international education partnership with institutions of higher education and K-12 schools and districts in Thailand and Japan. Additionally, she led numerous diversity and inclusion initiatives across the university. Her research focuses on the foundations of education, African-American education, Native American and indigenous education, critical race theory, critical multicultural and anti-racist education and culturally responsive science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). She has served as president of the American Educational Studies Association. She holds a graduate certificate in Cultural Studies and a Ph.D. in Social Foundations of Education from UNC Chapel Hill. [Biography adapted from https://ncat.edu/news/2020/04/price-named-dean-of-collegeofeducation.php]

Michal Rubin is an Israeli, living in Columbia, SC. The impetus for her writing came from the years-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As a psychotherapist, a Cantor and a poet, she brings forth the challenge of distinguishing truths from myths, awareness vs. denial, conformity vs. individuation. Her work was published in *Psychotic Education*, *The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*, *Wrath Bearing Tree journal*, *Rise Up Journal, Topical Poetry*, *Fall-Lines, The Last Stanza Poetry Journal, Waxing & Waning: A Literary Journal, South Carolina Bards Poetry Anthology 2023, Palestine-Israel Journal, The New Verse News, Writers Resist, Dissident Voice, Writers Launch, Critical Muslims*, a chapbook published by Cathexis Northwest Press, and a forthcoming poetry manuscript to be published by Muddy Ford Press.

Dr. Shawn S. Savage is an assistant professor and area lead for the curriculum and instruction doctoral concentration in the Department of Educational Leadership within the Watson College of Education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. With over 10 years of experience in K-12 and higher education as an academic and student affairs professional, Dr.

Savage investigates access, equity, and justice issues in K-12, teacher education, and higher education. He primarily studies the experiences of Black males—using justice-centered qualitative research approaches, including with athletics and the arts. Notably, a Jamaican background, African-informed inquiry lenses, and humanizing praxes animate Dr. Savage's work that highlights the brilliance, beauty, depth, and breadth of Blackness.

William H. Schubert is Professor Emeritus of Curriculum and Instruction and former University Scholar at the University of Illinois Chicago. He is author or editor of over 20 books and about 300 chapters, articles, reviews, poems, and other publications. Former president of the John Dewey Society, The Society for the Study of Curriculum History, the Society of Professors of Education (SPE), and vice president of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), he is recipient of the 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award of AERA, the Mary Anne Raywid Award of SPE, an elected Fellow of the International Academy of Education, and an elected member of Professors of Curriculum. His recent books include *Love, Justice, and Education* (2009), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies* (ed. with Ming Fang He, 2022), *Curriculum Matters* (UNESCO, 2023), and he has a forthcoming book, *Students as Curriculum* (Schubert & Schultz, 2025). In 2023, SPE established the William H. Schubert Award for Curricular Speculation to honor him.

Brian D. Schultz is the Virginia Todd Memorial Scholar of Curriculum Studies and a Professor of Teaching, Curriculum & Educational Inquiry in the College of Education, Health & Society at Miami University where he currently serves as an Associate Dean for External Relations and Partnerships. Brian is the Immediate-Past President of the Society of Professors of Education. His forthcoming book with colleague and mentor Bill Schubert is titled, *Students as Curriculum*.

Carol Schoenecker is a coach and educator. She currently works as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Duquesne University's School of Education and as the head men's and women's rowing coach at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Amy Senta is an associate professor of education at University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Watson College of Education, Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, Language & Literacy and Special Education. She holds a Ph.D.in Social Foundations of Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and earned NC Licensure in elementary education at NC Central University. For six years, Dr. Senta served as a teacher at Bethesda Elementary School in Durham, NC where she was named Durham Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008. Amy's research interests include qualitative methodologies; digital arts-based ethnography within schools, teacher education for advancing equity, critical whiteness studies, sociology of education, and critical social theory. She is a member of AERA, AESA, and the Society of Professors of Education. [Biography adapted from UNCW website and LinkedIn]

1. Building New Worlds…Imagination and Teaching

A woman's gut be a belly full/
fat and fatigued,/
building new worlds and knitting the sea with debris./

Ooohhhh

Although…will there be a day tomorrow/
where the woes and joys of womanhood don't collide?/
A day where I can tell myself to stop digging/
because I,/
us,/
we,/
create life,/
we breathe life…

--This poem and all the poems at the beginning of the sections in this issue are excerpts from a cento created November 2023 by Zariah Nicole, Shawn S Savage, Julia Lynch, Josette Ferguson, Carol Schoenecker, Amy Senta, Vicki Boley, Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon, Maddie Neufeld, Tania Ramalho, Travis Crowder, Siliva Bettez, Paula Groves Price and all workshop participants.[1]

[1] Note sent to poets explaining transcription: *We are happy to share with you the group cento called out/written during the AESA session, Poetry Reading: Collaboration as Essential Praxis for Social Imagination and Connection, AESA 2023…We, one co-editor and three guest-editors, using the zoom transcript as our first draft have written down the cento. You all know the foibles of zoom transcripts so you will already expect that we did the following: listened to the session on zoom and made corrections to the transcript, checked the revised transcript against the recording, identified challenge areas, listened and checked again and listened and checked again--so that we also checked our checking. We repeated this until we were reasonably confident about the accuracy of the transcript. In this way, we came to the words and spaces in the text here.*

A Poetic Meditation Professing Re(new)al and Repair in a Pandemic World

Carol A. Mullen
Virginia Tech
camullen@vt.edu

Charles L. Lowery
Virginia Tech
loweryc@vt.edu

Reading poets and educational philosophers who write lyrically zeroes in on how learners can grow from tackling perplexing issues conveyed through poetry. This collaborative, interactive article engages the humanities from an educational and poetic–philosophical–political perspective. A broader aim is to help students foster intellectual and aesthetic engagement with poems while promoting their critical and creative thinking skills. We, two faculty in educational leadership, attempt to spark deep listening and meaning-making through our academic contribution to pandemic poetry and writing on "lockdown culture" (*The Guardian*, 2021). Pandemic poetry, an online phenomenon that appeared during the COVID-19 years, presented "windows on the world"—as we see it, expressions of the felt-dimensions of life (loss, hope, etc.) (e.g., *The Guardian*, 2021). Imagining pandemic poetry as a genre born of exigency, we offer our reading of Mullen's (2022) original educationally-steeped poem, and mutual interpretive unpacking of its verses. Our poetry reading was performed live at Humanities Week 2023, followed by an elaborate response from a script penned together (Mullen & Lowery, 2023). Then we revisited this work and (re)composed it utilizing the transcribed record of our talk, complete with philosophical musings and concrete pedagogical examples, for *Professing Education*.

The Invitation

For All Eternity, a pandemic poem by Mullen (2022, see Appendix), is all about growth and becoming. In the writing of it, she took inspiration from select philosophical and political texts. On the one hand, we approach the poem as a data display about profound experiential learning that is available for interpretative unpacking relative to our own ideas of multiple and fluid meanings, and contextual understandings, extending to resonating studies in curriculum and psychology. On the other hand, our take is lyrical; as such, like the poet (Mullen), we contemplate life and death that meditates on ideas and sensations, drawing attention to life's losses and gains, decay, and regeneration. We see the poem as invoking vistas through meditation as a strategy for coping with particular losses and remembering to think, move, create, connect, and breathe. A Deweyian and Freirean scholar, Lowery (2013) is well positioned to offer insight into the poem's images of renewal and growth through educational learning. Mullen has long held the same specialized knowledge. In the poem, one can see a collective concern for the present transform into a message of active hope.

Regarding terms used, the phrase *pandemic world* was a deliberate choice for this article—"world" seems to connect people to the earth. *Toute le monde* (in French) and *todo el mundo* (in Spanish) both mean "everyone" and each literally translates as "all the world." Relatedly, we believe that owing to the careless way capitalism interacts with the environment, we can expect to see more viral surges, so "pandemic" was selected over "post-pandemic." Whether others view the state of the world as pandemic, we are certainly and unfortunately living with the repercussions. Hence, in this essay, the invitation is to participate in "repairing the world" in pandemic times, which aligns to Dewey's (1934) concept of growth and Freire's (1970/2005) notion of becoming. The democratic discourse invites

readers to reflectively engage their emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual acumen.

Joint Reflective Analysis

One of the first connections between Dewey and this piece (Mullen, 2022) is found in the premise of making the commonplace a thing that one can experience and understand aesthetically. As Dewey (1934) stated,

> *It is a commonplace that we cannot direct, save accidentally, the growth and flowering of plants, however lovely and enjoyed, without understanding their causal conditions. It should be just a commonplace that esthetic understanding—as distinct from sheer personal enjoyment—must start with the soil, air, and light out of which things esthetically admirable arise. And these conditions are the conditions and factors that make an ordinary experience complete.* (p. 12)

Dewey (1934) also emphasized parallels between "the emergence of works of art out of ordinary experiences" with "the refining of raw materials into valuable products" (p. 12). In both cases, there is a transformative process at play. Raw materials are transformed through a series of steps into something valuable, and similarly, ordinary experiences are transformed into works of art through a creative process.

The metaphor Dewey draws on is products manufactured for commercial purposes—a mere vehicle for his point, that art is intended both to express an experience and to be an experience. Here, Dewey suggests that art and the production of commodities involve meaning-making and value-making. In each process, something that was previously commonplace or raw is given purpose and meaning. Similarly, art has the capacity to take ordinary experiences and imbue them with deeper significance and value.

Artful experience—and the goal of artful expression—are means of saturating the ordinary—the commonplace—with meaning and value. The experiences of suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic (and by extension, through any great crisis or conflict) are ushered toward the educative and meditative work of "reentering a world" (Mullen, 2022, p. 1) of worth—a world worth living in. His aim was to demonstrate that experience is not in some euphoric or eulogized engagement with art in that these acts of praise and elation do not engage the experiencer with the thing experienced.

In other words, simply praising "the flower"—a symbol drawn from Dewey's (1934) work easily connected to "something special always underfoot" and a thing with "texture, density, depth" (from Mullen's poem)—is neither an act of comprehension nor a work of creation. Art transforms the flower. The flower—experienced for its existence, beauty, and meaning—is not merely seen or sensed; for, it is given "texture, density, depth." Experience is an integration of internal and external perceptions. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938) acknowledged,

> *Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had.* (p. 39)

In Dewey's (1938) logic, the concept of continuity is foundational to encountering purpose and meaning in an experience: "The principle of continuity in its educational application means [. . .] that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process" (p. 47). As theorized about experience and education, then, the concept of continuity is fundamental. Learning is incremental, as is life. Through experiencing "the flower" (i.e., whatever its beauty and reality may exemplify for any of us), we grow and become more human—our moral presence is felt in the world.

Moral Presence in Experience

The reading of Mullen's poem is educative, as poetry often is, on two levels. The poem invites us to learn of *it*—to ascertain and apprehend the language of the art itself. However, the poem's representative nature asks that we also decode our experience, comprehend our situation and surroundings, form conclusions about our reality, and *read the world*. We are called to become critically literate of our surroundings and situations. As Freire (1983) articulated,

> *Reading is not exhausted merely by decoding . . . language, but rather anticipated by and extending into knowledge of the world. Reading the world precedes reading the word, and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world. Language and reality are dynamically intertwined*. (p. 5)

Before he could decode letters and text Freire (1983) reflected on reading (and remembering) in childhood. Finding meaning in his experience of surroundings, he developed within "a critical understanding of the act of reading." This meant "*re-reading* essential moments" of "the most remote experiences" in his memory: "Surrendering myself to this effort, I re-created and re-lived in the text I was writing, the experience I lived at a time when I did not yet read words" (pp. 5–6). Experiences of the world are texts—decodable, comprehensible, and ripe with significance.

The text of a poem is to be experienced. The reader is prompted to engage with the ideas/images, to make meaning and reflect, and develop insight. The words of the text as an artifact are therefore experienced firsthand by the encounterer. For All Eternity "connects, teaches, gives, creates." Equally educative is the invitation to enter the life-world of the poem. A poet may ask that we develop a moral presence in our world: "See how entangled this line of growth is/Thick with the juices of creativity, it lives beyond itself."

As we see the entangled line of growth, we are reading the world. The text tells a story of a world where COVID-19 is now endemic. The narrative relates the condition of a world in which people lost family, friends, and their personal health to the virus. Yet, between the lines of the text one can infer hope and creativity. We are invited to recuperate—and create—a new story. Formerly our world was marked by social isolation and the economic impact of the pandemic. Now it can become a world of healing and hope—a world in which, if properly decoded, we can find ways to be morally present and live beyond ourselves.

To do so, we must help ourselves and one another grow. Dewey (1938) said, "Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process" (p. 50). Summoning Freire (1970/2005), it should be a "vocation of becoming more fully human" (p. 44). Healing in our current life-worlds is likewise an ever-present process, which is itself a moral responsibility. As Freire (2001) theorized, "Insofar as I am a conscious presence in the world, I cannot hope to escape my ethical responsibility for my action in the world" (p. 26). We contend that a pandemic world does not neatly allow for a rear-view of COVID-19. The virus is and will be with us, as will the scars caused by the illness and loss experienced by so many at the height of the pandemic. Nevertheless, we are encouraged to ensure "the ground becomes fertile," read the "Signs of recovery," to "Honor the loss," and to "Sustain action to right the wrongs."

We, the teacher/the learner/the leader/the human being must "Get closer to that which is alive/Kneel down/Look closely" (invited by writer in her poem). The flower must be *reached for, felt, breathed in*—a poetic whisper. Representing "R-E-A-C-H/F-E-E-L/B-R-E-A-T-H-E" in all caps and with each letter allocated a space with a hyphen persuades readers to experience *the experience*. By reaching/feeling/breathing, they are invited to partake in experience as an aesthetic, such as through expanded/prolonged moments of mindfully attending, noticing, or even enjoying.

Dewey's (1934) philosophical musings also took the form of questions: "How is it that the everyday making of things grows into that form of making which is genuinely artistic?" And "How is it that our everyday enjoyment of scenes and situations develops into the peculiar satisfaction that attends the experience which is emphatically esthetic?" (p. 12). A poetic message of encouragement was to "find the germs and roots in matters of experience that we do not currently regard as [a]esthetic" and "Having discovered these active seeds, we may follow the course of their growth into the highest forms of finished and refined art" (p. 12).

In Mullen's poem, the art itself (i.e., the poetic expression) aims to express (not state) meaning through "pattern-making"—a necessary act for artful and aesthetic understanding of human experience. Pandemic life comes to mind. Just as COVID-19 and the suffering of so many that accompanied the crisis—not to overlook the compounding effect of multiple pandemics/oppressions through racism, sexism, poverty, violence, war, and other crises—was intensified and protracted, we now must embrace a chronicity of understanding and meaning-making in its aftermath.

> For All Eternity (Mullen, 2022) does not superficially ask to simply be read. Rather, the reader is being invited to allow the poetry—the expression of life experienced by one/many/all—to reverberate more deeply, creating an opening for ambiguity, empathy, and possibility. Accordingly, Barone and Eisner (1997) proposed that arts-based educational research has seven "aesthetic qualities and design elements" (p. 73), stipulating that any work—like the poetic text—must satisfy, at least to some degree, these criteria: "(1) the creation of a virtual reality; (2) the presence of ambiguity; (3) the use of expressive language; (4) the use of contextualized and vernacular language; (5) the promotion of empathy; (6) the personal signature of the researcher/writer; and (7) the presence of aesthetic form" (pp. 73–78). We now turn to briefly address each of these criteria in the context of For All Eternity.

Virtual Reality

It could be said that the poem's virtual reality simulates experiences that offer readers an immersive feel of a world that the writer designed with aims in mind. With reference to the lyrical lines, these speak to such directions and actions as (a) positively extending people's boundaries in a pandemic world; (b) embracing life, living, and healing while honoring losses; and (c) constructively engaging in ecosystems that are themselves regenerating and recuperating in the face of ongoing challenges.

Ambiguity

The poem contains ambiguous messages, among them "as though pattern-making is development itself," perhaps invoking pattern-making as a deeper language of creativity and life (symmetry, branching, spirals, cracks, etc.) as well as uncertainty. Pattern-making is a generative process that involves or promotes development. We see patterns in nature's design and organization (leaves, etc.), and animal coverings (scales, etc.), as well as in the behavior of living things (planets, etc.), and the passing of the seasons.

The poem's line "Generating a life system for itself and others" personifies nature, sparking reflection on the conditions we can create for growing in personal ways, and connecting with people and communities. Stimulating creative and directed energy or spurring positive development toward a healthy state is desirable for people, communities, nations, and the world. Pattern-making in the life cycle of a human can perpetuate or even intrude on development. For instance, in the former case, assuming agency by participating in causes aimed at "Dismantl[ing] threats to humanity/Sustain[ing] action to right the wrongs," can spark opportunities for "Liv[ing] through healing/Heal[ing] through living."

In the latter case, a failure in development might occur when feeling "grief-struck," crushed to the core. A traumatic event involving hardship can be triggered by the loss of a loved one, illness, natural or weather disaster, divorce, unemployment, displacement, violence, the unexpected, and so forth. One can imagine (or even summon through a lived remembrance) restlessness, picturing trauma, perhaps evidenced by a depressive or anxious state, like this: An individual who while pacing aimlessly is "Up and down and all around/A moving force." A behavioral or activity pattern drenched with suffering could develop into chronic dysfunction and disorder. A disruption in mental health and personal patterns and rhythms could show up as ruminating fixations (essentially chaos and a collapsed state) that manifest as disengagement from the world, and healthy relationships, experiences, and habits.

Just as nature has an aesthetic so too does the human being. Equipped to recognize and create patterns, as well as to think about the future, we can anticipate what might be needed as we help or advocate for ourselves or others, or manage threats and crises. Identifying resources and strategies can spur healing, build resilience to major life stressors, and foster an existence that leads to positive adaptation and growth from adversity. Resources and strategies that build stamina include inner strength (built through mediative energy, exercise, positive messages, meaningful causes and charities, etc.), better relationships, appreciation of life, imagining a positive future and exhibiting future-oriented thinking (new paths and possibilities), healthy allocation of emotional and cognitive resources, and gaining perspective (such as on life's purpose and meaning). "Anticipating future desired events" has been associated with higher levels of well-being in research, such as a psychological study conducted in China with undergraduate and postgraduate populations (Luo et al., 2018, p. 1). However, resilience cannot be assumed or presumed to be ubiquitous following "spousal loss, divorce, and unemployment," based on a study using longitudinal data that found variability in households in Germany among those who experienced these significant stressors (Infurna & Luthar, 2016, p. 175).

Ambiguity in the poem is also revealed through puns like glowing ("glowing cities and forests"). This image hints at radiance and renewal through human and natural growth on the one hand, and human and weather disasters on the other hand: war and the failure of leadership to resolve conflicts constructively, uncontrolled fires and storms, radiation and radioactive waste from nuclear power, and so forth.

Expressive Language

The way the writer has expressed herself poetically invokes highly personal and grand vistas, awakening the notion of poetry as a healing mediation. The expressive language brings about remembering—the beloved who have passed in a pandemic(s) among unfortunate remembrances. The invitation is to rejoice in the gift of being in community (again), welcoming all who are new to our communities, workplaces, and professions. Striving to protect ourselves, loved ones, and societies from multiple pandemics, through courage we enact community-based action, disrupt racial and sexual violence, safeguard vulnerable groups, and protect the earth and every child. With radical love and moral care, we embrace humanity and protect freedom and relationships. By wholeheartedly inhabiting our lives, we consciously and deliberately make space for discomfort and change, hope and renewal. The poet's messages support such personal–political messages, including collective hope that all find love, healing, and creativity as we recover from what has been and find possibility in what will be.

Contextualized and Vernacular Language

In this poem the spirit of our times is reflected. Reentering a generative world in/after lockdown is juxtaposed with the gains and losses in our

communities. For All Eternity is about the generative cycle of rebirth and death and the forces that move us from decay to regeneration. As the coronavirus pandemic paradoxically rages and abates, in our wisdom, the poet seems to be meditatively conveying a deep desire that we heal from this protracted moment in history. A meditatively induced remembrance is of the beloved who helped improve lives. The tone of rejoice can be "heard" in the gift of being in community (again), perhaps extending to welcoming all who are new to our communities, workplaces, and professions.

Activist messages are most clearly conveyed in the lines "Dismantle threats to humanity/ Sustain action to right the wrongs/Live through healing/Heal through living." Besides the demands of our work, we are thinking that before us stretch ever-unfolding challenges of justice. Striving to protect ourselves, loved ones, and societies from multiple pandemics, through courage we enact community-based action, disrupt racial and sexual violence, safeguard vulnerable groups, and protect the earth and every child.

Promotion of Empathy

The lines unpacked directly above are not the only ones that we associate with promotion of empathy. Those who are "grief-stuck," as previously mentioned, have been enduring "Glassed-in hospitalization/COVID cremation, mass graves, remembrances," which speaks to a collective mourning and by societies around the globe. Those who have struggled for their lives are recognized, just like their caregivers—one entity drawing breathe and fighting furiously to live: "Breathing through shortness of breath." The earth is personalized as a central character in the poem, with its own fight for life: "A tendril of breath, winding/Attaching itself, holding on for support." The earth and human blur, as though one: "Nutrient fed, the ground becomes fertile/Defenses and therapeutics take hold/Signs of recovery from exhaustion."

Personal Signature

In the poem, living generativity and creativity during/after a (global) crisis is lyrically contemplated. For All Eternity reflects forces in our lives that move us from losses to gains, from decay to rebirth. Readers may find that the poem personally speaks to them or that it is more a meditation on (moments of) life from a subjective point of view. A possibility is that it may force coming face-to-face with sobering emotions associated with returning to community. As one reader (a faculty member in curriculum studies) of this poem put it:

That generative cycle of death and rebirth weaves in and out of every line that may take readers back and forth between what has been and what will be. One might feel the balance between loss and regeneration as if they were being volleyed back and forth from line to line. The lines are lyrical with sounds that collapse naturally into one another, allowing the reader the sensation of moving back and forth and back again.

Aesthetic Form

This poem is a meditation on life that uses a reflective tone, welcoming the listener/reader to mediate and reflect deeply on its themes around eternity, particularly "conditions for growth" and "possibilities anew," but without idealizing life or the new normal. Instead, as we encounter its various lines and verses we are remembering serious losses and acknowledging ongoing damages (e.g., raging fires and hurricanes), some of which are integral to re(new)al and the "cycle of creation." The poem uses aesthetic as well as rhythmic qualities of language (metaphors, analogies, and symbolism). The phrases are at times uplifting/heartening ("potent possibilities," "luscious growth," etc.), and at other times sad/disheartening ("see the suffering," "mass graves," etc.), and even simultaneously "up and down" (e.g., "Watch decay regenerate") as though conveying life's inevitabilities rhythmically. The poet's sensibility is about the importance of observation, the imagination and

senses, ritual, and exertion for experiencing the return to our communities. In generativity, we see caring, connecting, teaching, giving, and creating, among other gestures that bring into existence something welcomed (or resisted), new, or different. Even in the most restrictive situations where growth of mind or expression of individuality is limited (e.g., remote learning), students and teachers have the capacity to create healthy communities committed to the greater good and a better world.

Inspiration for the poem came from various sources. One is Dewey's (1934) philosophy that education should respect all sources of experience. For All Eternity's focus on life in community during a pandemic offers a lyrical take on life and death that meditates on ideas and sensations in the new normal. Another is Freire's (1970/2005) teachings in which justice is addressed from an educational viewpoint, and liberation on a personal and political scale. Yet another is hooks' (1994, 2001) expressive writing on politics, freedom, discord, and love in the context of empowering Black culture and teaching to transgress.

It is as though the writer came to this poem wanting to convey that life's losses and gains, decay and regeneration continue. Life in death and death in life reverberate as images. Was she reminding herself that rebirth, however seemingly unremarkable—like a rose that grows in concrete—is worth noticing? Often she has to remind herself (despite personal and universal suffering, and the necessity of constant struggle per Freire [1970/2005]) that there is beauty and growth, which from a liberation stance begins with the self. Life takes one thing of value in return for another, and we are jostled between healing and renewal, and birth and death.

Mullen expressed these thoughts in our presentation (Mullen & Lowery, 2023), answering a doctoral student's question, "What inspired the poem?" Then the educational leadership student/practitioner storied the intriguing notion of "heart-worker" as an expression of humanity:

> *Listening to Dr. Mullen read the poem instantly brought back being a biology teacher and cycles in the world of science. I mention this because when listening to poetry, we're hearing, processing, and feeling. What I really liked about the poem is how it transformed into this idea of humanity and everything that has transpired these last few years. I'm reminded of my own educational world where I work in family and community engagement. I can definitely attest to us constantly assessing needs and understanding the trauma that our students experience, and using that information to meet them where they are. Within our school we are heart-workers, and there's a certain humanity behind our approach to students and families.* (excerpt from transcribed record, October 23, 2023)

Mediation on Life

Invoking vistas through meditative writing is a strategy for coping with particular losses, and remembering to think, move, create, connect, breathe. Creating a sense of community under remote conditions has contributed to feeling alive, and aliveness eases the experience of reentry. The poem, as mediation, could be encountered as remembering, the beloved who have passed in a pandemic(s) among these remembrances. The invitation is to rejoice in the gift of being in community (again), welcoming all who are new to our communities, workplaces, and professions. Striving to protect ourselves, loved ones, and societies from multiple pandemics, through courage we enact community-based action, disrupt racial and sexual violence, safeguard vulnerable groups, and protect the earth and every child. With radical love, we embrace humanity and protect freedom and relationships, and by wholeheartedly inhabiting our lives we create space for discomfort and change, hope and renewal. The poet's messages support such personal–political messages, including collective hope that we all find love, healing, and creativity as we recover from what has been and find possibility in what will be.

Resonances With Philosophers

Possibilities awaken as readers reflect on their own life—their circumstances, their losses and obstacles faced, their hopes and endeavors—to "live through healing."

Dewey (1934) asserted an idea that brings to mind creative connection and its inevitability and importance to artistic, cognitive, and educational (pedagogical) endeavor in life (as a classroom) and the classroom (as life):

> *It is quite possible to enjoy flowers in their colored form and delicate fragrance without knowing anything about plants theoretically. But if one sets out to understand the flowering of plants, he is committed to finding out something about the interactions of soil, air, water and sunlight that condition the growth of plants*. (p. 4)

For All Eternity asks that the one who is "the experiencer" of the moment be intentional, to "express emotion, engage in ritual, acknowledge obstacles"—the initial "colored form and delicate fragrance" of the moment. But the poem also encourages the reader to commit to a discovery process articulated by Dewey as "finding out something about the interactions of soil, air, water, and sunlight," that is, to recognize the systems and ecological aspects of the world in order to, in the poet's words, "Dismantle threats to humanity/Sustain action to right the wrongs/Live through healing" and to "Heal through living." First one sees patterns or connections, then makes meaning out of them. Cultivating connections and mindful presence are active states of being that spur inquiry, making an imprint on existence.

Continuing with the poet's sensibility, this is how we work to "Imagine potent possibilities anew" and "Prepare the earth for what can be." In order to establish and steward a world of "Luscious growth in all forms," it is necessary to "Work the ground with muscle."

Healing Through Spatio-Temporal Experience

In the final verse of the poem, one can see our collective concern for the present transform into a message of active hope. The reader is asked to engage in a conscious repairing of the world, which in Hebrew is *tikkun olam*, meaning a commitment to make the world better through "physical repair or stabilization" (Lowery, 2023, p. 126). Here olam refers not only to "the world" but also connotes "the ages" and "in perpetuity," or, as it might be translated, "for all eternity." The commitment, then, is not for a healing in a limited space or finite moment of time—it is an ongoing repairing. In this spatio-temporal dimension of hope, we experience both The World as our place and our planet (space) and The World as our *olam*—our sustained human experience (time).

The passage (directly below) concerning repair in the poem aligns to not only Dewey's (1934) concept of growth, but also Freire's (1970/2005) notion of becoming. There is a "rhythmic ebb and flow" (i.e., "A cycle of creation") in this Freirean becoming and Deweyan growth. We can almost visualize these two ideas fusing as one in this verse from the poem:

> Heal through living
> Breeze of the seashore
> Hayseed of inland prairies
> An ecological footprint
> Outpacing our planet's capacity to regenerate
> Glowing cities and forests
> Eco-friendly countering impacts
> Striving to nourish a planetary home
> A cycle of creation is this growth
> For all eternity

Symbols of the movement and interactions of interdisciplinarity, intersubjectivity, and intersectionality are all present in these closing words, which extend forward both into the ether and into eternity. "Our planet's capacity to

regenerate" is our ability to recognize ourselves as human beings within a world connected to, and responsible for, other human beings.

Freire (1970/2005) declared, "Knowledge emerges through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72). And Dewey (1934) communicated the heart of this self-same notion in this way, emphasizing the spatio-temporal aspects of continuing and hoping.

> *Space thus becomes something more than a void in which to roam about [. . .]. It becomes a comprehensive and enclosed scene within which are ordered the multiplicity of doings and undergoings in which man engages. Time ceases to be either the endless and uniform flow or the succession of instantaneous points which some philosophers have asserted it to b*e. (p. 23)

The rhythmic ebb and flow of growth echoes through space and time, like the seasons recurring in Freire's parallel view of progress, and then again in Mullen's poem. Freire (1970/2005) saw progress as movement in and with the world: "The point of departure of the movement lies in the people themselves. But since people do not exist apart from the world, apart from reality, the movement must begin with the human–world relationship" (p. 85).

The spatio-temporal aspect of being in and reading the world is an inherent concern of education. As Dewey (1938) conveyed, the environment of objects in which infants find themselves is "very restricted in space and time" (p. 74). The world within the infant's grasp is spatially narrow and temporally partial. But their learning experiences, although limited, are naturally educative. The world "steadily expands by the momentum inherent in experience itself" (p. 74). Further explaining, he wrote:

> *As the infant learns to reach, creep, walk, and talk, the intrinsic subject-matter of its experience widens and deepens. It comes into connection with new objects and events which call out new powers, while the exercise of these powers refines and enlarges the content of its experience*. (p. 74)

Likewise, during the coronavirus pandemic our experiences were limited spatially and temporally. The "grief struck" experienced trauma and adverse experiences spatially. We were isolated from loved ones, countless were physically unwell and often quarantined in restricted spaces, and many experienced the loss of place, such as jobs and homes. Temporally, we found ourselves coping with a distortion of time, wasted hours from endless news cycles, and time denied with loved ones.

But For All Eternity, while fully acknowledging such painful experiences, re-centers our focus on an expanded vision of the environment, and self and other. It asks that we consider ways to mature and grow—to become. For the child as student, Dewey (1938) summoned the perspective of an expanding "life-space and life-durations": "The environment, the world of experience, constantly grows larger and, . . ., thicker." For pedagogues, he spoke of a nurturing sensibility: "The educator who receives the child at the end of this period has to find ways for doing consciously and deliberately what "nature" accomplishes in the earlier years" (p. 74).

The poem presents us with the possibilities of "doing consciously and deliberately" in the period in which we now find ourselves. The cycle is one of space and location (e.g., "the seashore," "inland cities," "forests," "a special place/Where everything is growing") conjoint with time and duration (i.e., themes of change, decay and growth, and regeneration). Therefore, the healing hoped for in the poem "is the organized and organizing medium of the rhythmic ebb and flow of expectant impulse, forward and retracted movement, resistance and suspense, with fulfillment and consummation" (Dewey, 1934, p. 23).

This thought resonates in the phrase "a cycle of creation is this growth." Here, in this single line of poetic expression, one can see an

invitation to consider how Dewey's "rhythmic ebb and flow of growth" and Freire's "invention and re-invention" are spatially and temporally bound in our collective lived experiences. Our growth is *in the world*—in this place and in this moment—and, as such, our becoming then must *begin with the human–world relationship*. In Dewey's corresponding view,

> *It is an ordering of growth and maturations—as [William] James said, we learn to skate in summer after having commenced in winter. Time as organization in change is growth, and growth signifies that a varied series of change enters upon intervals of pause and rest; of completions that become the initial points of new processes of development. Like the soil, mind is fertilized while it lies fallow, until a new burst of bloom ensues.* (p. 23)

However, isolation and staunch individualism do not create favorable environments for these blossoms of growth and becoming. As with all aesthetic experiences—whether these be reading a poem or helping one another heal our world in crisis—a connection is required. Interaction as "a moving force" is essential, per Deweyian logic: "Qualities of sense, those of touch and taste as well as of sight and hearing, have [a]esthetic quality. But they have it not in isolation but in their connections; as interacting, not as simple and separate entities" (p. 121). The idea of "a moving force" may inspire one to think of a "stimulus" or "impetus," the force that causes or initiates the movement. There is an aesthetic to being in the world and an artfulness to human interaction that cannot be ignored. It is through this interaction—this authentic connectivity—that we grow and we heal. In the words of the poem, this is to "Live through healing/Heal through living."

Our capacity to regenerate following crises and conflicts, such as COVID-19, is possible through the time we spend engaging with one another in the (re)invention of self and other, classroom and community. One way we do this is through meditative pattern-making and educative meaning-making in the moment we now find ourselves in—together. "Freire's critical consciousness for repairing the world"—which highlights becoming in a particular way—involves "being consciously aware of one's positive and negative actions in and influences on the world" (Lowery 2, 2013, p. 125). For example, as ventured by Darder (2002) in *Reinventing Paulo Freire*, Freire showed through his life that it is important to face one's fears and contend with the inevitability of suffering, which are behaviors associated with the quest to (re)new humanity.

Building on these concepts, a poetic meditation professing re(new)al and repair in/after lockdown begins with critical consciousness and praxis, moving to practical applications of critical consciousness. To become and grow, we must reenter the world. To heal/repair it, we must challenge our fears and increase our agency. Pursuing humanistic, human-centered inquiry—such as that enacted here—is but one means for fueling the creative spirit and emerging anew while resisting being creatively unavailable (which can be employed as a strategy for creative and meditative renewal).

Moving Forward as Pattern-Makers

Literary constructions of life (like the poem we analyzed) inevitably bring together the "profoundly personal" and the "unquestionably social, intrinsically political," pointed out Barone (2001) in *Touching Eternity* (p. 1). Cultural politics play a conscious role in many critical and arts-based works in education and the social sciences. Researchers raise socioeducational issues about racism and so forth through creative production and critique (He, 2023; Saldaña, 1999).

As an example, for curriculum studies professor He (2023), liberation has impressed upon her the need to "resist domination" as someone experiencing "creative insubordination in exile" from China (p. 59). She had been living out a country's history around the suppressing, unmasking, and punishing of its intellectuals. In

her experience of the pandemics of the moment (COVID-19 and racism) in the Southern USA, she found that "cultural, political, and linguistic insubordination became further intensified as the COVID-19 sparked racism, hate, and xenophobia targeted at Chinese diasporas and broader Asian diasporic communities" (p. 61). She was seeing that her doctoral students (teachers and school leaders) were struggling with fear and oppression. They were trying to figure out how to deal with laws that create "a climate of fear" around the use of "'divisive concepts about race and the history of race in the U.S." (p. 62). Dissertations using critical race theory (CRT) and ideas of race, social justice, equity, sexual orientation, and so forth (in accordance with book banning in schools) were under surveillance. In response to the threat against social and racial justice, she encouraged them to practice "creative insubordination" in their work and research, introducing counternarratives in curriculum and education in the American south: Black feminist methodology and narrative, freedom songs, memoirs, and more.

In our lexicon, He (2023) centered empowerment and liberation in pattern-making in a particular way. She described her use of creative insubordination strategies for assisting her graduate students (practitioners) in a refusal of hegemonic domination (rules and directives) when seeking to protect others. Learning to defend one's views and rights and teaching stakeholders (children, etc.) to do the same serve as an example of creative insubordination in another topical study conducted with Brazilian teachers (Grando & Lopes, 2020). Our Google searches in 2023 of creative insubordination in education confirmed that modern-day book bans on Black lives and CRT, among other diverse materials, have at times been met with student-led protests in high schools (e.g., Bellamy-Walker, 2022). Creative acts of noncompliance (anti-racist unions, book clubs, etc.) have given agency and voice to student as pattern-maker in the active (sometimes necessarily resistive) role of policy stakeholder.

Repairing the world must entail recognition of inevitabilities in "pattern-making" that have not always led to the development and advancement of society. Because of this, for example, it is time to advance and defend freedom for the vulnerable as never before, and for all to find love, healing, and creativity in dreams of a better tomorrow. Black people's struggle for freedom, wrote hooks (1994), is an empowering act of engagement in life that is "counter-hegemonic" (p. 2). "Rooted in antiracist struggle," teaching is "fundamentally political" (p. 2), fueling suspicion to the point of divisiveness across our communities that should not outshine the love of humanity (hooks, 2001). Reentry into community in pandemic times is troubled with disunity to such an extent that we must counter with better patterns of humanity.

Grief has become a new normal and on the scale of "global geographies of death" (Maddrell, 2020, p. 107), spawning bereavement societies that fight for survival and recovery. Loss and grief can live alongside hope and renewal, as we have seen in the global protests in support of Black lives that oppose systemic oppressions; protection of the environment and pollution controls; emergence of telework and other workforce flexibilities; and bittersweet creative rituals of condolence and rejuvenation. Mobilization of "mourning into sustained action to address inequalities and injustices at home and abroad" (Maddrell, 2020, p. 110) is generating unprecedented pattern-making around equity for bereavement-struck global communities. Equity's growth favoring racial and social justice is conflictive, with activists' push for systemic and legislative change, and against conservative decisions and rulings (e.g., ban on race-conscious admissions in college applications).

Re-entering the world with a greater sense of community may spark different actions: working for a social cause or purpose; being in contact with others who share our values; tackling political divisiveness or social isolation; or overcoming/managing feelings of loss, aloneness, and separation. Besides the demands of work, we are living with the reality of how to

address potent political forces. Calling on or joining others, we may take a stand on systemic injustices (police violence, anti-Black racism, ecological destruction, etc.). Human rights and environmental movements have arisen to protect our communities and habitats from further damage and to sustain new worlds.

Finally, our experience of writing on re(new)al and repair in a pandemic world proved both generative and therapeutic. Life/classroom/creativity/community as sacred space invite what educators can offer in terms of repair and re(new)al. We hope our readers found value from the poem and literary analysis around the prophetic imagination and courageous resistance.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

References

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (1997). Arts-based educational research. In R. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary methods for research in education* (pp. 73–103). American Educational Research Association.

Barone, T. (2001). *Touching eternity: The enduring outcomes of teaching*. Teachers College Press.

Bellamy-Walker, T. (2022). Schools banned books about Black life: Black kids are reading anyway. *NBC Universal*. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/schools-banned-books-black-life-black-kids-are-reading-anyway-rcna13702

Darder, A. (2002). *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A pedagogy of love.* Westview Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. Perigee.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Simon & Schuster.

Freire, P. (1970/2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). Continuum.

Freire, P. (1983). The importance of the act of reading. *Journal of Education, 165*(1), 5–11.

Freire, P. (2001). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Grando, R., & Lopes, C. (2020). Creative insubordination of teachers proposing statistics and probability problems to children. *ZDM Mathematics Education, 52*, 621–635.

Guardian, *The*. (2021). *Windows on the world: Pandemic poems*. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/may/08/windows-on-the-world-pandemic-poems-by-simon-armitage-hollie-mcnish-kae-tempest-and-more

He, M. (2023). To live in creative insubordination is to resist domination and thrive in liberation. *Professing Education, 21*(1), 55–66.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

hooks, b. (2001). *All about love: New visions*. William Morrow and Company.

Infurna, F., & Luthar, S. (2016). Resilience to major life stressors is not as common as thought. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 11*(2), 175–194.

Lowery, C. L. (2013). Faith, humility, and hope: Freire's critical consciousness for repairing the world. *Scholar–Practitioner Quarterly, 7*(2), 125–136.

Luo, Y., Chen, X., Qi, S., You, X., & Huang, X. (2018). Well-being and anticipation for future positive events: Evidences from an fMRI study. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8*(2199), 1–8.

Maddrell, A. (2020). Bereavement, grief, and consolation: Emotional–affective geographies of loss during COVID-19.

Dialogues in Human Geography, 10(2), 107–111.

Mullen, C. A. (2022). Reentering a world in lockdown: A poetic meditation. *Educational Studies*, *58* (2), 267–272.

Mullen, C. A., & Lowery, C. L. (2023, October 23). *A poetic meditation on re(new)al after lockdown* [Paper presentation]. Humanities Week, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA.

Saldaña, J. (1999). Playwriting with data: Ethnographic performance texts. *Youth Theatre Journal, 13*, 60–71.

Appendix
For All Eternity

Carol A. Mullen

Imagine yourself in a special place
Where everything is growing
See the world changing
Hear the world breaking
Feel the world aching
Sense the world breathing
See the suffering
Hear the mending
Touch the healing

Move forward
Get closer to that which is alive
Kneel down
Look closely
R-E-A-C-H
F-E-E-L
B-R-E-A-T-H-E

Something special always underfoot
Look closely at this growth
See how it expresses care
Connects, teaches, gives, creates

Up and down and all around
A moving force
As though pattern-making is development itself

Watch texture, density, depth
Sense how conditions for growth arise
Making the ground fertile
Generating a life system for itself and others

Imagine potent possibilities anew
Luscious growth in all forms
Energized by virtue of its own force

Watch decay regenerate
Over the ground
Under the ground
Through, beneath, and beyond

Prepare the earth for what can be
Work the ground with muscle
A tendril of breath, winding
Attaching itself, holding on for support

Spawns and enfolds the passing, the grief-struck
Glassed-in hospitalization
COVID cremation, mass graves, remembrances
Breathing through shortness of breath
See how entangled this line of growth is
Thick with juices of creativity, it lives beyond itself
Cost-calculating sustenance

Nutrient fed, the ground becomes fertile
Defenses and therapeutics take hold
Signs of recovery from exhaustion
Honor the loss
Express emotion, engage ritual, notice obstacles
Dismantle threats to humanity
Sustain action to right the wrongs
Live through healing
Heal through living

Breeze of the seashore
Hayseed of inland prairies
An ecological footprint
Outpacing our planet's capacity to regenerate
Glowing cities and forests
Eco-friendly countering impacts
Striving to nourish a planetary home

A cycle of creation is this growth
Encompassing the human lifespan
For all eternity

Maxine Greene and Relational Imagination: Interrelationality as Discourse in Critical Imagination

Seungho Moon, Ed.D.
Loyola University Chicago
smoon3@luc.edu

Recently, I have been interested in relationships and looking at the world from *small* things, exploring interrelationships among people, nature, objects, and even energy, like *qi* (기; 氣). My relationships with my spouse and daughter have turned my perspectives on relationships and imagination upside down. When I left home for a one-night trip to a Society of Professors of Education (SPE) conference in November 2023, my daughter put her cherished toy and pen in my bag with an "I love you" note. My encounters with "critical imagination," which is a theme of this collective writing, closely connect to my theorization of relational imagination. Highly influenced by Maxine Greene's (1995, 2001), I conceptualize relational imagination as prompting us to look at the world in a way that explores interdependence among selves (as a plural form), others, the cosmos, and even spirit, which is not limited to the Judeo-Christian version of it.

I owe my passion for imagination to my teacher, mentor, and friend, Maxine Greene, at Teachers College, Columbia University, during my doctoral studies about one and a half decades ago. Greene (1995) calls for "releasing the imagination," which encompasses poetic, social, political, and ethical imagination. Educators look at social realities from different, imagined perspectives and create different realities with the use of our imagination, she asserts. To her, imagination means to "look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 1995, p. 16).

I have participated in Maxine Greene's call for "work" via multiple projects throughout my academic journey. In Oklahoma, for example, I worked with elementary school children in underrepresented communities in Tulsa and used dance, clay, poetry, and painting as starting points to discuss multiple perspectives and imagine different social realities in their lives labeled as "at risk" (Moon, 2019). Great conversations emerged about cyber bullying issues, gun violence, and creating a safe, healthy community within the format of dance, poetry, and creation of wind chimes.

In Chicago, I invite my students to look at the same work of art, such as Grant Wood's (1930) *American Gothic*, from diverse social vantage points and experiences. A critical question we explore involves how power operates in decision making on "core" knowledge and the "central" discourses (Spencer, 1861). I examine curriculum as political discourse by challenging the myth of knowledge neutrality and instructors' objectivity in teaching history or imparting other knowledge. Imagination is crucial in inviting students and educators to look at curriculum theorizing differently. This process definitely feels uncomfortable, requiring students to come out of their comfort zones within ontological, epistemological, and axiological spaces. At the same time, I work hard to create a safe, brave space where the feeling of discomfort is welcomed, and even embraced, in an unthreatening manner. Indeed, myriad emotions fluctuate uncomfortably within this brave space, hopefully encouraging transformative experiences in students' lives. Regardless of their cultural backgrounds, participants explore the *relationality* of people appearing in works of art or artifacts, using their imagination and considering "What if . . . " scenarios. What happens if Nan, the White woman in Wood's (1930) *American Gothic*, is a woman of color? What narratives are then created in the context of rural America in 1930?

What would the relationship be between the White man and the woman of color, and how would it differ from the one in the original work of art, which seems to depict a father and daughter (as Grant Wood has mentioned) or a husband and wife? I use this approach to dismantle the myth of color-blindness as fairness, which encompasses the notion of "I do not see color and only see children because I treat every student equally." Due to the legacy of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, White students were taught not to treat people differently. "Separate but equal" is not constitutional. Yet I should emphasize that the subjectivity and lived experiences of educators influence our capacity to treat all students equally. Eurocentric, patriarchal, heterosexual, Christian worldviews are perpetuated in the curriculum as if they are a knowledge-neutral, "default" understanding of the world wherein people with diverse backgrounds should be damaged by these worldviews.

I owe my epistemological journey and pilgrimage to dear Maxine Greene. She gave me so many precious gifts. We lost Maxine on May 29, 2014, and we now remember a decade of living in the world without "her" yet with her "spirit." I believe that her spirit resides in us forever. Below, I share my letter to Maxine that I wrote in 2014. At that time, I did not know how to accept the reality of losing her. However, I felt the responsibility of carrying the torch of her spirit. Relational imagination, I believe, lives in this moment to remind us of Maxine's spirit among us and appreciate that one person, only "one" person, has influenced so many people with her life, friendship, and scholarship. Maxine's lively message is timeless, and I invite readers to join her "unfinished" message via my humble letter dedicated to her today.

***

Dearest Maxine
Metaphors are your life.
We are strangers as teachers—
we play the Blue Guitar; we
challenge our taken-for-grantedness
and resist "the things as they are"
enthusiastically. I am inspired by you,
my dearest Maxine,
to imagine what might be, what *should* be.

Without you, I might be a hubris-driven rationalist
who wears a "square hat" in a "square room,"
if I borrow Wallace Stevens's metaphors in your writing.
Owing to you, I am wearing sombreros here and now
in front of my students
and constantly imagining
how and what "things could be otherwise."

Your passionate mind and spirit
that you shared with us as an eternal teacher and philosopher
are never completed and are always in the making.
Even during the challenging time at the hospital in NYC on May 15
(coincidentally, Teacher Appreciation Day in Korea),

you dwelled in your hallucination in the ward
and gave lectures for students, artists, and teachers
endlessly from dawn to late afternoon
contesting awakening people's apathy, numbness, and dullness.
Indeed, as you said, we need a "work of art" for our ongoing project.
You are remembered via
our invaluable moments spent sharing ideas at
the Met, Guggenheim, Frick Collection, Cooper-Hewitt National Design, etc.
Most notably, I remember our unfinished conversations in your living room
on Fifth Avenue, 89th Street.

Our initial conversation, in spring 2006, was about Korean-ness and Jewish-ness
while watching a Korean film, *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter . . . and Spring* (Kim, 2003).
On Mother's Day in 2011, before I left NYC for Stillwater, Oklahoma,
we talked about ethical imagination when
Mi-ja, in *Poetry* (Lee, 2010), struggles with a helpless situation in her private space,
although it was not her private space exclusively, but a public space, prompting us
to consider how things might be different in our communities.

I was a homeless intellectual in the U.S. in 2005;
as a new doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University,
you became my intellectual, emotional, and spiritual shelter.
Your food was too exotic yet became the foundation of my life journey
in the field called curriculum studies.
You woke me up to injustices in our society
by prying open the door of aesthetic education.
Your cozy couch was the place for

laughing, crying, and "gossiping"—yeah, we know that you love TC gossip
about our moment-to-moment experience.

Now, wearing sombreros,
I recite your voice of
I am not . . . yet
I am not . . . yet
"I am… what I am not yet…!"
We imagine the possibilities
always, without hesitation.

Yes, we are not yet to prepare any sort of farewell.
You are here with us
in the articles, books, videos, lectures, and any places where
we need imagination to challenge our current approaches in education.

I join you in imagining different societies as L'étranger

because . . . this project is incomplete, always in process.
Most importantly,
my love for you is always here with my students,
as you taught me lessons with your life.

I dare to join your journey of "not . . . yet"
in this time of loss and mourning
of you and of the communal vision for public education.

May 31, 2014 (on the third day of the loss)

References

Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger: Educational philosophy for the modern age.* Wadsworth Pub.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essay on education, the arts, and social change*. Jossey-Bass.

Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetic education*. Teachers College Press.

Hancock, M. (Director). (2014). *Exclusions & awakenings: The life of Maxine Greene* [Film]. Hancock Productions.

Kim, K. (Writer & Director). (2003). *Spring, summer, fall, winter . . . and spring* [Film]. LJ Film & Pandora Film.

Lee, C. (Writer & Director). (2010). *Poetry* [Film]. Pine House Film.

Moon, S. (2019). *Three approaches to qualitative research through the ARtS: Narratives of teaching for social justice and community*. Brill Sense.

Spencer, H. (1861). *Education: Intellectual, moral, and physical.* D. Appleton & Company.

Wood, G. (1930). *American gothic* [Oil painting]. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, United States.

2. Someone is singing…Critical Imagination and Autobiography

This weight/
a stone around my neck,/
ash gray and cracked down the center of me./
Strange fruit./
Somewhere, someone is singing./

Far away someone is singing./
What is the difference between philosophers and poet?/
None./
Plato's book Republic is full of poetic images. But Plato rejected poets./
Someone
is singing/
a far away/

Critical Imagining: Straddling and the Possibility of Knowing Worlds

Asilia Franklin-Phipps
SUNY New Paltz
franklia@newpaltz.edu

When I was about four or five, my mother took me and my little brother to see an elephant. We had never seen an elephant and my mother, a single mother, was very committed to facilitating an education that involved seeing things we had never seen and having experiences that we had never had. I do not think she had read James Baldwin yet, but she would have agreed with him about the kinds of experiences children should have with art, movies, culture, and science. One day, she asked us if we wanted to go see an elephant. Of course, we wanted to see an elephant. After a short drive to the middle of West Los Angeles, my brother and I ran up to the temporary circus tent erected in the parking lot of a stadium. When we entered, we stood behind the gate looking on with excitement and joy. The elephant slowly walked around a dirt circle. The elephant handler asked us if we wanted to ride the elephant. We screamed yes even though both of us were scared. We knew what elephants we were as had seen them in books and movies, but seeing one in person was quite intimidating. I asked the handler about falling off. I wondered if the elephant ever trampled anyone. My questions were patiently answered and the man who was in charge of the elephant guided my brother and me to sit on the elephant. We sat clutching the saddle as the elephant walked around the track at a slow lumbering pace. We were so high off the ground, seeing things that we had not seen before.

A friend and colleague once called me a straddler. I have not told her that I once sat atop an elephant and saw the entire world from a different perspective, instead I asked her what she meant. She is a professor, but also a poet and musician and is a person who thinks very imaginatively. We have both found ourselves in a job that promised creativity and expansion, but have often found the reality quite stultifying, demoralizing even. We have bonded over our disappointments. Her comments were meant as a compliment, but I had often thought of it as a deficit or a problem–not belonging, not fitting in, being out of step, or being the source of bad feeling (Ahmed, 2010). As a black girl and woman, I have often been misled to think that many of the gifts that I have inherited are often reframed as deficiencies. But, because she was a friend and reading Black feminist theory, I heard it as a compliment.

Straddling suggests two sides. I refuse the idea that there are only two sides. Straddling means finding (sometimes uneasy) home in multiple and often contradictory spaces, often at the same time. Stretching across worlds that want you and others that don't. I would also say that straddling is making a home, even in spaces that are hostile to one's existence and thriving. Like a hearty plant, I am here adapting and growing. I am a professor of Education, but also teach in Art and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I am one of a handful of Black women professors on campus and in my building. I sometimes walk to get lunch and cannot be certain that I will be treated with the same respect that others receive. This is not a complaint, rather it is an acknowledgement of how I inhabit the world in ways that are not acknowledged. I hope to describe the multiple worlds that I inhabit and the conditions under which I must find a way through. Finding a way through means that I must exist multiply, often arriving as a visitor–an alien and still somehow coming out on the other side. Criticality is central to straddling and finding a way through, while remaining mostly whole,

healing from past and present hurts, while also experiencing new hurt. I must be aware of how others perceive me, while also evaluating the value of those perceptions. I have had to become skilled in recognizing meaningful critique and I know that this is not how everyone must operate and depending how you look at it, this way of living might be read as only a negative. Criticality is not having to tear yourself into bits to be legible or understood by things not worth the effort.

When I think of a critical imaginary, I think of the ability to inhabit different worlds which necessarily attunes one to the differences across worlds, but also the arbitrariness with which value is placed on some people, things, places, and times, alongside those people, things, places, and times that are discarded as having no value. Becoming attuned to the way that things do not have to be this way, is one of the gifts of developing and maintaining a critical imagination. With ongoing practice, conversation, listening, observing, and reading, a critical imagination can allow one to determine what counts to them, straddling where necessary and imagine other places coming to be.

Straddling worlds might also mean a practice of traveling between worlds, even as one seems to be in stasis. "Outsiders" must traverse worlds, often as a matter of survival (Lugones, 1987). In many ways this is a gift, even though it can be quite lonely and painful. The elephant finds itself under a circus tent, alone, in a parking lot in Los Angeles, far, far, away from home.

In an essay about critical imagination, I did not think I'd be talking about love, but I follow bell hooks' writings about criticality and love. She also writes about the pleasure of noticing the limits of the narratives on offer and imagining otherwise. Many of us who enter critical spaces to ask ever-expanding questions about teaching, learning, knowledge, pedagogy, and politics do so because we have found that there is pleasure in thinking differently today from what was thought before. Finding pleasure in this is an achievement (hooks. 1992). Finding pleasure in developing and sustaining a critical imaginary often positions one out of step with others–affect aliens (Ahmed). There is pleasure in doing so.

In my role as a college professor, I teach across three departments. I teach a range of classes that often do not appear to have much in common. If I were to describe my approach to all the classes I teach is that I make space for them to begin to develop their own critical imagination, which will allow them to become world-travelers—elephant riders. I hope that students in my classes leave with a deepening understanding that the version of things most readily available is the least likely to be the truth and that everyone does not need to aspire to the same life. I hope they learn that there are many things with inherent value and that being curious or asking questions about the world is never going to be a bad thing, even as it is often framed in such ways.

References

Ahmed, S. (2010). *The promise of happiness.* Duke University Press.

hooks, bell. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation.* South End Press.

Lugones, M. (1987). Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception, *Hypatia, 2*(2), 3-19

Our Theory Within: Imagining Education from the Foundations and Edges of Our Lives

William H. Schubert
University of Illinois—Chicago
schubert@uic.edu

I would like to thank Brian Schultz, President, the Board of the Society of Professors of Education (SPE), and the membership for creating The William H. Schubert Award for Curricular Speculation in my name, and then making me the inaugural recipient of it. I am honored, to be sure, for these recognitions. When I suggested a topic for our SPE designated session at the Louisville AESA Conference to President Brian Schultz, I intentionally added the modifier *our* to foundations of education. Obviously, the phrase *foundations of education* is the raison d'etre of AESA, and it is central to SPE. Its primary subject matter, as indicated in the first issue of AESA Standards (Warren, et al. 1978) hailed advancing historical, philosophical, social, and cultural foundations of education as the primary purpose of AESA (founded in 1968) through normative, interpretive, and critical modes of study. I was perhaps the youngest member of the Task Force that authored those *Standards*. My work in the areas of curriculum theory, curriculum history, and curriculum studies has long been informed by AESA and its elder ancestor, SPE, founded in 1902 by Charles DeGarmo, John Dewey, and others. Having earned a Master's Degree in history and philosophy of education at Indiana University Bloomington in 1966-1968, while also pursuing school administrative certification, I was sufficiently inspired to consider the foundations of education as the basis of my subsequent work for 8 years in schools as a teacher and curriculum worker.

I carried this inspiration into my career of 36 years as a professor of curriculum studies at the University of Illinois Chicago. The foundational realms of study still serves me well as a scholar-activist and Professor Emeritus of Curriculum and Instruction, now in retirement for over a decade, working with students and faculty (many of whom are former doctoral students) from the University of Illinois Chicago, Georgia Southern University, and other universities throughout the US and world. I consider curriculum theory and curriculum studies to be a practical instantiation of educational foundations. I see curriculum as improvisation of teaching and pedagogy (e.g., Rubin, 1985; Sarason, 1999; Schubert 1981; Schubert, 2010) from a context of perspectives drawn from foundations of education situated within the needs and interests of educational situations.

Now, in retirement, I am glad to have access to the ample array of mass media (e.g., YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, TMC, Democracy Now, Google) as well as print sources and personal interaction (phone, Zoom, and others). It seems like a magical array of resources when contrasted with the limited resources (e.g., phone booths, party lines, land lines, radio programs, the beginning years of television, and traveling to libraries for information) available in my childhood, youth, and early-to-mid career. So, I use my freedom from institutional domination in retirement to continue my self-education, i.e., constructing the *theory within* me, the ever-emerging theory that IS me and is still becoming. It is the ***me*** created

through "critical imagination in the edges in our lives" (as the title of our SPE discussion at AESA portends]. In engaging with this *theory within* idea I have rapidly concluded that the project of self-education (which, of course, includes myriad associations with others, other shelves, sharing evolving *theories within*) is what educators at all levels and in multifarious spheres of being should focus on with their students. Indeed, we must encourage teachers, students, and all who work directly with students to be agents of their own exploration and self-creation on the edges, while simultaneously striving to survive or even flourish within a system that too often seeks to control, conquer, and dominate (Franklin, 1986/). I agree that there may be too much hope in this call to flourish, but I extend it as a possibility. To have a chance of doing this, we must consider the subtitle, i.e., "the foundations of **our** lives."
I have concluded that the *foundations of education* that I have valued for so long as a basis for cultivating the *theory within* me, and have often referred to it by that name: *theory within*, or close synonyms (Schubert, 1979; Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1980, pp. 347-348; Schubert, 1982, p. 54; Schubert, 1986/1997, pp. 133-134 & 421, Schubert, 1992; and onward through my work to present, including Schubert, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2021, 2023). These academic foundations need a personal and practical, a participatory and passionate emphasis as well (He & Phillion, 2008), which I will try to sketch below. Such sketching, I contend, must include that which is educational on the edges of formal schooling, i.e., in the myriad contexts of our lives.

I am not sure how I imagined the *theory within* as a guiding force of my work (better to say, my *play*) in education over the years. I think I have always been in education; I think we all are continuously *in* education, if not the field of education, then *the act* of education. For the past few years, I have been trying to understand how my conscious awareness of doing education came to be and is still coming to be. As a child, if someone asked, "How old are you, Billy?" I would say something like, "Five, going on six." The *going on* phrase was doubtless emphasized to convey increasing maturity. Well, now (over a decade into retirement) I am 79, going on 80, and I am still fervently thinking about how it happened, and is still happening – this process of becoming educated is now playfully within me continuously reconstructing the theory that I am becoming.

How did imagining become central to my education? What are its foundations? When did my imagining emerge and evolve? Why and how did it become centered around the personal, the emerging *theory within* me? How does it speak to the edges of our being and becoming?
The most I can do here is to sketch a few fragments of what I am trying to explore much more fully. At least, it will suggest a path to pursue with greater elaboration. The point is that I want to encourage each educator and every human being (including and especially students at all levels) to think, ask, "What are the foundations of **my** education, the education (not only the schooling) that has constructed the theory that I am and am becoming?" I will sketch some dimensions of doing this in several phases of my life. Put another way, trying to understand the emergent theory within me illustrates my search to understand to foundations of my life, i.e., spheres of living that have contributed to my personal sense of historical, philosophical, cultural, and social life and shape the metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, axiological, ethical, aesthetical, political, and related assumptions (to express it more academically), i.e., what I call the *theory within* me. I have lived through the phases of my almost 80 years of the emergence of theory within me and hope that sketching salient aspects of it will encourage others to understand the foundations of their lives more fully and with greater vitality.

Childhood

In attempting to understand the assumptions I live by that were formed in my childhood, I must address major sources of my becoming, such as family, location, books and periodicals,

mass media (radio, movies, and television), sports, school, church, among others. Growing up as an only child, on a farm and in rural communities in seemingly peacefulness amid mostly White people with European backgrounds who for one reason or another came to the United States (erroneously called "America") played an immense part in the foundations of my education. So did my family background: a father who was a teacher, coach, and school administrator, and a mother who was a mathematics and social studies teacher, as well as extended family of a maternal grandmother who was a teacher in tiny little brick schoolhouses that dotted the countryside, and two great aunts who taught in rural towns. My grandfather was an FDR progressive Democrat, farmer, president of a bank that folded in the Depression, and member of the Masonic Lodge.

If I had book length space for this writing, I would tell stories of books, conversations, and stories that I pursed with them and other relatives on the edges of education that occurred in schools – they were excellent teachers; however, in these non-school venues even more education took place as we imagined together in ways that stretched the theory within me. It expanded, too, through sports and games, summer travels, movies, radio and TV programs, collections, and much more. For instance, I would elaborate on the courage in the movie *Shane*, my bewilderment at what was happening in *African Queen*, what I did not know to call existentialist angst in *Johnny Guitar*; or my appreciation of the treatment of Native Americans in the Straight Arrow radio program. I would elaborate on relationships of siblings in *Father Knows Best*, *Donna Reed*, and *Bonanza* (since I grew up as an only child). I would tell of a dozen family road trips during summers with my father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, and great aunt travelling to many places through the 48 contiguous states, most Canadian provinces, and several Mexican states, and how I was involved in "curriculum planning" for those journeys. I would relate my playing on baseball and basketball teams and family outings at golf courses, I would tell stories about creating fictional versions of sports long before fictional sports were popular in the world of betting. These were merely a few of the foundations of education on the edges of my education – the periphery that overshadowed what was supposed to be the center of education (i.e. schooling).

Youth

In my teenage years, the theory that I was becoming, the driving ideas and beliefs, that guided my action in the world still came from the abovementioned sources, and increasingly included teenage friendships and acquaintances and involvement with fundamentalist Christian religion since many of the students in my classes were raised in the evangelical ethos. It seemed more genuine and infused in the lived ethics than more the 'country club' churches, such as the one we attended.

Sports, travels, movies, TV shows, and collections of coins and of information of sports history still played a big part in who and how I was becoming. Long discussions about the meaning of life with two or three close friends had lasting meaning. A group of three boys and five girls played a big role in my development. Life in rural areas and on the farm played a larger role than I could realize, as did the homogeneous life around mostly descendants of White Euro-based families of settler-colonialists; however, the ruralness and settler qualities seemed normal, barely recognizable.

College

I spent little time considering what college to attend, interviewed with just two, and applied to a good liberal arts-oriented one, called Manchester, that my parents, grandmother and her twin, my great aunt, attended. There, I became more acquainted with the arts, philosophy, literature, psychology, and sciences. I concentrated on them and left behind much of the attachment to movies, TV, and eventually formal institutionalized religion. The best courses

in college increased my indecisiveness in selecting a major because each course opened doors that I wanted to be a life pursuit. I selected elementary education because I thought all disciplines must be tapped to understand education, and I consciously became committed to study that was a central source of forging the theory I was becoming.

Outside of the classroom I made friends, dated, had a serious relationship throughout my sophomore year, and then met another who became my first wife after I graduated. Work, mostly in summers, and a couple of stints as a residence hall counselor (from which I was fired at least once, not realizing that a large part of the job expectation was to tattle to administrators on students who broke rules).

Summer work also consisted of learning the hard work of laying field tile on my great uncle's farm; being a model for a sportswear catalogue; going to Washington DC with my good friend, Nathan, to work for the Democratic senators from Indiana, Vance Hartke and Birch Bayh, during the civil rights summer of 1964; learning of lives of construction workers building an interstate highway through northeastern Indiana.

Draft Deferment and Graduate School

Manchester was a Church of the Brethren college and many of the members were conscientious objectors; the U.S. role on the war in Vietnam was revving up, there were often debates among members of this church and others who were less pacifistic. When I returned to Manchester from Washington, I was expected to advocate for President LBJ in the forthcoming election.

Upon graduation, I had been accepted for the Master's Program in History and Philosophy of Education in the fall of 1966; however, as soon as I resumed my summer job in highway construction, my military draft status was from 2-S, deferment for being a student, to 1-A, the most draftable status. I was not in favor of the war, or of being killed (or of anyone being killed in the war), so I immediately left for Indiana University in Bloomington. I realize this is an example of privilege and wanted any who opposed the war as unjust to be free to do so without reprisal.

I talked my way into beginning in the summer. I started the Master's early, still had to take the draft physical and battery of tests, regained student 2-S deferment status, and spent the next several years dreading a mailbox message that would say I was drafted, and cause me to leave for Canada as did several friends. All this was a curriculum of the theory within me.

At Indiana University, I quickly found the kind of place I wanted to be – a Research I university that encouraged taking a wide range of theory – in education, philosophy, psychology, sociology. In the fall term, I was given a research assistantship and invited to take doctoral courses during master's degree work. That spurred me onward. Toward the end of my Master's Program, Philip G. Smith, Chair of History and Philosophy of Education, invited me to continue in their PhD program under funding from the new National Defense Education Act (NDEA) fellowships. I was flattered and intrigued; however, I declined, believing that I had better teach for a while before presuming to be able to teach teachers at the university level, which was becoming my goal. Besides, I philosophically did not support the D in NDEA, National **Defense** Education Act. Little did I know that the NDEA would be the ancestor of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *A Nation at Risk*, *America 2000 No Child Left Behind*, Race to the Top, and a host of programs for educational reform--I would say *regress* rather than progress, that followed. Carrying acrid acronyms, many of these programs would devastate progressive relationships between teachers and learners for decades. Still I hoped to make educational experiences better, and I applied for teaching jobs. It was a heyday of offers to male elementary school teachers, so I had lots of possibilities. My experience in Washington, DC and other travels drew me to want to live in a cosmopolitan area, and family and friends in the midwest made Chicago attractive, so I embarked on eight years

in a progressive public school in the Chicago area.

Teaching, Studying, and Earning a PhD

My first two years of teaching were in a self-contained sixth grade. I began to learn about and from students. I can still tell stories about them, and they would be in their sixties by now.The school district was already committed to individualized reading and was further committed to individualized instruction in other areas: math, science, social studies, language arts, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies. Based on students' interests and perceived needs (both my and students' perception). Getting to know them was added to the *theory within* that I was becoming, and what I did with them (what I offered for their learning – activities, experiences, and ideas, skills or appreciations and dispositions – the curriculum) combined with the what I was (as a person, my character and personality) was also curricular. I envisioned teachers as curriculum (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015) and students as curriculum for themselves and for each other, and for anyone who works with them (Schubert & Schultz, 2015).

I learned to monitor my own actions and ways of being because I knew they were curricula and much of or more than what I taught. An individualized reading approach was already in place wherein the students were accustomed to reading books (factual and fictional children's literature, rather than basal readers) and having conferences with me and each other about the books– only doing skill development and activities when the need appeared. I developed lists of leading questions that would enable me to confer with a student on a book whether or not I had read it and to extrapolate its meaning to their lives and developing selves. In view of the district leadership's desire to individualize the rest of the curriculum I made similar sets of questions designed to stimulate inquiry by individuals or groups of students on whatever was being studied using heuristic inquiry prompts in other subject areas or combined areas, facilitated by multiple resources, including textbooks as one kind of resource. District leadership observed my classroom and hired me to refine instructional materials called "learning pacs" for the district.

The district's professional development program was individualized, consistent with their curriculum for students, and I chose to join a group that studied what new progressive schools of the late 1960s and early 1970s could be, because there was going to be a bond referendum to build two new schools in the district. It was amazing that in-service (as professional development was called then) had a productive end that inspired teachers to participate.

In 1969 two of the first schools using open-space design in the Chicago area were constructed and I was invited to teach on the intermediate grade team of one of them. The summer before we began, we participated in an Institute on Role Differentiation for Open Space Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We took courses and practiced teaching as teams that worked with summer school students from Madison Public Schools. We were given *carte blanche* to create and we were facilitated in our interactions by counselors who specialized in sensitivity training. It was the 60s! The University of Wisconsin faculty and staff continued to work with us for several years, placing advanced student teachers, called interns, with us. Thus, our intermediate team had a team leader, three teachers, three or four aides, and four interns to work with students in the equivalent of two sections that in self-contained classrooms would have been two sections of grades 4, 5, and 6 with two teachers for each grade level.

The primary wing of the school was similarly organized, and so was the other new school on the other side of town. We invented the curriculum, environments, and pedagogical strategies as we taught. We were certainly not without problems; however, the popularity and prestige afforded *open education* and its progressive relatives led teachers, educational

leaders, and teacher educators to beat a path to our door. Meanwhile, University of Wisconsin supervisors of the interns took notes on what we did as they supervised their intern teachers. We grew accustomed to visitors, and I sometimes involved them in the teaching by having them talk with students as they worked on projects. I continued to teach there for four more years.

This (involving visitors in the classroom) might seem to have taken away time from the conscientious concern to develop my evolving theory within, but that is not the case. This is because planning was deemed a collaborative venture among interns, aides, teachers, and especially students. It occurred during the day as we taught and learned. It was an essential part of living, not preparation for it, as Dewey contended, unlike the plight of teachers today who do endless written plans for seemingly endless tests and other accountability forces, and the situations for which they plan often change before plans can be actualized. While we had yearly achievement tests, they were considered one rather minor indicator of success or failure. Our most valuable evaluation came from continuous reflection on the meaning and worth of the flow of experiences, reflected in the artifacts of our work together and in conversations with colleagues and students. Granted, I reviewed student work at home, more by writing comments on papers than grading them. This freed me to do more important preparation for teaching which consisted of my curriculum of continually recreating the theory within me. I did this by tapping many resources of the Chicago area: many libraries and bookstores, especially used bookstores: art museums and related places; conversations with good friends and colleagues; music; involvement in the political scene of the time (e.g., issues of race, class, war and peace, gender, ecology, consumerism, politics). I consulted with a project of another good friend, who left a teaching position in public schools of Indiana, and started a free school, called The Fort Wayne Folk School[2]. My good friends were all curricula for me. I still liked sports, movies, music, TV, literature, philosophy, and especially participation in family life and helping two daughters grow and develop in the first years of their lives. These experiences contributed to the living theory I was becoming and the process was informed by teaching and all other dimensions of my life. They coalesced as the foundations of my life and education – which were one and the same.

I dreamed of becoming an educational scholar. I imagined how I might actualize the potential I hoped I possessed. I read about education. I delved deeper into literature of curriculum theory. I wrote essays, poems, stories, and more, not for publication, but for the meaning and worth of that kind of expression. I took courses from Indiana University Bloomington, University of Wisconsin Madison, University of Chicago, University of Illinois Chicago, Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, and wrote more papers. I studied college catalogues from Columbia and Harvard as well as the above universities. As I began my sixth year in the Downers Grove Schools, I met J. Harlan Shores of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). I decided to apply for their PhD program, and simultaneously applied for and received a sabbatical leave from my teaching position which included half salary and full benefits for a year.

I was admitted with an assistantship and fellowship that followed, so I had enough income to support the family. I was thrilled, I accepted immediately. I had dreamed of such good fortune for half a decade. I know some scholars tell stories of just falling into doctoral study, but to me it was a dream come true that I anticipated

[2] Editors' note: For more information see https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0046760X.2023.2291565

for years. I braced myself for full-time study – to complete as much of the program as possible in a year with two summers, one on each end of the academic year sabbatical, because the next year I was required to repay the district by coming back to teach for at least one more year. I thought I could write the dissertation in that payback year, if had the topic in mind and mined courses I took to refine and reconstruct it.

I was all set to start my PhD in curriculum theory, when Professor Shores, my advisor and co-author of one of the best regarded synoptic curriculum textbooks (Smith, Stanley, & Shores, 1950/1957) in the field wanted to discuss a possible problem. He told me that there was no program in curriculum theory, even though there had been a noteworthy tradition of curriculum scholars there at UIUC. He confided, almost apologetically, that we would need to co-construct a personalized program because there was no department of curriculum or PhD program in that field; so, I would have to major in secondary or elementary education. I chose the latter and was thrilled not to have a prescribed program course to follow, which enabled me to select courses (to take for credit or to audit), or to construct independent studies or tutorials that grew from my needs and interests. To be proactive in the construction of my curriculum for studying curriculum fit seamlessly into the ideas of growing the *theory within* me – ahh, synergy of self-education and institutional education -- finally. Besides, I thought: "What better preparation for being a curriculum scholar could there be than designing the curriculum of your own studies?" And to do so on the fly – a kind of action inquiry (Thelen, 1972)– and improvisational, imaginative, and inventive – the topic of my dissertation!

I, in fact, did most of what I anticipated doing. I gleaned from courses, independent studies, assistantships, audited courses, and individualized study ways to hone and improve my dissertation, and even folded my experience in my required repayment of the sabbatical to the school district in Downers Grove plus study at Northwestern through a cooperative collaboration of Big Ten universities, finished the dissertation, and earned the PhD by the summer of 1975, and was offered a tenure track position at the University of Illinois Chicago, (UIC, then called Chicago Circle Campus).

Professorial Life, 1975-2012

The essay is an illustration of foundations of my education as my evolving *theory within*, as a springboard for others to consider the foundations of their own theories within, and the contributors to them and it continues here with professional and some personal life.

Shortly into my career I was divorced and my children, Elaine and Karen, and first wife, Margaret, moved to Texas. I saw Elaine and Karen on two extensive visits per year and kept in as close contact as I could. I was immersed in the professoriate at UIC. I married Ann Lopez, a scholar and artist. In our loving relationship, we traveled and studied together, we taught (professed) consulted, wrote, and presented together. We grew by sharing our lives for six years before having children of our own. I learned much from her—about the arts in Chicago (diverse venues of art, architecture, dance, opera, pop, rock, jazz, folk and more, theatre, film, books, museums, and more); philosophical and political diversity (from street gangs to high culture, enclaves of ethnic and racial diversity). We searched together for deeper understanding of what curriculum means in a broad cultural sense for contributing to the field (via scholarship and praxis), and we did so to create and recreate our *theory within*, hoping and striving to enable it to make a positive difference in the world, to contribute to what we thought of a growing *stream of goodness* to which others share and contribute.

When we had a daughter, Heidi, and a son, Henry, all four of us participated in this process of mutual education (Lopez, 1993) by building of the theories within us. Sometimes it seemed that we grew together, as One, and at other times as individuals who contributed to one another.

Some called what we did *home schooling*, some called it *home education*, a few such as John Holt (1981) called it *unschooling*; although it was just trying to be fully in to world. We continuously strove to find places to go and be, experiences to have, throughout the Chicago area, on travels far and wide, the most pervasive in the imagination whether at home or on the go, improvising as we went, trying to reach out, to share, to create places and spaces to be and become more fully.

I could go on and on. If I did, I would include sections of stories on almost all of the entries in my most comprehensive *Curriculum Vitae*, as well as sagas about friends, relatives, colleagues, former students (now colleagues). I would tell of tragedies and deaths including the death of Ann from multiple myeloma and other illnesses, and I would tell of invigorations and inspirations, bizarre mysteries and events, and everyday significant experiences – they all have contributed to the theory that I am still becoming.

A 36-year career in the professoriate of curriculum studies might require book-length portrayal, at least, likely longer. The colleagues I interacted with and with whom I taught, collaborated, wrote, and pondered deeply throughout these years at UIC including Bill Ayers, Bill Watkins, John Nicholls, Don Hellison, Ward Weldon, Dave Stovall, Susan Edgerton, David Hansen, Annette Henry, Gary Griffin, Aria Razfar, Edward Podsiadlik, and Vicki Trinder, and former PhD students with whom I continued to be colleague--Brian Schultz, Isabel Nuñez, Joe Ohlinger, Wade Tillett, Mari Koerner, Tom Thomas, William H. Watkins, Audrey Watkins, Horace Hall, Patrick Roberts, Peter Hilton, Lasana Kazembe, Kristien Zenkov, Mike Klonsky, Fred Klonsky, Carol Melnick, Virginia Jagla, Michael Baugh, Norm Weston, Dick Streedain, Jenny Wojcik, Pat Hulsebosch, Avi Lessing, Jason Lukasik, Niki Christodoulou, Nick Georgiadis, Kelly Vaughan, and so many more--, as well as frequent co-authors, such as William Ayers, George Willis, Craig Kridel, Dan Marshall, Jim Sears, and of course Ming Fang He and Ann Lynn Lopez Schubert. All of these persons have been and still are curricula for me (and hopefully I for them), and include especially my children--Heidi Schubert, Henry Schubert, Elaine Clinard, Karen Schubert, and grandchildren--Kevin Clinard, Alex Clinard, and Audrey Schmidt. And these lists only begin a much larger list of the many I have come to know (past and present) through their writings, presentations, conversations, and artistic creations – curricula all -- for me, and exemplars of curricula in lives of everyone – interactive shapers of theories within me.

Retirement

My retirement years began in 2011, and I remained in Chicago for a while, then moved to Georgia and married Ming Fang He in 2013. She is a curriculum scholar who was born in China and lived through the Cultural Revolution, resided on one of Mao's Reform Farms for six years and was trained to be a barefoot doctor there. She graduated from Wuhan University and taught English at the university level, before emigrating to Canada. She completed the course work for a Master's in English Literature at Lakehead University and transferred to an ESL Master's Program at the University of Toronto, after which she earned a PhD under the leadership of F. Michael Connelly at OISE. Following a post-doc she took a job at Georgia Southern University. We met through AERA and work on the *Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008) for which I was invited to be editor of Part 3 of three parts, i.e., Curriculum in Theory.

Ming Fang helped me see more deeply into a project I have been exploring in retirement; namely, curricular and pedagogical practices and theories that have similarity to John Dewey's reconstructive views in many countries (Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1933; Schubert, 2009). I have begun to explore educators ranging from Ibn Khaldoun in Arabia; to Leo Tolstoy in Russia, Frederick Douglass and Anna Julia Cooper in the United States; to Princess Kartina and Ki Hadjar

in Indonesia; Rabindranath Tagore, Jiddu Krishnamurthi, and Mahatma Gandhi in India; Jose Marti in Cuba; Maria Montessori of Italy; Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, and Daisaku Ikeda in Japan; A. S. Neill in England; Myles Horton in the United States; Paulo Freire in Brazil; Frantz Fanon from Martinique, and of course the great religious and ethical teachers (e.g., Lao-tse, Confucious, Buddha, Abraham, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Martin Luther, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X). The massive neglect of the educational/curricular insights from the Far East, Middle East, Global South, Oceanic islands, and Indigenous cultures throughout the world by the dominating empires throughout history, including the U.S.-Western European-Corporate Empire of today must be overcome through awareness of educational insights and praxes from many venues and is an essential beginning.

Ming Fang helps me to see the life in-between cultures as a curriculum (He, 2003), to explore increased social justice through personal~passionate~participatory inquiry and action (2008), proceeding through lives of exile and imaginative projection and reconstruction of multiple meanings of being *at home* in the world (2010); engaging self-realization and contribution to/with others through the flowing rivers of diaspora as curricula (He, 2021; 2022), the pursuit of positive change through creative insubordination (He, 2023).

Our meetings with friends, relatives, colleagues, students, and others must be infused with attention to the theory within us. Our travels, our meditations, our engagement with the arts, literature, and philosophy, our experiences with music and film, and our wandering and wondering, conversing and imagining can be seen as foundational to the theory within us. We need to make this explicit and to imbue it with love and a quest for justice that dispels greed and acquisitiveness (Schubert, 2009), in ways that become part (if even small) of making the world a better place.

Conclusion and Moving Onward

Every entry on my *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) could become a full-blown story about how meaning has been continuously reconstructed in my life – so would the spaces between the lines in the CV and each of the other experiences I have had, including vicarious ones from myriad print, media, stories from friends, colleagues, students, countless others and even experiences imagined and not had. The foundations of our educations are overt as well as subtle, nuanced, and different in every situation in which we recall them. These foundations of our perspectives and the lives that flow in and from them can never be known fully; they can only be sampled in conscious remembering. To realize that much remains hidden within the foundations of our being and becoming is imagining the significance of the edges of our lives that we see only hazily as they continuously recede from our perception and simultaneously remain embedded within us.

A purpose for which I strive and increasingly try to overtly advocate is that the curriculum studies and educational foundations that matter most entail the conscious and conscientious pursuit of meanings that continuously reconstruct the theory that we are. This project is central to living life more fully and should be made explicit in educational relationships – especially between/among students and teachers in and out of schools. I am increasingly convinced that this must be added to and addressed within what is called the foundations of (our) education.

References

Connelly, F. M., He, M. F., & Phillion, J. (Eds). (2008). *Handbook of curriculum and instruction*. Sage.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education.* Macmillan.

Dewey, J. (1933). Dewey outlines utopian schools. *New York Times*, April 23, p 7. Also in Boydston, J. A. (Ed.), *The later works (1925-1953) of John Dewey,* Volume 9, (pp. 136-140) Southern Illinois University Press, 1989.

Franklin, B. M. (1986). *Building the American community: The school community and the search for social control*. Falmer.

He, M. F. (2003). *A river forever flowing: Cross-cultural lives and identities in the multicultural landscape*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishers.

He, M. F. (2010). Exile pedagogy: Teaching in-between. In J. A. Sandlin, B. D. Schultz, & J. Burdick (Eds.), *Handbook of public pedagogy: Education and learning beyond schooling*. (pp.).Routledge.

He, M. F., Schultz, B. D., & Schubert, W. H. (Eds.). (2015). *Guide to Curriculum in Education*. Sage Publications.

He, M. F. (2021). Diaspora curriculum theorizing. In M. A. Peters & R. Heraud (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of educational innovation*. Springer. (https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-981-13-2262-4_244-1)

He, M. F. (2021). Diaspora curriculum theorizing. In M. A. Peters & R. Heraud (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of educational innovation*. Springer.

He, M. F. (2022). Diaspora curriculum. In W. H. Schubert & M. F. He (Eds.). *Oxford encyclopedia of curriculum studies* (pp. 620-639), Oxford University Press.

He, M. F., & Phillion, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Personal~passionate~participatory inquiry into social justice in education.*: Information Age Publishing.

Holt, J. (1981). *Teach your own: A hopeful path for education*. New York: Delta Seymour/Lawrence.

Lopez, A. L. (1993). *Exploring possibilities for progressive curriculum and teaching in three urban contexts*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Lopez Schubert, A. L, Schubert, W. H., Lopez Schubert, H. A., Lopez Schubert, H. W. (1990). Home-centered education: A Deweyan view in principle and practice. American Educational Studies Association, Orlando, FL, November 1, 1990).

Lopez-Schubert, A. L., Schubert, W. H., Lopez Schubert, H. A. (1983). Familial theorizing and the "literature" that facilitates it. Bergamo Curriculum Conference, Dayton, October 1983. Published as: Schubert, W. H., Schubert, A. L. & Schubert, H. A. (1986). Familial theorizing and the literature that facilitates it. *Journal of Thought, 21*(2), 132-47.

Rubin, L. J. (1984). *Artistry in teaching*. Random House.

Sarason, S. B. (1999). *Teaching as a performing art*. Teachers College Press.

Schubert, W.H. (1975). *Imaginative projection: A method of curriculum invention*. Ph.D. Dissertation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Schubert, W.H. (1976). Situationalized education: Beyond individualization. *Insights, 12*(1), 14-16.

Schubert, W.H. (1977). On the need to study personal theory. *Insights, 14*(2), 4.

Schubert, W. H. (1981). Knowledge about out-of-school curriculum. *Educational Forum, 45*(2), 185-199.

Schubert, W. H. (1982). Teacher education as theory development. *Educational Considerations, 9*(2), 8-13.

Schubert, W. H. (1992). Personal theorizing about teachers' personal theorizing. In E. W. Ross, J. Cornett, & G. McCutcheon (Eds.), *Teacher personal theorizing* (pp. 249-264). State University of New York Press.

Schubert, W. H. (2009). *Love, justice, and education: John Dewey and the utopians*. Information Age Publishing.

Schubert, W. H. (2012). The Society of Professors of Education: Distinguished past and promising possibilities. *Professing Education 8*(1), 3-13.

Schubert, W. H. (2013). SPE: What can we be? *Professing Education (9)* 2, pp 11-14.

Schubert, W. H. (2015). Play as a basis for scholarship in curriculum studies. *Professing Education 10* (1), 8-15.

Schubert, W. H. (2021). Curriculum theory as a life-long search for perspective from context and reflection. In M. A. Peters & R. Heraud. (& M. Morris section on Curriculum Theory), *Encyclopedia of innovation in education*. Springer.

Schubert, W. H. & He, M. F. (Eds.). [Nuñez, I., Roberts, P., & Ross, S., B. Schultz (Associate Eds).] (2022). *The Oxford international encyclopedia of curriculum studies*. Oxford University Press (3 Volumes, 115 articles, 1940 pages, one million+ words + Author of Preface, Introduction, and Topical Outline).

Schubert, W. H. (2023). *Curriculum matters: What teachers should know and do*. UNESCO, International Board of Education.

Schubert, W. H., and Lopez Schubert A. L. (1980). *Curriculum books: The first eighty years*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Schubert, W. H. & Lopez Schubert, A. L. (Eds.) (1982). *Conceptions of curriculum knowledge: Focus on students and teachers*. College of Education at Pennsylvania State University.

Schubert, W. H. & Lopez Schubert, A. L. (1982). Curriculum as cultural experience in student lives. In W. H. Schubert & A. L. Schubert (Eds.). *Conceptions of curriculum knowledge: Focus on students and teachers* (pp. 49-57).

Schubert, W. H., Schubert, A. L. & Schubert, H. A. (1986). Familial theorizing and the literature that facilitates it. *Journal of Thought, 21*(2), 132-47.

Schubert, W. H., Lopez Schubert, A. L., Thomas, T. P., and Carroll, W. M. (2002). *Curriculum books: The first hundred years*. Peter Lang.

Thelen, H. A. (1972). *Education and the human quest: Four designs for education*. University of Chicago Press.

Warren, D., Finkelstein, B., …Schubert, W. H., and other members of The Task Force on Academic Standards of the American Educational Studies Association. (1977-78). Standards for academic and professional instruction in foundations of education, educational studies and educational policy studies. *Educational Studies, 8*(5), 329-34

Unknowing, Critical Imagination, and Delinquent Reading in the Academy

Robert J. Helfenbein
Mercer University
Helfenbein_rj@mercer.edu

The boy learned to read as "in the beginning was the word and the word was with God". The word, the words were literal but needed to be read in Greek and Hebrew and even Aramaic, and with the pastor-teacher to take the whole of a sermon on just one verse, a book of the Book would take months. So, then….what then does *literal* mean? Why do we need him to help us read?

Reading—and I think I want to resist the distinction between scholarly reading and any other kind of reading because I'm not sure that, for me, it works that way—is, it seems to me, rightly connected to the formation of the subject in a Western-dominated modernity (post or otherwise). Tsing (2018) notes the connection of mastery as a trope (is that word strong enough?) entangled in sovereignty, sociogenetic processes of material and ideological production: "the human is a narrative creation" (p.121). We both read as we have been taught to read as well as read toward some desire about the self we hope to reinforce or potentially become. But it seems too that a politics of reading is/can/should be at play. Here, it's McKittrick that can guide us as she notes,

> *Perhaps the function of communication, referencing, citation, is not to master knowing and centralize our knowingness, but to share how we know, and share how we came to know imperfect and sometimes unintelligible but always* hopeful and practical ways to *live this world as black.* (McKittrick, 2021, p.17)

This, although not the this of Blackness per se, tracks with thinking of reading as a form of education but only in that thinking of, "Education *as* ethics; education as a radically unmasterful act that requires that our ethical grounds are always aspiring, shifting, experimenting, failing—but striving nevertheless toward more ethical orientations" (Tsing, 2018, pp.67-68).

The boy ran to the La-Z-boy, having read the most amazing thing ever, the Lord of the Rings, the Two Towers "Arise, Arise, Riders of Rohan….

> ***Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter!***
> ***Spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered,***
> ***a sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises!***
> ***Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!***
> ***Ride for Ruin and the world's ending"***

But the man was annoyed, watching Crossfire, "don't bother me, boy" and the boy *walked on down the hall* realizing that this room, these books, these spaces were all there is, all there would be—this—like so so many things—would not be shared. He told this later to the woman, the woman who sat across from him with the notepad, the pencil, and the questions.

> *What do we do with the call for vulnerability, for becoming, when reading itself comes from a place of vulnerability, of loss, of absence—a wish to become someone else from somewhere else with other selves? It would seem that reading as*

> *political, as pedagogical, as rooted* in a desire for becoming can be conceived of as both an unconscious and conscious project. An unhinging—indeterminate and unpredictable but perhaps toward a project "that enact[s] agential forms of inhuman relationality" (Singh, 2018, p. 123).

The boy heard the man say that we should take all the homosexuals, put them on an island, and drop a bomb on it (aping a TV personality running for president). The boy asked where in the word did it say that we should do this—after all, everything we do and believe is based in the word. The boy hadn't read that. Did he misread? Was he reading wrong? The anger that followed marked a change between the boy and the man and it never went back.

Yes, reading practices (and in this case, one hopes that practice makes imperfect) are part of what constructs the self—notably not the only thing I remind you, gentle reader—and we cannot help being complicit in those practices and the broader construction of the human that are reinforced by them, but I want to agree with Tsing that "complicity becomes not something negative to be resisted and disavowed but something to be affirmed in order to assume responsibility" (p. 120). But…we can attend to the difference in how folks may take up those practices, their indeterminacies and entanglements, and even attempt to take them up in a project of difference itself—an ethics, an undoing, an unhinging, an education.

References

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Singh, J. (2018). *Unthinking mastery: Dehumanism and decolonial entanglements*. Duke University Press.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (2005). *The two towers*. HarperCollins.

DeGarmo Lecture 2022: Itinerant Curriculum (as) Theory Now! An Uncertain Manifesto for a Manifesto of Uncertainties

João M. Paraskeva
University of Strathclyde, UK.
jmparaskeva@gmail.com

In Memory of Dwayne Ernest Huebner

The Original Sin

> *When the never-to-be-forgotten day of the terrible aucon arrived, slaves, horses, and other cattle were to be put under the hammer and again change masters.*
>
> Truth (1998, p. 18)

It was in 1772 when, in Reading, Pennsylvania, a slave dealer issued a letter to the slave-trading company complaining about his product:

> *I took your Negro George, some time ago home, thinking I might be better able to Sell him: who after being with me a night behaved himself in such an insolent manner, I immediately remanded him back to the Gaol. About a week since I put him up at Public sale … where there was a number of Persons who inclined to Purchase him. However, he protested publicly that he would not be sold, and if anyone should purchase him, he would be the Death of him and words to the like purpose, which deter'd the people from biding. I then sent him back with Directions to the Gouler to keep him at Hard Labor, which he refuses to do and goes in such An Insolent manner that it is impossible to get a master to him there* (Green, apud Harding, 1981, pp. 40–41).

George, like millions of slaves, Sojourner Truth (1998) claims, knew full well that "when the never-to-be-forgotten day of the terrible auction arrived, they were put, like horses and other cattle, under the hammer, and again change masters." Echoing James Madison's words, Achille Mbembe (2017, p. 2) argues that slavery is "America's original sin." As he (2014, p. 2) adds, the fact that there is not a single Black person who has come freely to the shores of the New World is, in Alex Tocqueville's eyes, "one of the irresolvable/great dilemmas of American democracy" a dilemma that – among such endless others - crosses the curriculum field, a clock bomb about to go on any time.

At the very root of our field's endemic epistemicidal malaise (Paraskeva, 2011; 2016; 2018; 2021a; 2021b; 2022) resides the nation's eugenic sin; it emerges and grows out of it. Such sin is the crux of what anticolonial and decolonial scholars call el patron colonial de poder (Quijano, 1991) – or coloniality power matrix (Mignolo, 2008); it is one of the fundamental pillars that sustain Modern Western Eurocentric reason, a eugenic reason - and the riverbed of countless dominant and counter-dominant curriculum theories (Paraskeva, 2022; 2021; 2018; 2016). Eugenics constitutes a tortuous nub – in which class, race, ethnicity, caste, agender, and sexual orientation dynamics rub against each other - through which what I called curriculum epistemicide and reversive epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016; 2018; 2021; 2022) is crafted, developed, and perpetuated. Such nub reflects the gigantic "delirium produced by modernity" (Mbembe, 2017, p. 2) – a delirium that crosses the struggles for the US curriculum theory and history (Paraskeva, 2022a; 2022b) - and constitutes a structural component of "the nuclear power plant from which the modern project of knowledge - and governance – has been played" (Mbembe, 2017, p. 2). The curriculum epistemicide is a crime against humanity.

Generations after generations have been exposed to "a pedagogy aimed specifically at habituating them to eugenics" (Mbembe, 2017,

p. 114), a pedagogy that normalized selective breeding, eugenic betterment, and sterilization of those considered with inferior blood (Selden, 1999), a 'public' pedagogy through which millions have been 'injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, and abasement' (Césaire, 2000). Eugenics is the country's original sin that runs through the veins of curriculum theory and history since its emergence (Kliebard, 1997; Wraga, 2018; Schubert et al., 1980; Watkins, 1993). It provides the epistemicidal nature of the field. If eugenics is the nation's original sin, the epistemicide is the field's peccadillo original; it is the field's nature. Our field is the crematory of Caliban reason (Henry, 2000), paving the way for the consolidation of a eugenic matrix (Watkins, 1993; Selden, 1999; Escobar, 2013; Walsh, 2012). Why the persistence of such eugenic sin in our field's history, theory, and research? Part of that, - I argue - is undeniably related to the triumphalist nature of dominant traditions – currently framed in neoliberal terms - which have been able to immortalize the field's selective nature, echoing the eugenic voracious appetite of the coloniality power matrix. However, such constitutes just one side of the coin. The other side of the coin relies right on the core of the contra-hegemonic hemisphere – in particular within critical, post-critical approaches - and the challenges they have faced and continue to face to interrupt such sin, despite their notable accomplishments (Paraskeva, 2018; 2021a; 2021b; 2022). What is the reason underpinning the incapacity of critical and post-critical perspectives to dismantle such sin? What happens then to the critical and post-critical approaches?

What happened to critical and post-critical theories!

> *If you have a good theory, forget about reality (Žižek, 2018)*

Imagine, Terry Eagleton (1996, p. 1) encourages us, "a radical movement which had suffered an emphatic defeat so emphatic that in fact, it seemed unlikely to resurface for the length of a lifetime, if even then." The defeat he has in mind "is not just the kind of rebuff with which the political left is depressingly familiar, but a repulse so definitive that it seemed to discredit the very paradigms with which such politics had traditionally worked" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 1).

Sadly and worryingly, as curriculum workers, there is no need to imagine such *Kafkian* real, as we are in the eye of such a debacle. Our field is facing a 'severe emphatic defeat,' the 'discredit of its pluriverse paradigms,' a violent social and academic disbelief related to a narrative "so quaintly out of tune with the modern era, that nobody even bothered any longer to enquire into its truth value" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 1). We have burned an endless epistemological capital. We are 'the defeat'. We are cornered in the republic of the absurd … inadvertently producing such absurd.

Despite notable accomplishments made by critical and post-critical curriculum theories - (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1981; Pinar, 1974; McLaren, 1986; Greene, 1973; Miller, 2020; Grumet, 1981 and so many others) - it is shocking that after over a hundred years, the field is still tied up in a eugenic epistemicidal straitjacket. Why? What underlies such epistemicidal malaise, as I have proclaimed (Paraskeva, 2011)? How is it possible for such epistemicide to succeed in a democratic society? Why "still bother with critical and post-critical curriculum theories" anyway, as François Cusset (2008, p. 11) would put it? Do critical curriculum theories still have something to offer? In Slavoj Žižek (2018) terms, are 'critical and post critical curriculum theories' still important today? Why? Whose theories? Whose theory has been crafted? Why countless critical accomplishments - and in fact, they were not so few (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1981; Pinar, 1974; McLaren, 1986; Greene, 1973; Miller, 2020; Grumet, 1981 and so many others) - did not break with the field's original sin? Why do they never become dominant? Why are critical approaches not even dominant within the

counter-dominant sphere? Why were they never able to – permanently - disestablish the eugenic nerve of the field?

Do critical and post-critical curriculum theories suffer from the same malady as cultural theories, as Terry Eagleton (2003) argued? Did they disintegrate and crumble with the same violence with which they arrived? Could it be that, like cultural theories, critical and post-critical theories also 'promised to grapple with some fundamental problems, but on the whole failed to deliver'? (Eagleton, 2003) Could it be that, like cultural studies, radical and critical approaches have been shamefaced about morality and metaphysics, embarrassed about love, biology, religion, and revolution, largely silent about essences, universals, and foundations, and superficial about truth, objectivity, and disinterestedness? (Eagleton, 2003)? He (2003) argues that those issues constitute 'rather a large slice of human existence to fall down on.' Are these the true colors of what I have termed Huebner's (1976) syndrome? (Paraskeva, 2022); or worse, has the syndrome become an irreversible curse until it is resolved.

Painstakingly, and as history tells us, counter-hegemonic critical and post-critical curriculum theories – since their emergence - have never been able to capture the demands and needs of society as a whole. Why? What is this inadequacy due to? Whose inadequacy? In "Whose interest is the activity" of counter-hegemonic theories, James Macdonald (1975, p. 88) would have asked?". The "bankruptcy of the counter dominant approaches" in our field, as Jacque Rancière (2010, p. 38) would have phrased it, is one of the structuring pillars of current public pedagogies. Why, as Maristella Svampa (2016, p. 24) would certainly put it, critical and post-critical curriculum theories have been persistently produced through a "deficit of accumulation, an accumulation of egregious 'blurring's and forgetting's'"? Is it possible that critical approaches face the same healthy plague of philosophy that is fundamentally and irremediably a praxis of criticism without creation, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1984) would put it?

After over a century of crucial battles for the U.S. curriculum, do we have – at least - a better interpretation and understanding of the field today? If Karl Marx (1998) is right - when he points out that the focus is not to interpret the world in various ways but to change it - and I agree that he is (see Eagleton, 2011; Paraskeva, 2021b), how can we be so sure that we have a just interpretation/understanding of our field? How can 'just change' be produced without a 'just interpretation' and a 'just theory"? How can we aim for social transformation without a dominant theory of social transformation? Have we been able to produce a just theory of social transformation? Where is such a theory? How can we achieve such a theory of social transformation while producing a divisive, derivative, abyssal reading of reality and vice-versa? (Santos, 2014) Whose/what epistemological colors framed curriculum theory – and should frame a just theory? More than a century after the field's emergence, isn't it essential to understand where and how 'we' are? How have we ended up 'here'?

Is critical theory just a reaction hemisphere? Critical theory and pedagogies seem unable to "sustain a convincing critique of the present social formation in the face of the need for such critique" (Poster, 1981, p. 1). Undeniably, the golden age of critical and post-critical counter-hegemonic approaches, as Terry Eagleton (2003) would put it, is passing. Why is it so difficult to build a critical theory? In "a world where there is so much to criticize, why has it become so difficult to produce a critical theory?" (Santos, 1999, p. 197). Undeniably, over the last couple of decades, "disruptions have multiplied in the planetary landscape, but they have not produced a change in the dominant and counter-dominant paradigms, a conscious movement of self-organization, or a revolutionary upheaval" (Berardi, 2012, p. 11).

Critical and post-critical counter-dominant theories, Santos (1999) claims, failed to

recognize not only that many of the crucial concepts "no longer have the centrality they once enjoyed or were internally so reworked and nuanced that they lost much of their critical strength" (p. 200), but also the impossibility of "a total alternative to the existing society." (p. 201). That is, "there is no single principle of social transformation and even those who continue to believe in a future socialist see it as a possible future in competition with alternative futures. There are no unique historical agents or a unique form of domination" (Santos, 1999, p. 202; Fanon, 2001).

The failure of critical and post-critical counter-hegemonic theories, though, lies precisely in the shortcomings of their epistemological matrix - fundamentally Modern Western and Eurocentric, which gives and grants them a divisive reason – which is overtly incapable of addressing the world's epistemological difference and diversity. Modern Western Eurocentric thinking is an abyssal thinking, "a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible being the foundation of the visible ones. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line". (Santos, 2007, p. 45).

Patently, critical and post-critical counter-hegemonic approaches, laudably edified by leading intellectuals and movements within what I have coined 'the generation of utopia' (Paraskeva, 2021b; 2022) – a generation that sails and swims with a very crucial curriculum river (Paraskeva, 2011) – echoes such eugenic abyssal divide. By fundamentally operating within a Eurocentric epistemological matrix, critical and post-critical counter-hegemonic approaches ended up aggravating such abyssal lines and inadvertently legitimizing their reductive visibility and the false legitimacy of this side of the line through the invisibility and non-existence of the other side of the line.

Moreover, critical and post-critical counter-hegemonic approaches by refusing to get out of the Modern Western Eurocentric epistemological straitjacket bluntly ignore that the 'masters tools cannot dismantle the master's houses (Lorde, 2007), and in doing so they labored in one of their crucial deficiencies, that is refusal "to admit that in a world that is epistemologically diverse it is impossible to understand and transform it from one and only one fixed epistemological position" (Paraskeva, 2021b, p. 259).

Again, Terry Eagleton (2003) helps us a great deal:

> *Structuralism, Marxism, Post-structuralism, and the like are no longer the sexy topics as they were. What is sexy instead is sex. On the broader shores of the academia, an interest in French philosophy has given way to the fascination with French kissing. In some cultural circles, the politics of masturbation exert far more fascination than the politics of the Middle East. Socialism is not out of sadomasochism. Among students of culture, the body is an immensely fashionable topic, but it is usually the erotic body, not the famished body. There is a keen interest in coupling bodies but not in laboring bodies.* (p. 2)

Like Slavoj Žižek, we are all good Hegelians, 'if you have a good theory, forget about reality.' Curriculum theory is a vivid example of a Eurocentric eugenic exhausted epistemological logic framing the field within a 'capitis diminutiu' – that is, theoretical atrophy hijacked by what Jalal Al -Almahd calls 'occidentosis,' an endemic plague, a eugenic epistemological logic as I have been denouncing, verbalized and operationalized by the so-called 'curriculum mechanotics' and 'the sepoys of coloniality' - incapable of understanding the world's diversity and difference.

Curriculum's Capitis Diminutiu

> *The old is dying, and the new cannot be born (Gramsci, 1999)*

As I was able to argue elsewhere (Paraskeva, 2018), the clashes between dominant and specific critical and post-critical counter-dominant traditions have demonstrated how the latter

ended up falling into the reductive functionalist approach. In their struggle against the epistemicide, they aggravated such epistemicide by crafting a reversive epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016; 2018; 2021a; 2021b; 2022).
Moreover, the wrangles between and within such traditions fueled what I would call, drawing from José Gil (2009), a 'curriculum involution' – a deadlock. In such sometimes-ruthless struggles, neither the dominant nor the counter-dominant traditions were able to claim total victory; thus, we keep experiencing an increasing void between, on the one hand, the absence of the consolidation of a fully segregated curriculum – we do have countless examples of counter-dominant victories – and, on the other hand, the complete absence of the emergence of the new human being. Moreover, within such an impasse, the epistemicide and the reversive epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2016; 2018; 2021a; 2021b; 2021c; 2022) keep being perpetuated. That is, neither the "old human being" died nor the "creation" of the new human being was fully materialized. Neither the old social order remained safe nor did the new social order emerge; that is, "the old is dying, and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci, 1999, p. 276). Based on Gil's (2009) framework, these battles represented no "real" tragedy as they were stripped of their tragic dimension. Instead, a curriculum involution occurred (Gil, 2009), which, in too many ways, points to a 'regression.'

As I have argued, one of the fundamental counter-dominant limitations relies on its incapacity to break from the heavy chains of the modern Western Eurocentric epistemological platform. Pundits within both dominant and counter-dominant traditions wield arguments based just on a particular Eurocentric framework that proved to be part of the problem, i.e., the epistemicide (Santos, 2014), the curriculum epistemicide (Paraskeva, 2011; 2016; 218; 2021a; 2021b; 2022).

Moreover, the epistemicidal nature of our field triggers the impairment of the critical that contaminates the whole and its part. Its historical metonymic character should have pushed our theoretical field and critical theorists into a permanent short circuit with the real. This absence of an irreversible short circuit maculated the metonymic character of the critical; it muzzled its unquestionable theoretical wealth that could allow the critical to maintain its hegemony within the counter-hegemonic sphere. Such imparity has triggered discomfort within the critical turf.

This theoretical imparity—or impairment—of the critical has thus flooded the banks of the radical critical curriculum river—laudably denounced and scrutinized in crucial approaches provided by Wexler (1987), Ellsworth (1989), Liston (1988), Gore (1993), Baker (2009) and others as we had the opportunity to examine in other contexts (Paraskeva, 2016; 2018; 2021a; 2021b; 2022). For example, the absence of caste in our curriculum debates speaks volumes about such impairment. It is a glaring theoretical embarrassment. Caste constitutes one of the most flagrant pathological absences in our field. Its constructed absence produces a mythomaniac theory. Caste is caste, not class; caste of caste, not race. By continuing to produce a theory that ignores the existence of caste dynamics, we are only building a theory that lies, a theory that speaks to a reality that does not exist. Our theory does not speak for millions of 'untouchables.'. It offers them a world that did not exist and continues not to exist. It ignores such a 'chamber of horrors' and eugenicism of Hindutva reason (Teltumbde, 2018; Ambedkar, 2016). Working on our theoretical terrain towards a curricular theory of caste and crafting a non-derivative caste curriculum studies is thus crucial (Paraskeva, forthcoming).

Finally, such involution and imparity aggravated the field's deadlock. Revisiting Pierre Bourdieu and Zygmunt Bauman helps us a great deal here. The concepts of 'immigration' in the former and that of 'strangers' in the latter are crucial to our argument. Critical curriculum theory—which we all owe so much—is far from

a nightmare for the hegemonic bloc; long ago, it ceased to produce 'strangeness'; it ceased to be a 'strange' thing produced by 'strangers'; it became predictable. Given its epistemological predictability, critical curriculum theory is no longer a threat. It cannot continue to "mutilate or eradicate" (Bauman, 2005, p. 7) the dominant thinking theory and way of building the world. Critical theory even ceased to be the theory of mutiny (Saramago, 1999, p. 43). Thus, it ceased to be a producer and conductor of the "immigration of new ideas" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 7), and even what is intended as new remains reductively tied to an onto-epistemological corset incapable of going beyond the Eurocentric modern western platform. Critical theories are exhausted with a "Eurocentric conception of time, space, number, causes" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 9) that somehow abdicates from a radical epistemological co-presence of the 'other side of the line' (Santos, 2014).

The incapacity to overcome such involution and impairment is a clear evidence of curriculum's *capitis diminutiu*, which triggers its *hypertrophia theoricae* paving the way for the *theorycide*. Such atrophy blocks any hypothesis of a relevant correlation between student teachers and the curriculum with the environment (DeGarmo, 1913; 2022).

Curriculum Theorycide

> *There is no future without death*
> *(Saramago, 2009)*

The belligerent battles that opposed hegemonic and counter-hegemonic movements and also the wrangles within such movements promoted a kind of theoretical *coup d'état*, an attack on the space and time of theory, a theoretical mope, a *theorycide*, paving the way for a dangerous anti-intellectual intellectualism one of the enzymes of the de-skilling of educators. Intellectualism is becoming a rare collectible in school settings (Paraskeva, 2013).

A 'non-theoretical' atmosphere reigns. This is the theory, that is, the theory of 'non-theory.' The theory is, indeed, the absence of theory. Non-disquiets conquered the field. The utopia of theoretical hysteria was buried. We live in an 'atheoretical' moment, a plague that has contaminated the various areas of our field like rust and settled down with all its belongings in the velvet armchairs of our academy. The *theorycide* peppers the commonsense, which is not necessarily the absence of a theory, but the yoke of a 'non-theory theory' momentum. The hunting season for theory and theorists was normalized. There is no theoretical trepidation in our field. We are experiencing paralysis. Worse than theoretical stagnation, we face the 'non-existence' of any theoretical turbulence. The roaring theoretical fires of the past – of an even recent past – are long gone. Our field is no longer theoretically combustible within the vast social sciences.

Another theory is essential—admittedly itinerant—which can only be achieved with another theorizing, another epistemological logic, and which, faithful to the ethical principles of epistemological justice, helps us to "arrange the words" in another way (Saramago, 1999, p. 86). There is no future without death, as José Saramago (2009) would say. That is, and as I have argued and analyzed in a different depth in another context (Paraskeva, 2018; 021b; 2022), critical and post-critical theories, in general, and critical educational and curricular theory, in particular, as we have thought and talked about it, has to die. This is not the end of critical theories and pedagogies. It is a way to produce truthfully a pluri-diverse supradisciplinary critical approach to address the endless diverse onto-epistemological challenges of the world.

While provocative, the challenge is not begging for an end in Eurocentric terms. It begs something radically different. It begs 'the otherwise' (Paraskeva, 2020). We must fight collectively so that, as Gil (1998) would say, "critical theory does not become petrified as a tribal theory", and an excellent way to address such insufficiencies is to commit to an "exfoliation processes" (Gil,1998, pp. 127–

128.9), which dismantle the current divisive 'complicated conversation' (Pinar, 2004); It attempts to decolonize such conversation – not complicated at all, but epistemicidal; it attempts to 'des-epistemicide' such complicated conversation which is itself epistemicidal (see Huebner, 2021; Huebner & Paraskeva, 2021a). This is a battle of the infinite, a battle for the infinite and within the infinite, yet not an infinite battle. The "infinite is then the possible" (Pessoa, 2006, p. 56), a present possible "as the only reality is the eternal present, the undying now" (Pessoa, 2006, p. 47). Critical theories and pedagogies need a new logic for a possible utopia of a just world. We must put 'theory back' at the epicenter of curriculum debates. Another theory, however. A non-derivative, non-abyssal, a just one for a decent life, as Santos (2018) would advocate.

Uncertain Manifesto for a Manifesto of Uncertainties: ICT as Just Theory!

> *ICT is an epistemology of liberation that can persistently challenge structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life* (Darder, 2022)

Sentient of the field's deadlock – and deeply influenced by anti-colonial and de-colonial non-Eurocentric approaches – I have proclaimed the epistemicidal nature of the field (Paraskeva, 2011) and advocated the need for a 'frontal' confrontation with its historical epistemicidal reason. I argued for the need for a deterritorialization tout court and to assume an itinerant theoretical curriculum (ICT) perspective. I claimed the curriculum reason as divisive, eugenic in its hegemonic and counter-hegemonic Eurocentric platforms and argued for a non-derivative non-abyssal approach (Santos, 2014; Paraskeva, 2011; 2016; 2017; 2021a; 2021b), a deterritorialized one, a decolonial one, an itinerant curriculum theoretical path (Paraskeva, 2011; 2016; 2017; 2021a; 2021b). Such confrontation challenges the field's historical sociological absences (Santos, 2014) and questions the institutionalization of the visibility and existence of particular forms of knowledge – fundamentally Eurocentric - pushing curriculum theory and the field's history out of the colonial zone. I called this momentum 'the epistemological turn,' a decolonial one (Paraskeva, 2011; 2016; 2017; 2021a; 2021b). ICT has been embraced by scholars within and beyond the U.S. committed to what Enrique Dussel (2013) calls analectic – or ana-dialectic approach - breaking the abyssal divide produced by modernist / post-modernist wrangles which persistently produces the Global South as non-existent. ICT places the struggle against the epistemicides and reversive epistemicides as a center of gravity of a new utopian logic, one that is committed to being a performative utterance (Austin, 1962), that is, a 'theory – itinerant - that does something by saying it'. ICT is responsive to the world's epistemological diversity and difference.

The ICTheorist is an epistemological pariah, a just political take deeply committed to social, cognitive, and intergenerational justice. It is a declaration of epistemological independence,

To do that, critical and post-critical theories and pedagogies – the way we have been thinking and doing - need to end; they need to deterritorialize; they need to radically de-link from its own oppressive epistemological Western Eurocentric matrix without renegading it and commit to the "radical co-presence of both sides of the line" (Santos, 2007, p. 45). As Zhao (2019, p. 27) states, "ICT is a form of decolonial thinking that recognizes an ecological co-existence of varying epistemological forms of knowledge around the world paying attention to knowledges and epistemologies largely marginalized and discredited in the current world order."

ICT is a new conceptual grammar (Jupp, 2017) that moves itinerantly within and beyond "(a) the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being; (b) epistemicides, linguicide, abyssality, and the ecology of knowledges; and (c) poststructuralist hermeneutic itinerancy"

producing a new non-abyssal alphabet of knowledge (Paraskeva, 2022).

ICT aims toward "a general epistemology of the impossibility of a general epistemology" (Santos, 2007, p. 67). It is a human rights theory, as Santos (2009) would undoubtedly frame it. ICT implies a different theorist who challenges and is challenged by a theoretical path that is inexact yet rigorous; s/he "runs away" from any unfortunate canon; it implies a theorist who is committed to moving towards an 'abyssal' epistemological terrain, provoking abstinence of theoretical uniformity and stabilization. The ICTheory(ist) is a volcanic chain that shows a constant lack of equilibrium; the ICTheory(ist) is always a stranger in his/her language. It is not a sole act, however; it is a populated solitude. ICT challenges any form of indeginestoude; that is, it challenges any form of romanticization of indigenous cultures and knowledges, and it is not framed in any dichotic skeleton of West-rest (Paraskeva, 2022; 2014; 2011; 2021a; 2021b).

ICT, as Darder (2016) argues, is "an epistemology of liberation that can persistently challenge structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life must be cultivated, nurtured and embodied within the blessed messiness and unwieldy chaos of everyday life within schools and communities" (p. 12); ICtheorists de-link from myths of the myths of Eurocentric science (Popkewitz, 1976; Harding, 2008; Smith, 1999; Paraskeva, 2018).

ICT, as inherently an exfoliation metamorphosis, a "sill of infinite mourning" (Couto, 2008, p. 105), champions an anti and post "occidentosis and "mechanotic" (Al-L-Ahmad, 1987, p. 31) momentum. ICT is "not merely invocation or evocation; it exemplifies how ideas can be added powerfully to the sources of curriculum studies by substantially including Works" (Schubert, 2017, p. 10) above and beyond the Modern Western Eurocentric epistemological dominant and counter-dominant traditions.

To de-link and decolonize – while honoring the legacy of the critical path, taking it to a different level – is also a decolonial attempt to do critical theory (Kellner, 1989, p. 2). In so doing, an itinerant curriculum theory re-thinks utopianism and responds to Habermas's (1981) challenge of modernity as an incomplete project committed to decolonizing. It helps one to understand how it is crucial to question the accurate epistemological colors of our battle for a just education and society. Our task is not to 'shoot the utopists' (Santos, 1995) or the utopia that inhabits within us and bubbles out of the debris of modernity.

Unsurprisingly, ICT causes concern in dominant and counter-dominant republics. The itinerant theoretical commitment implies radically altering historical grounds of epistemological comfort; it implies recognizing that the South exists, going to the South, and learning from and with the South - as Santos warns us (2014). It also implies admitting that one cannot understand and explain the world's endless diversity and difference and its challenges only through the limits constructed by the English language – 'an enzyme of coloniality. Why must the oppressed explain their oppression in the oppressor's language and within the oppressor's epistemological terms? How can we continue to collude with this theoretical refinement saturated with sadism?

As educational scholars, our task is to de-link and decolonize it, a crucial commitment toward a ruthless critique of every existent epistemology as a sine qua noncondition for a just curriculum theory. This is undeniably the very best battle we can engage to open up the Western Eurocentric canon of democracy (Santos, 2007) and, in doing so, paves the way for a non-abyssal and just society through a non-derivative curriculum theory. (Paraskeva, 2021c). ICT is an onto-epistemological declaration of independence. It is the people's theory echoing the world's epistemological difference and diversity. In that sense, ICT will always be an uncertain manifesto for a manifesto of uncertainties. ICT is a theory now!

References

Al-L-Ahmad, Jalal (1984). *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West*. Iran: Mizan Press.

Ambedkar, Bhimrao (2016) Annihilation of Caste. In Arundhati Roy (ed) *Annihilation of Caste. B. R. Ambedkar*. London: Verso.

Apple, Michael (1979). *Ideology and Curriculum*, New York: Routledge & Kean Paul.

Austin, John L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University

Bauman, Zygmunt (2005) *Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baker, Bernadette (2009). *The New Curriculum History*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Berardi, Franco Bifo (2012) *The Uprising. On Poetry and Finance*. London: Semitotext(e).

Bourdieu, Pierre (2001). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Césaire, Aimé (2000) *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Cusset, François (2008) *French Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

Darder, Antonia (2016). Ruthlessness and the Forging of Liberatory Epistemologies: An Arduous Journey. In João M. Paraskeva. *Curriculum Epistemicides*. New York: Routledge, pp., ix – ixv.

Darder, Antonia (2022). The Generation of the Utopia: Foreword. In João M. Paraskeva. *Curriculum and the Generation of Utopia*. New York: Routledge, pp., xv - xix.

DeGarmo, Charles (1913). *Principles of Secondary Education*. New York: The MacMillan Company.

DeGarmo, Charles (2022). Discussion on the Report of Dr. Harris. *Journal of Education*, Vol. XLI (21), pp. 165–167. In J. M. Paraskeva (Ed.) Curriculum: A New Comprehensive Reader. New York: Peter Lang, pp., 383-384

Deleuze Gilles and Guattari Felix (1984) *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Dussel, Enrique (2013). *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. Edited by A. Vallega. Translated by E. Mendieta, N. Maldonado-Torres, Y. Angulo and C. Pérez Bustillo. Durham: Duke University Press.

Eagleton, Terry (1996). *The Illusions of Post-Modernism*. Oxford: Blackwell

Eagleton, Terry (2003). *After Theory*. New York: Basic Books.

Eagleton, Terry (2011). *Why Marx was Right*. Yale University Press.

Ellsworth, Elizabeth (1989). Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59 (3), pp.. 297–324.

Escobar, Arturo (2013). Words and Knowledges Otherwise. In W. Mignolo and A, Escobar (Eds) *Globalization and the Decolonial Turn*. New York: Routledge, pp., 33-6

Fanon, Frantz (2001). *Wretched of the Earth.* New York: Penguin Books

Gil, José (1998). *Metamorphoses of the Body*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gil, José (2009) *Em Busca da Identidade. O Desnorte*. [*In Search of Identity. The Bewilderment*] Lisboa: Relógio D'Água.

Giroux, Henry (1981). *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gore, Jennifer (1993). *The Struggle for Pedagogies: Critical and Feminist Discourses as Regimes of Truth*. New York: Routledge.

Gramsci, Antonio (1999). *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited by Q. Hoare and G. Smith. New York: International Publishers.

Greene, Maxine (1973). *Teacher as a Stranger*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, INC.

Grumet, Madeleine (1981) "Autobiography and Reconceptualization," in H. Giroux, A. Penna and W. Pinar (eds) *Curriculum and Instruction*. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, pp., 139–44.

Harding, Vincent (1981). *There is a River. The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*. New York: Vintage Books

Harding, Sandra (2008). *Sciences from Bellow: Feminisms, Postcolonialities and Modernities*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Henry, Paget (2000). *The Caliban Reason*. New York: Routledge.

Mbembe, Achille (2017). *The Critique of the Black Reason*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. (1981). 'Modernity versus Postmodernity,' *New German Critique*, 22: pp., 3–14.

Huebner, Dwayne (1976). "The Moribund Curriculum Field: It's Wake and Our Work," *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6 (2) pp., 153–67.

Huebner, Dwayne (2002a). Huebner, D. (2021). A Foreword---Second Edition: Theory Not as a Schema for "Acting," But for "Looking." In. J. M. Paraskeva *Conflicts in Curriculum Theory*, New York: Palgrave (2nd Edition), pp., v – xHuebner, Dwayne & Paraskeva, Joao, M. (2021). A Curriculum Afterword: The Dialogue Dwayne Huebner and João M. Paraskeva. In João M. Paraskeva, *Conflicts in Curriculum Theory*. New York: Palgrave, pp. 215–262

Jupp, James (2017). Decolonizing and De-canonizing Curriculum Studies: An Engaged Discussion Organized around João M. Paraskeva's Recent Books. *Journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies* 12 (1), pp., 1 – 25

Kellner, Douglas (1989). *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Kliebard, Herb (1995). *The Struggle For the American Curriculum.* New York: Routledge.

Liston, Daniel (1988). *Capitalist Schools: Explanation and Ethics in Radical Studies of Schooling*. New York: Routledge.

Lorde, Audre (2007). *Sister Outsider*, Berkeley: Crossing Press.

MacDonald, James (1975) The Quality of Everyday Life in School. In J. Macdonald & E. Zaret (1975) *Schools in Search of Meaning*. Washington: ASCD, pp., 78-94, p., 88.

Marx, Karl (1998). *German Ideology.* Amherst: Prometheus Books

McLaren, Peter (1986). *Life in Schools*. New York: Routledge

Miller, Janet (2020). The Sound of Silence Breaking. Feminist Pedagogy and Curriculum Theory. In J. M. Paraskeva (Ed.) *Curriculum: A New Comprehensive Reader*. New York: Peter Lang, pp., 868 – 873.

Paraskeva, João M. (2021a). *Conflicts in Curriculum Theory. Challenging Hegemonic Epistemologies*. [Preface by Dwayne Huebner] 2nd Edition. New York: Palgrave.

Paraskeva, João M. (2021b) Curriculum and the Generation of Utopia. [Preface by Antonia Darder] New York: Routledge.

Paraskeva, João M. (2021c). Did COVID-19 Exist Before the Scientists? Towards Curriculum Theory Now. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 55 (1), pp., 1 -13.

Paraskeva, João M. Paraskeva (2016) *Curriculum Epistemicides*. [Preface by Antonia Darder] New York: Routledge.

Paraskeva, João, M. (2018). *Towards a Just Curriculum Theory. The Epistemicide*. [Foreword by Noam Chomsky] New York: Routledge.

Paraskeva, João, M. (forthcoming). *Critical Perspectives on the Denial of Caste in Educational Debate.* New York: Routledge.

Pessoa, Fernando (2006) *Textos Filosóficos* (Vol. II). [*Philosophical Texts*] Lisboa: Nova Ática

Pinar, William (1974). (ed.) *Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution and Curriculum Theory. Proceedings of the Rochester Conference*. California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Pinar, William (2004). *What Is Curriculum Theory?* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Popkewitz, Thomas (1976). Myths of Social Science in Curriculum. *The Educational Forum*, 40(3), pp. 317–328

Poster, Mark. (1981) *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism: In Search of a Context*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

Quijano, Anibal (1991) Colonialidad y Modernidad/Racionalidad. *Perú Indígena*, 29 (1), 11–21.

Rancière, Jacques (2010) *Chronicles of Consensual Times*. New York: Continuum,

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (1995). *Towards a New Common Sense*, New York: Routledge.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2007). 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking. From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges,' *Review*, 30 (1): 45–89.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2009). 'If God Were a Human Rights Activist: Human Rights and the Challenge of Political Theologies. Is Humanity Enough? The Secular Theology of Human Rights,' *Law, Social Justice and Global Development*, 1. Retrieved www.go.warwick. ac.uk/elj/lgd/2009_l/santos

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (1999) Porque é tão difícil construir uma teoria crítica? *[Why is it so difficult to build a critical theory?*] Revista Crítica de Ciencias Sociais, N 54, Junho, pp. 197–215. p. 197.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2014) *Epistemologies from the South*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2018). *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, Durham: Duke University Press

Saramago, José (1999) *Folhas Políticas*. [*Fallen Leaves*] Lisboa: Caminho

Saramago, José (2009). *Death with Interruptions*, Orlando: Houghton & Mifflin Harcourt Publishing

Schubert, William, Lopez Schubert, Anne. Lynn; Thomas, Thomas and Caroll, Wayne (1980) *Curriculum Books; The First Eighty Years*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Schubert, William (2017). Growing Curriculum Studies: Contributions of João M. Paraskeva. *Journal for the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies*, 12(1), pp. 1–20.

Smith, Linda (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies*. London: Zed Books

Svampa, Maristella (2016). *Debates Latinoamericanos: Indianismo, Desarollo, Dependencia, Populismo*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa.

Teltumbde, Anand (2010). *The Persistence of Caste. The Khairlanji Murders and India's Hidden Apartheid*. New York: Zed Books.

Teltumbde, Anand (2018). *Republic of Caste. Thinking Equality in the Time of Neoliberal Hindutva*. New Delhi: Navayana.

Truth, Sojourner (1998). *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. New York: Penguin Books.

Walsh, Catherine (2012). 'Other' Knowledges, 'Other' Critiques Reflections on the Politics and Practices of Philosophy and Decoloniality in the Other America. Transmodernity. *Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(3), pp. 11–27

Watkins, William (1993). Black Curriculum Orientations. A Preliminary Inquiry. *Harvard Education Review*, 63(3), pp. 321–338.

Wexler, Philip (1987). *Social Analysis of Culture: After the New Sociology*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan and Paul.

Wraga, William (2018). The Historical U.S. Curriculum Field's Sense of the Past. *Curriculum History*, pp. 19–28

Žižek, Slavoj (2018). *Living in the End Times*. London: Verso

Critical Imagination: A Counterexample

Isabel Nuñez
Purdue University Fort Wayne
nunezi@pfw.edu

I stared at those two words—'critical' and 'imagination'—for a long time before I realized that I am sorely lacking in both (which perhaps was contributing to the blankness of the page in front of me). I then considered explaining this in an email to Mary Kay Delaney in which I would politely bow out of this collection of essays for *Professing Education*. Finally, though, I decided that it might be interesting for others to read about how even the absolute dearth of criticality and imagination need not be a barrier to earnest efforts toward desirable ends in education contexts, my own being the deanship of a school of education at a regional public university.

****

I am a happy person by nature. I have some bad days and some bad moods, but for the most part my emotional states range from content to joyful. I remember as a teenager getting frustrated with this in my envy of angst-ridden and much cooler-seeming peers. I even wrote a poem in adolescence that ended with the lines "Sometimes / I just want / an excuse to SCREAM!" I'm sure I did, but those feelings are rare. I enjoy every day: my morning reading with a cup of tea, getting ready (especially makeup!), the people I work with and the work that I do, making dinner for my family and sharing it together, more reading (this time with wine!), and going to bed early. Each part of my day makes me happy. I appreciate this feature of my temperament and would not change it, but it does have its drawbacks.

One problem with always being happy is that I am rather averse to change. I don't like big changes, like moving, and I don't like small changes, like getting a new handbag when my old one falls apart. It makes me very anxious when my spouse moves the furniture around. When everything seems great the way it is, why change it?

This attitude, of course, is distinctly uncritical. It is not critical in the everyday sense of criticism, or pointing out flaws, nor in the scholarly sense of identifying and addressing injustice. The former is not a big concern for me. For example, I would argue that a strengths-focused approach to faculty and staff development is more effective than critiquing performance, especially when a good portion of one's personnel are tenured professors. Plus, my ability to remain optimistic in the face of challenges is experienced as steadying to those of my colleagues predisposed to react more strongly. I am told that my calm presence helps to keep others from panicking when enrollments drop or our state's Republican supermajority enacts more misguided education legislation (which happens often).

I think this is part of why I became and remain dean. We don't really have drama in the School of Education (knock wood!), and in my 3 years leading the unit I've not once asked the provost to step in and address a personnel issue or faculty conflict. I just read a book on gender equity in college sports (rather, the lack of it despite Title IX). Through large-scale survey research, the authors found that the higher a woman's rank in this field, the less ardent her support for measures to improve gender equity. Women athletic directors, in fact, show the least enthusiasm (Druckman & Sharrow, 2023). The researchers opined that women are socialized to the status quo as they move to higher levels of leadership, but did allow that conservatism might instead play into their selection for these roles. I can see both forces at play in my own trajectory—congenital positivity

and an expanding view of why policies and structures are in place.

This really gives me reason to worry about not being critical enough of society and its failings. Viewing the world through rose-colored glasses makes it difficult to discern nuanced forms of oppression and inequity. To counter this, I need to seek out other perspectives to balance my positivity. I read local and national news, as well as critical scholarship. I am involved with professional organizations that are engaged in justice-focused work, including the Society of Professors of Education. One of my best sources for alternate viewpoints is my spouse, who is much more critical than I am in both senses of the word. With others' help, I can find and tap into some righteous anger!

****

In *The LEGO Movie*, the wizard voiced by Morgan Freeman enters the mind of Emmet, an ordinary guy mistaken for the prophesied 'Special' who will save the world. Searching for creative ideas, the wizard instead encounters a vast nothingness, leading him to exclaim to Emmet, "Your mind is so prodigiously empty" (Lord & Miller, 2014). This is my favorite scene in the movie, because my mind is exactly like Emmet's.

As weak as I am in criticality, the situation as regards imagination is even worse. I stand in awe and amazement before the many friends and colleagues who seem to have never-ending streams of inspiration flowing somewhere deep within. These folks have so many possible research topics and writing projects that they can't even keep track of them—much less produce them all. I, on the other hand, have no ideas. The only reason I've published so much is that people are kind enough to collaborate with me (I am a good worker bee), and because if I ever do conceive of a scholarly work I know I must get it into print ASAP. Who knows when or if the next idea will come around?

The same limitations hold in other areas of imagination. I don't create visual art of any kind, and I can't even hear the difference between musical notes. I like to cook, but I don't diverge from the recipe. I really enjoy the intellectual work of curriculum design (which is why I got my doctorate in curriculum studies), but I am not the kind of teacher who continually reimagines (or even tweaks) a class. It generally takes me a few semesters to be happy with a new course, but then it gets encased in amber. To be brutally honest, I am probably a rather boring person.

My lack of creativity doesn't pose too much hardship in everyday life. Any time that I might have spent on artistic endeavors I will happily devote to reading. However, it does constrain my effectiveness at work. The very first sentence of the policy document outlining the duties of a dean on my campus starts out with "The dean is responsible for articulating a vision …" Visioning is hard, though, when one is perfectly content with things as they are. Thankfully, here I can also find support in community. Several of those idea people I described earlier in this section are employed in the School of Education. They are probably my favorite faculty, even if they can get a little bit tiring. Whenever anyone has an idea, I am grateful. I try to say 'yes' to everything I can, and to provide resources whenever possible. At the very least, I will pitch in to lend a hand. Despite lingering self-doubt about whether or not I am really qualified to be a dean, given my lack of imagination, I do feel like an empowered faculty and a collaboratively constructed vision are ultimately better for the School.

****

So much for an essay on critical imagination—yours truly is not very critical and not very imaginative. Still, my relentless optimism compels me to find the good in this state of affairs. Perhaps my struggle to perceive the negative can help provide respite for those who see life's problems all too clearly. And maybe my dearth of creativity can allow others free rein to pursue their own visions. There's also a fair chance I might just be tone-deaf and annoying. If

that's the case, please set me straight. I will eventually be grateful. Even if it stings in the moment, I won't be able to stop myself from turning it into a learning experience, and thus a positive.

References

Druckman, J. N., & Sharrow, E. A. (2023). *Equality unfulfilled: How Title IX's policy design undermines change to college sports*. Cambridge University Press.

Lord, P., & Miller, C. (Directors). (2014). *The LEGO Movie* [Film]. Warner Animation Group.

3. Refuge we write…Continued Critical Imagination and Autobiography

Debris liquid gut/
sliced open/
Reaching to sop up that which spills./

Community/
shackled to each other's heart,/
breathing life,/
liberation./
The embodiment of mind, body, and spirit./
Chronicles of refuge/
we write.

Dangling Over the Cliff: Thinking Differently, Critical Imagination, and Foundations of Education

Brian D. Schultz
Miami University
brian.schultz@miamioh.edu

Recently, the Society of Professors of Education (SPE) convened a session at the 2023 American Educational Studies Association annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. Those who participated were prompted by the session title: *Critical Imagination on the Edges in our Lives: Foundations of Our Education*. Various scholars from the SPE leadership contemplated and interpreted their theorizing about critical imagination, educational foundations, and how this impacts their lives. For instance, Bill Schubert, whose ideas about the "theory within" him (1982, p. 8) inspired this session, shared his stories about his lived experiences in the educational foundations and curriculum studies fields. In a genuine series of questions emblematic of Schubertian thought, he asked:

> *How did imagining become central to my education? What are its foundations? When did my imagining emerge and evolve? Why and how did it become centered around the personal, the emerging theory within me? How does it speak to the edges of our being and becoming?*

It is these questions and others that made for an enriching, if not eclectic, session where other SPE members shared their ideas. Similar to Schubert, colleague Asilia Franklin-Phipps discussed her experiences growing up and how her race and positionality informed her education. Seungho Moon drew from his inspirations on creativity and imagination prompted by his mentor, Maxine Greene. Others, too, contemplated how the foundations of education have helped to shape their lives and imaginations, including: Isabel Nuñez, Rob Helfenbein, Mary Kay Delaney, Kelly Vaughan, and more, each contributing their own lived experience to the session. All of the participants who attended engaged in lively deliberation about how we position ourselves within the foundations of education—just as Schubert intended in his suggestions of the session title.

Whereas it was my intent to merely facilitate the session as the society's current president, I, too, have theorized on this topic and was motivated to contribute to the discussion as others shared their ideas, perspectives, and thoughts. What follows is my reaction to colleagues' treatises on an imperative for professors of education: understanding, making meaning, and theorizing about how we engage in our work and to what ends. What follows is part of what I shared, which weaves itself into additional threads of my theorizing.

≈≈≈

What really strikes me is the word "edges" in the session title. What and how others spoke to the edges of their work and their lives encourages me to ponder and wonder about how I think about the edges related to both my own educational journey and my current work. I have theorized about edges, at least in my professional life quite a bit, particularly as it relates to challenging, encouraging, and making spaces and opportunities for students with whom I have worked. The form the edges take make me think about comfort zones—particularly for my students. I have long thought about how to push students to the cusp of their comfort zones, and stretch their minds in a positive capacity. To further their understanding of their own imagining that is emerging within them, and the edges that may have impact on their own being.

This comes from a chapter of my life when I was literally challenged, and pushed other individuals, onto the edges, in the context of rock climbing. This desire to get people to think about their comfort zones and bring in catalysts to prompt different ways of thinking did not happen by chance. When I was working on my master's degree, I was captivated by theories and practices of experiential education, with a particular focus on adventure programming. I had been working with group dynamics, on ropes courses, and then transitioned into more technical aspects related to adventure education. Rock climbing, backpacking, caving, and paddling become central to how I was thinking about education.

I want to focus on the rock climbing for a moment. I use rock climbing here in its literal but also its metaphorical sense. With rock climbing, there is the literal edge of the cliff. But also, there is the image of a cliff as a place of danger. A wonder of what might be below. A worry about what could happen. A caution, and a hesitation, in the name of safety. And, possibility of something beyond.

More than 25 years ago, I took a college course that significantly impacted my interpretation of curriculum henceforth. The class was based on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of flow. Aptly titled "Skills and Challenges," the class used rock climbing, caving, and expeditions as the centerpiece for students to discover their skills and challenges in an adventure-based medium. Leaning on Csikszentmihalyi, the goal of the course was to do, to act, and to reflect so as to learn what flow meant for each student individually in the varying contexts and activities. When, if plotted on an x and y axis, a student's skills and challenges intersected, there was the opportunity to create an optimal experience. Given this premise, "finding flow" is when a person has the requisite skills to meet the challenge at hand. When in flow, people describe feelings of deep pleasure, problems subside, time is not tracked as they become immersed in the task or activity. Think of an athlete being "in the zone" or a performer being "on fire" where everything is working in sync, and great results achieved.

The course itself was entirely field based. There was no classroom. We were outside—outside the confines of the schoolhouse. We were not learning about, but we were doing. Literally rock climbing, backpacking, caving. This was my first foray into rock climbing. We were at a rock site to top rope, a way of beginner climbing where a rope was fixed to the top of a face and the belayer was on the same level as where the climber started their route. It was supposed to be easy. Most everyone in the group was a novice so the challenge was large and most had limited skills. The novelty of the activity resulted in my struggle to get up the face. I had acquired some aptitude prior; I had been successful in a rock-climbing gym. However, in this authentic space outdoors, I couldn't do it. I hit a barrier. I tried and tried again—until my thumbs hurt. The struggle was real. I was defeated, recognizing the literal obstacle to my pursuit of the goal as I attempted various ways to move myself up. I lacked the skills and the challenge was too steep with my limited experience to achieve flow.

I recognized the application of a "real life" barrier and the obvious impact for other learning contexts. Although that first time felt like a failure on the rock, it challenged me to not only pursue, but also to persevere. I was determined. I stepped away from that experience initially defeated, but eager to practice so that I could find flow with rock climbing. My pursuits eventually allowed me to transition into leading rock climbing and other outdoor pursuits, and even a short summer stint as an Outward Bound instructor in North Carolina.

My enthusiasm for experiential learning via rock climbing introduced me to how adventure programming can be a formidable pedagogical tool. Not only did I and others need to have intentional focus, we also had to have ingenuity and problem-solving skills to find "success." Taking people out of their "normal" or "usual" experiences into unique ones was an impetus to think differently and leverage or develop skills

many did not realize they had or could have. Much like I learned myself, the deep potential of the experiential instigated my theorizing. But, it challenged me to contemplate about what "success" was:

> *Was success making it to the top of a route? Or, was success challenging oneself to go beyond what had been accomplished before? Was it challenging perceived limits? Was the product, in this case reaching the top of a route, more or less important than the process of figuring the challenge out and the pursuit? Was completing the climb more important than the ideas and skills learned along the way? Could an accomplishment be "in the making?" How was the struggle, the messiness, and the complicatedness of an experience valuable?*

Even though I was not aware of it at the time, others were making a similar argument about "the power of rock climbing" as a "perfect metaphor for work and life" (Muoio, 2000, p. 162).

While working on this short piece, I came across an old article I saved during my initial interest in finding flow. The ideas were revelatory. In the piece, Mike Donahue, an experienced mountaineer who taught others to climb via his Colorado Mountain School, argued:

> *Climbing is an ongoing process of making decisions and moving forward. One of the easiest ways to change is simply to alter your position—to focus on the one-inch square in front of you and put one foot in front of the other. But to go forward—on a cliff, on a project, or in your career—you sometimes first have to take a step sideways, or even a step back.* (Donahue in Muoio, 2000, p. 162)

The experiential learning associated with this has stayed with me. It has prompted me to think about how the attributes related to adventure programming and technical rock-climbing skills can be transferred to classrooms.

How can we do this kind of work within our roles as professors of education? How could I take my experiences from the outdoor pursuits and fit them into a "traditional" classroom? Those familiar with my work know of the emergent curriculum I experienced alongside fifth-grade students in a school serving a Chicago housing project community. As the students and I embarked on a curriculum that was meaningful to the students' lives and responsive to their questions, we faced a proverbial uphill climb. While identifying and working to solve a problem they identified, they worked to overcome barriers, navigate obstacles, and challenge the status quo.

Taking that initial rock-climbing experience coupled with my teaching experiences, I have wanted to figure how best to engage others, particularly future teachers and colleagues, in such pedagogical experiences. There are myriad ways that this can occur beyond expeditions: readings, discussions, debates, activities, and inviting outside speakers into our spaces has the potential to act as adventure. This last idea, of bringing speakers in, has seemed to be a successful way to challenge the assumptions of students and colleagues alike. It is not a radical or new idea, but one with pedagogical intention. Bringing both notable and powerful speakers in to a space can impact participants' thinking–challenging them to think differently–and to prompt them to be agentic. Assumptions get disrupted. Participants experience discomfort. They grapple with "troublesome knowledge" (Meyer & Land, 2005, p. 373). The provocative speakers in which they engage become the catalyst, the change agent for thinking differently and seeing ideas and practices from a reworked vantage point. It makes them alter their position. View the content from another angle.

There is something inherently powerful about having those that do not have a direct stake in a course or in a department bring their ideas forward to challenge, disrupt, corroborate, and wonder with others—then have the luxury of leaving. Their visits can act as prompts—as ways to start or complicate a conversation. When I served as Chair of the Department of Teaching,

Curriculum & Educational Inquiry at Miami University, together with colleagues we brought in an array of scholars to instigate and provoke dialogue. Some of the scholars included Sonia Nieto, Chris Emdin, Julio Cammarota, Chezare Warren, Rich Milner, Bettina Love, among others. Oftentimes the faculty and students read the particular professor of education's work in advance in order to have a shared starting point for engagement. Intentionally, we often would share our own "aspirational threshold concepts" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2019, p. 31; TCE, n.d.) with the guest speaker in advance so that they can know where we are coming from, understand the anchor ideas we all shared, learn about our collective commitment to justice and equity, and in turn be ready to challenge us to make good on and work to realize the vision we have articulated for ourselves.

I have observed that there is a certain kind of person that is most successful when visiting. These are critical authors—people engaged in professional development and scholarship—who push students (and faculty, too) to the edges of the comfort zone. They dangle them over the edges, but importantly when they push them towards that so-called cliff, they have a really firm grip on their ankles. They are conscious to not cause panic, fear, or increase anxiety—too much. Such speakers are aware that nudging too far would cause too much angst: Participants inevitably would tune out, dismiss, or simply reject the new ideas. I find this ability to be a distinct talent—to dangle over the cliff but not let go—a competency that not everyone has. The giftedness is in that firm grim, such speakers have the ability to push while being cognizant to pull them back. Their goals are clear: challenge and disrupt, but not overwhelm or create an absolute disconnect.

Of course, there are speakers or writings that will push someone over the cliff, over the edge. Those with the foresight to see that it is not productive, know that it would be particularly hard to bring those individuals back if they have pushed too far, perhaps for a sustained period of time. Some call this "the danger zone," when a person is so far out of their comfort zone they go beyond the "optimal learning zone" (Lancaster, Nudurupati, & Anbar, 2023, para. 9-11) and likely miss the entire intention. Instead, those gifted speakers want to see a progression in participants' learning, thinking, being, and doing particularly with how they see themselves and see their future students.

Indeed, these speakers want their audience to think differently. Whereas bringing in a speaker is clearly not the same as going on an expedition, I believe some similar results can be achieved if the prompting is just right. In this way, the speakers are doing what expeditionary learning expert, Rolf Smith (in Muoio, 2000), argues can "push people out of their stupid zone—a place of mental and physical normalcy—so that they can start to think differently, explore what they don't know, and discover answers to mission-critical problems" (p. 152).

What could be more "mission critical" to teacher educators and future teachers than learning to disrupt and rethink a broken system that does not serve young people very well? How can we collectively dangle such ideas over the cliff's edge to improve educational foundations, prompt thinking differently, and encourage critical imagination? We must continue in our pursuit to identify the lived experiences of future educators to further their imaginings and their abilities to dangle over the "edge of the cliff." A relentless search to identify the intersection of skills and challenges within the individual to facilitate capacity development.

References

Adler-Kassner, & Wardle, E. (2020). *(Re)Considering what we know: Learning thresholds in writing, composition, rhetoric, and literacy*. Utah State University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optional experience*. HarperPerennial.

Lancaster, M. E., Nudurupati, A., & Anbar, R.D. (2023, December 9). Why stepping outside your comfort zone promotes learning. *Psychology Today*.Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/understanding-hypnosis/202312/why-stepping-outside-your-comfort-zone-promotes-learning

Meyer, J. H. F., & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education, 49*(3), 373-388.

Muoio, A. (2000, January/February). Idea summit. *Fast Company*, 152-164.

Schubert, W. H. (1982). Teacher education as theory development. *Educational Considerations, 9*(2), 8-13.

TCE (n.d.). *Mission and vision*. Department Teaching, Curriculum, and Educational Inquiry, Miami University. Retrieved from https://miamioh.edu/ehs/departments/teaching-curriculum/about/mission-vision-concepts.html

Dissertation Mentoring and the Development of a Critical Scholarly Imagination

Susan R. Adams
Butler University
sradams@butler.edu

At the 2023 American Educational Studies Association (AESA) conference in Louisville, KY, I was fortunate to step into a compelling session. I had not had time to carefully preview the session agenda, so I was looking for a room I could slip into without causing a disturbance. Instead of sliding into an inconspicuous chair in the back of a room, I found myself in a small conference room with scholars seated at a small table. Unbeknownst to me, I had stumbled into the Society of Professors of Education Business Meeting. I was welcomed graciously and listened with interest because rather than conducting typical "business", the meeting featured scholars reading papers on the topic of "Critical Imagination on the Edges in Our Lives".

It was one of those paper sessions in which a group of interesting people come ready to share theoretical papers, but they have not communicated much with each other during the months preceding the session. Without any articulated plan that I could discern, several of the papers included warm and moving homages to specific dissertation chairs and scholarly mentors. And these scholars were definitely naming names. Serendipitously, in that intimate conference room, an important mentor of mine was poised to read his own paper. His paper included references to his own scholarly mentors and his deep respect for their contributions to the field and to his own scholarly life.

It was deeply inspiring to hear stories of being challenged, supported, and befriended by these rock stars of the curriculum world. And I recognized many of the mentor names being dropped. As I listened, I naturally reflected on the scholars and mentors featured on my own scholarly Mount Rushmore. And as I am wont to do, I reached for some paper and jotted notes to myself as I made connections to the stories swirling in the room and in my imagination. This thought piece is my attempt at unraveling and articulating the complexity of the mentoring relationship as I experienced it with my own dissertation director, Rob Helfenbein.

Rob Helfenbein and I met when he was a faculty member at IUPUI in Indianapolis. He taught my cohort's qualitative research class and while we all enjoyed the experience, I like to say that the class "lit me up" every Monday evening. My cohort buddies took great delight in my exuberance and I did not care at all. I loved the give and take, the verbal sparring, and the imaginative approach to conducting ethical teacher research in K-12 communities that Rob was working on. The work was challenging, but it was also energizing. The assignments and discussions offered me the earliest glimpse of who I might become as a scholar and I was delighted by the discoveries which unfolded for me before, during, and after class each week. My cohort mates teased me unmercifully for my undignified exuberance but I refused to allow them to spoil the excitement of my learning.

Early in the process of assembling my dissertation committee, I met with Rob to describe the earliest framework of my research study. He immediately grasped my goals, gave me some vocabulary terms that better described what I was trying to accomplish, and made himself available as a committee member. His enthusiasm in my project was energizing. This initial conversation was just the beginning of a long, fruitful, and challenging relationship resulting not only in successful completion of my

dissertation, but also, inadvertently, an induction into scholarly mentoring.

To my knowledge, there is no official curriculum of dissertation mentoring, and if there is, Rob and I were certainly not studying it. Instead, our years of meetings to discuss my progress were opportunities for Rob to offer glimpses into his own scholarly life. He did this by telling his own dissertation stories and describing his relationship with his own mentor, Dr. George Noblit, who was a key character in the shaping of Rob's scholarly identity. In many ways, George participated actively, if indirectly, in my experience and solidly remains in my imagination as the epitome of great scholarly mentoring. I like to envision myself as part of his legacy and I am fortunate to have had the chance to tell George about his influence on me and to let him know how important his protege is in my life.

I am always honored when Rob encourages one of his master's or doctoral students to connect with me and I love to hear that he often tells them stories about our dissertation journey in his classes. I deeply enjoy forming these new relationships across geography, generation, and disciplines. The beginnings of their adventures always return me in imagination to my own early days and to appreciate once again the deep learning of the dissertation experience and its accompanying relationships. I am moved to be a continuation of George's mentoring legacy.

Rob and I have presented and published about our dissertation relationship (Adams & Helfenbein, 2016) which was a cathartic opportunity for both of us to work through the traumas visited upon us during the defense process. Rob and I have talked from time to time about what I am learning from our relationship as I learned to be a thesis advisor to undergraduate honors students and master's thesis students in my current institution. It is worth noting that little or no attention seems to be paid in higher education when one is assigned to mentor a thesis or dissertation. Perhaps it is assumed that we have all been through the experience and have absorbed the practices by osmosis. I have often wondered why there is so little discussion about mentoring in my own institution and when I am gathered with scholars at academic conferences. But when there is conversation about it, the topics tend toward the painful or the hilarious rather than describing the elements of best practice for thesis and dissertation advising.

When I rather suddenly took on the mentoring of my first thesis student, I found myself relying heavily on what I had learned from Rob. Revisiting our many conversations in my memory allowed me to distill some important mentoring pillars I have found effective as I develop my own mentoring practices. Here I will name and unpack the principles, practices, and approaches which I have identified and have tried on as I have stepped into mentoring other new scholars.

Listen and affirm good questions.

In addition to reading the papers I wrote for his class, Rob made himself available in person and by email to give feedback, ask clarifying questions, and confirm for me that I was heading in a fruitful direction. When a few others expressed skepticism about my ability to design a study in which I worked *with* teachers while also studying them, Rob believed it was possible to do with integrity. He also helped me see some avenues for pursuing my goals by employing research methods which aligned with my critical feminist perspectives. He was the first person to assure me that my idea had merit.

Generate trust and vulnerability by being vulnerable yourself.

In our earliest dissertation conversations, Rob generously shared stories of his own dissertation experiences. He affirmed my own nerves and uncertainties by describing what it was like to defend his proposal and his dissertation. There were times he laughed and claimed the whole dissertation process is composed of medieval rituals of torture and humiliation, and that no one gets through without getting a bit singed.

Through his stories, I better understood that so much of what is hard about scholarly pursuits is the head game you are playing with yourself in order to tackle such a huge undertaking. I trusted him because he trusted me with some of his own fragilities.

Don't hover.

It was Rob who urged me to write conference proposals and to connect with other scholars at academic conferences. If we were at the same conference, he often made introductions to people he respected and who he believed I would benefit from knowing. But he did not micromanage our conversations and trusted I was capable of navigating those spaces independently.

Don't explain too much.

One of the interesting parts of our working relationship is that we come from different disciplines. My background is in language education and Rob's discipline was social studies and curriculum and instruction. I situated my study under a curriculum studies umbrella, but pulled some culture and social aspects from my language education major. There were times when I had some catching up to do in order to understand the curriculum world. Rob would point me toward authors or invite me to join a book study, but doing the work was my job. I was motivated to be an active contributor in the book study conversations and enjoyed the challenge of stretching myself into the unfamiliar. Rob taught me to refrain from taking on those responsibilities which are best left to the learner.

Let the student be your teacher.

Because our backgrounds are different, and because I was still directly connected to practicing secondary teachers, Rob often asked my opinion about issues bubbling in local K-12 schools. He respected my knowledge of the landscape and my experiences with supporting English language learners and their teachers. He also allowed me to share elements of my theoretical framework that were unfamiliar to him. This reciprocity brought some balance to the power in our relationship and was a big confidence booster to me.

Protect when necessary, but let the student take the lead.

There were times during my dissertation years when other committee members voiced concerns or questioned my readiness for the next step in the process. I understood that my committee members had their own working relationships, and because I was already teaching on the faculty of a nearby university, I also understood that faculty members do not always see eye to eye on seemingly small decisions like which theoretical frameworks are permissible, how the manuscript should be organized, or even how many chapters a dissertation should have. Each member in their own way wanted the best for me, but they did not always agree on what the best thing would be. And they also had their own discipline-specific perspectives they believed were relevant and applicable. Rob, as the member working with me most closely, became the point person who communicated with everyone else. He served as an important bridge between all of us but when hard moments arrived, he allowed me to speak for myself and to stand my ground when necessary. Watching him balance these demands was instructive to me in my own academic mentoring roles and has provided me with guidance in several sticky situations with my own graduate students.

The mentoring relationship is intimate, but it also has boundaries.

There is a great deal that Rob and I know about each other. And conversely, there are whole aspects of our lives that are completely unknown to each of us. We are aware of some of the big details in each other's life, but we do not get into it much beyond expressing care or concern when life is difficult for the other. We know a lot about our values, ethics, and perspectives. We share some values and diverge in others. We respect each other, keep track of each other

professionally, and are always delighted to have a chance to reconnect in person at a conference. We have standing to ask questions about our work, to celebrate each other's successes, and to exchange a knowing glance across a conference room when someone says something ridiculous. But our social and personal lives rarely intersect and that is fine with us. I have experienced similar parallels in my own thesis advising. There is deep love, a sense of the honor of being trusted with this responsibility, and a commitment to working toward the student's success, but the relationship does not extend much beyond the walls of my office.

Remember that the student *chose you* as the mentor.

In most cases, graduate students have some freedom to select faculty members they believe will bring all the necessary knowledge and skills to the effort of producing a brand new thesis or dissertation. In my case, I had to choose faculty members in my language education discipline, but because of my positive connections with Rob from the qualitative research class, I felt strongly that he needed to be the person with whom I worked most closely. I did some perusing of the guidelines and discovered that the position of dissertation director could be filled by someone outside the department with the permission of my chair. I made a case for Rob filling this role and my chair agreed after having her own conversation with him about it. When my master's thesis students approach me to ask me to serve as their advisor, I always take those requests seriously and understand the magnitude of the request. I chose Rob because he saw something in me that resonated with him and he was as interested in my project as I was. That was very compelling to me given the fact that mentoring a thesis or a dissertation brings few tangible rewards to the advisor.

Connecting to Critical Scholarly Imagination

My dissertation journey with Rob as my mentor not only resulted in the successful defense and publication of the manuscript, but it also opened up new scholarly avenues for me to consider as I emerged as a fledgling researcher. I sometimes accompanied Rob to hear him speak in our community. He also nudged me toward organizations and conferences he believed might interest me. Unlike others, he did not chide me for failing to narrow my research interests but encouraged me to explore scholarly spaces in which several of my interests converged. We called this exploration "finding my people" and I followed my curiosity wherever it went. I will never be the sort of scholar who is a big expert in a small field of study. Some days I see the wisdom of that approach and wish I could do that, but it is just not who I am. Instead I choose to look for ways to make my scholarship relevant in unexpected places and enjoy the challenge of stretching myself to make a contribution in my own unique way. There is a deeply critical aspect to my scholarly imagination that dates back to my earliest conversations with Rob in which we debated issues, sought meaningful ways to bring theory to practice, and interrogated inequitable systems within and beyond the academy. Rob's modeling provided a curriculum of mentoring, granting me the freedom to distill his wisdom and to imagine my own identity as a scholarly mentor. Now I hope to pay it forward

.

References

Adams, S.R. and Helfenbein, R.J. (2016). What we talk about when we talk about love: A duoethnographic exploration of the dissertation relationship. *Interdisciplinary reflective practice through duoethnography: Examples for educators.* J. Norris and R. Sawyers, (Eds.). Palgrave McMillan.

Transformative Disruption: Faculty Perspectives on Teaching in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange

Barbara Junisbai
Pitzer College
barbara_junisbai@pitzer.edu

Reggie Bullock
Pitzer College
reggie_bullock@pitzer.edu

Brian Charest
University of Redlands
Brian_Charest@redlands.edu

Introduction

In fall 2023, Pell grants became widely available to incarcerated students for the first time since 1994.[3] This dramatic shift in policy is but one part of a broader resurgence in prison education and reentry programming. More and more college courses are being offered in carceral facilities across the U.S, whether as volunteer or credit-bearing programs. At several public universities, wrap-around support helps formerly incarcerated students, some of whom began their college journey on the "inside," navigate opaque structures, access resources, and strengthen community. System-impacted folks, their families, communities, allies, and advocates are at the vanguard of these developments, pushing for reform at the local, state, and federal levels.[4]

At this pivotal juncture, our team—an alumnus who completed his BA while incarcerated and two instructors who have taught in prison classrooms since 2018—decided to take a reflective pause and invite faculty colleagues to share their experiences around the meaning and import of prison education. *How might one's self-conception as a teacher, and one's understanding of what is possible in the classroom, be shaped by this unique experience?* The 14 instructors with whom we spoke have all taught at least one course in a medium-security men's facility through the Inside-Out Prison Exchange. Their courses bring "outside" (non-incarcerated) students and "inside" (currently incarcerated) students together in a prison classroom as peers in the learning process. All 14 faculty are employed by a collection of colleges and universities located in the Inland Empire, a region extending across San Bernardino and Riverside Counties that is deeply embedded in southern California's military-industrial complex. All conversations took place in the spring and summer of 2022 over Zoom.[5]

Our work builds upon a growing body of research on the impacts of prison education, which tends to focus on the benefits to students who take courses inside. Multiple case studies and a smaller number of larger-scale analyses point to a host of interconnected gains for students who are incarcerated. They are more likely to experience gains in work-related skills, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and interpersonal communication and generally experience lower

[3] For more information, see https://www.vera.org/news/after-30-years-the-first-program-to-offer-pell-grants-to-incarcerated-students-has-launched and https://www.bop.gov/resources/news/20230712_pell_grant.jsp.

[4] We acknowledge that prison education remains a complex and politicized subject. Should prisoners, who have committed petty to atrocious crimes be availed an education, let alone a secondary education? Those who are against ask, who is paying for the high cost of college, and why should incarcerated individuals be offered a higher education when law-abiding citizens and their children do not get a free ride? Contrary arguments are also made. Why shouldn't incarcerated individuals be given an opportunity to pursue their potential and find a place in academia, in order to give back to their communities upon release? Unlike the cost to taxpayers for housing, feeding, and clothing the incarcerated, investments in higher education offer documented returns to the individual and to society, so why not use public funds to further the public good? While we do not contribute directly to this debate, research shows the tangible impacts of offering college courses inside prisons; our research further documents how teaching inside shapes not only students, but faculty, as well.

[5] See Appendix A for a description of participant selection and data coding.

recidivism rates than the general prison population (Allred, Harrison and O'Connell, 2013; Bozick et al., 2018; Davis 2019; Davis et al., 2014; Delaney, Subramanian and Patrick, 2019; Mukamal, Silbert and Taylor, 2015). College courses foster affective and human development, helping shape what students value and how they engage with the world (Spellberg, 2019; Werts, 2013). These outcomes are especially well documented in the research on the Inside-Out Prison Exchange. Inside and outside students experience transformations in their conception of self and the other, as well as more nuanced views on incarceration and criminal justice (Conti, Morrison and Pantaleo, 2013; Inderbitzen, 2015; Martinovic, Liddell and Muldoon, 2018; Pollack, 2016; Wyant & Lockwood, 2018). In addition, students' understanding of the value and purpose of education is deepened, as is their sense of agency as political and institutional change-makers (Fouché & Guillermo, 2021; Hicks-Peterson, 2018; Hilinski-Rosick & Blackmer, 2014; Pompa, 2013; Sokoloff, 2014).

Much of the data on prison education and student development comes from the faculty who teach them. We were curious about the ways that teaching and learning inside impact not only students but educators, as well. In our view, faculty perspectives are vital. Their expertise and mentorship have a significant influence student aspirations and achievement. In addition, teaching inside gives faculty firsthand knowledge of the specific needs of incarcerated students, especially given institutional and logistical barriers to quality education. As members of academic and policy circles, professors are in a strong position to influence decision-makers, provide evidence-based critiques of and best practices in prison education, as well as offer a more holistic understanding of the pitfalls and promise of collaborating with the carceral state. Querying faculty perspectives, in other words, recognizes their essential role as change agents and advocates for expanding educational access.

Building on a growing body of literature on prison education, and in particular the Inside-Out model of prison education, our conversations with faculty colleagues uncovered *transgressive teaching that intentionally disrupts prevailing educational practices in the academy*. In this article, we draw on the insights that Inside-Out instructors shared with us to theorize *how and why* transgression and disruption emerge in the Inside-Out classroom. We also question whether these dynamics can be replicated in traditional college courses, even when faculty embrace those very same pedagogies. We conclude by acknowledging a serious reservation that several of our participants raise: In contrast to the multiple transformative disruptions within the classroom, its effects beyond the classroom appear uncertain. The paradox of disruption and non-disruption is worthy of focused analysis and will be taken up in greater detail in a subsequent piece. Here, our framework is one of dialogic, appreciative inquiry, teasing out the aspects of the Inside-Out model of prison education that faculty find generative and inspirational (Bushe, 2011).

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

A distinctive form of prison education, the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program has for the past 25 years brought together "inside" and "outside" students in prison classrooms across the United States.[6] Inside-Out seeks to "create opportunities for people inside and outside of prison to have transformative learning experiences that emphasize collaboration and dialogue, inviting them to take leadership in addressing vital issues [and] social justice goals" (Inside-Out Center, n.d.). Faculty who teach Inside-Out courses must participate in an intensive weeklong pedagogical institute, which is facilitated, in part, by incarcerated students who

[6] Inside-Out courses are also taught in the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Canada.

have completed courses in the program. Professors come together inside prisons to learn with and from incarcerated students and each other about alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing in the classroom.[7]

Drawing from a long tradition of transgressive pedagogies, the Inside-Out training provides professors with a framework for resisting systems of domination and oppression that too often dehumanize students, dull the learning process, and limit education's capacity to inspire political and social action.[8] While not new, the Inside-Out model of teaching and learning is engaged and humanistic, urging faculty to "have the courage to *transgress* those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning" (hooks 1994, p. 13, emphasis added). In transgressive classrooms, professors cannot simply lecture at or ask students to share about their lives and cultures; they must create spaces where they, too, are willing to relinquish control and be vulnerable (hooks, 1994). Teaching in prison, where the structures and forces of the carceral state are on full display, the need for such pedagogies is even greater.

Inside-Out offers an opportunity for faculty to intentionally co-create a space for course content and the diverse life experiences of students to jointly inform learning, which is another key component of transgressive education. The seating arrangement, alternating inside and outside students in a discussion circle; the use of icebreakers throughout the semester; and the conception of every participant (including the professor) as teacher-student and student-teacher, are hallmarks of the Inside-Out pedagogy. Together, these elements help build trust, facilitate dialog, and upend the "banking model" of education (Freire, 1970) in pursuit of a non-hierarchical learning space where all voices and contributions are valued, and no one is more central or more authoritative than another (Pompa, 2013). Structural divides and individual differences, such as race, class, and gender, do not disappear in the Inside-Out classroom. Rather, they become the foundation for participants to gain new insights and understandings not possible in more homogenous learning spaces.

As a professor who has taught in and written about the program explains, "Inside-Out aims to make the same diversity that creates social barriers into a rich fund for developing wisdom, insight, and a sense of human connection" (Maclaren, 2015, p. 86). Everyone is invited to "approach ourselves as works-in-progress … incomplete and provisional" (Ayers, 2002, p. 85), while simultaneously "…open[ing] our eyes to our shared humanity, to challenge orthodoxy (especially our own dogma and received thinking), and to engage our world more freely and fully, with both imagination and hope" (p. 82). Although much of this may sound like standard fare for progressive pedagogues, the main difference here is how teaching inside a prison underscores the need for and brings into sharp relief the value and efficacy of transgressive practices. This sharpening up of what matters in the classroom happens in ways, we contend, that are difficult to reproduce in more traditional educational settings.

Our Project

Consistent with the Inside-Out learning model, we designed our qualitative research project as a dialogic vehicle for "drawing forth … the best in those gathered: the best ideas, the best critical thinking and, frankly, the best of what it means to be a human being" (Pompa, 2013, p. 23). Rather

[7] Traditionally, trainings were in person and partially held in prisons; more recently, Inside-Out institutes have been offered online due concerns related to Covid 19, with formerly incarcerated Inside-Out students serving as facilitators.

[8] Transgressive lineages include feminist, liberatory, critical, and resistance pedagogies. See, for example: Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2020; hooks, 2014; and McClaren, 2017.

than a narrowing or confining approach, we opted for an appreciative composite that acknowledges lived wisdom, social complexity, and human contradiction (Biesta, 2009). Our research was guided by three objectives. First, we were genuinely curious to know, how does transgressive teaching and learning manifest in the Inside-Out classroom, and how does that experience shape Inside-Out faculty, if at all? Rather than testing a set of pre-generated hypotheses, we chose open-ended questions that encouraged faculty reflection and in-the-moment sense-making.[9] Rather than directing the conversation, we invited participants to highlight whatever aspects of teaching they considered relevant, without being limited to pre-determined options. We wanted participants to have the opportunity to contextualize their responses and to share, as they wished, nuanced, complex views on a nuanced, complex topic. Additionally, the use of open-ended questions lent our study flexibility to capture unexpected and emergent themes which we might not have anticipated in the design phase (Emerson et al., 2011; Rapley, 2001; Roberts, 2020).

Second, our research was driven by a desire to slow down, reconnect, and meaningfully engage during a global pandemic, a time of overwork, burnout, and disconnect for many of us. Every participant in our study is someone with whom we have worked, taught alongside, participated in Inside-Out trainings, and/or have taken Inside-Out courses. Our research team consists of an alumnus of one of the institutions in our study, a formerly incarcerated individual who took multiple Inside-Out courses over several years, plus two tenured professors at two of the institutions in our study and who regularly teach Inside-Out courses.[10] We are thus intimately familiar with the Inside-Out pedagogy and familiar, to varying degrees, with the 14 faculty participants. In recognition of the ongoing obligations (teaching, research, service) that structure our colleagues' busy lives, we were sure to respect their limited availability; hence, our intention to connect was tempered by the fact that time is a precious commodity for academics. Reliance upon open-ended questions helped foster a sense of conversation to generate faculty interest, ownership, engagement in our research process.

Third, creating a safe space for reflection, we hoped, would be of intrinsic value to our colleagues as they, in dialog with us, articulated what Inside-Out means to them. As research shows, self-reflective exercises are critical to internalization of knowledge, metacognition, and life-long learning (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 2000; Lang, 2016; Zull, 2002). Finally, our analysis of faculty reflections contributes to conversations, both scholarly/ theoretical and developmental/ applied, about how high impact educational practices like Inside-Out shape the arc of faculty development. Faculty growth and learning benefit student growth and learning (Hicks-Peterson, 2018).

Self-reported data in Tables 1 through 3, found on page 82, indicate that most faculty in our study (11 or 79%) were tenured when they first taught Inside-Out. Half had been at their current institution for a decade or less; of these, most began teaching in the program within their first five years on the job.[11] At the other end of the spectrum, several professors came to Inside-Out as senior colleagues who had been at their institution for more than 15 years. A variety of disciplines are represented, with the largest number (5 or 36%) in the social sciences, followed by the humanities (4 or 29%), interdisciplinary fields (3 or 21%), and science

[9] See Appendix B for the list of questions we posed to faculty participants.

[10] To learn more about us and how our backgrounds influence our work, please see our individual positionality statements in Appendix C.

[11] Indeed, two respondents expressed that Inside-Out offerings were one of the reasons why they decided to take positions at their particular institution.

and math (2 or 14%). Half of the 14 are faculty of color, another four (or 29%) are the first in their family to go to college, and two (or 7%) self-identify as LGBTQIA+. Eight (or 57%) self-identify as women, and six (or 43%) self-identify as men. Most (9 or 64%) were actively involved with justice- or prison-related education, social movements, campaigns, and/or organizations prior to teaching Inside-Out, and almost half are personally affected by the carceral state or have loved ones/family members who are system-impacted.

Inside-Out and Transformative Disruption

A key, cross-cutting theme found throughout our conversations is a keen appreciation for the transformative disruptions that emerge when teaching Inside-Out. While only one colleague referred directly to "disruption" and "to disrupt" while describing their experience,[12] in their own words and using different examples, everyone with whom we conversed connected Inside-Out to the upending of dominant, inherited ways of teaching and learning typically encountered in the academy. After a careful process of coding and recoding the transcripts, followed by discussion and further refinement, we settled on the notion of transformative disruption to encapsulate this shared value and the transgressive pedagogical practices that embody it. Our conversations with faculty illuminate, in detail, what transgression looks and feels like, as practiced in the Inside-Out classroom.

Drawing from the narratives generously shared by the 14 instructors, we highlight the following features that differentiate Inside-Out courses from business-as-usual teaching and learning. Transformative disruptions include: 1) centering diverse human experience in ways that deepen connections to course content and 2) the creation of a vibrant, vulnerable classroom community. Underlying these disruptions is a third: the spatial and emotional unmooring of all participants, faculty and students alike. Being unmoored, or "off kilter"[13] invites the intensity of engagement, experimentation with ideas, and expansive conversations that are characteristic of the "magic"[14] of Inside-Out. Note that, as we chose and shortened specific quotes, we sought to honor, to the extent possible, the fullness of the energy and experience that our conversations opened up (Imarisha, 2016; Joelsson, 1996; Prieto, 1997).

Transformative Disruption 1: Deepened Human Connection

First and foremost, the Inside-Out classroom upends common assumptions about human value. In the "transmission model of knowledge," the professor is the focal point, the heart of the learning space around whom students orbit.[15] The centrality of the instructor holds true even if they sit among students in a discussion circle rather than standing before them at a podium.[16] In the transmission model, the professor often misrecognizes the potential that students bring to the classroom and, instead, views them as vessels into which knowledge is transferred (Freire, 1970). This form of education reproduces a hierarchical, scarcity-based environment, such that a select few—often those who have mastered the language and norms of formalized schooling—claim greater status than others.

Because Inside-Out courses take place in a prison, power, expertise, and established notions of hierarchy are intentionally upended in multiple ways. The change of venue allows for a kind of classroom reset, where everyone in the room is

[12] Interview with Inside-Out professor, June 8, 2022.
[13] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[14] The word "magic" was mentioned by several faculty participants in our study (May 2, 2022; May 9, 2022; June 13, 2022; August 2, 2022; and August 3, 2022).
[15] Interview with Inside-Out professor, June 8, 2022.
[16] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 30, 2022.

valued for what they bring and contribute, "…where everyone is a teacher… and everyone's knowledge is valued."[17] Faculty express appreciation for the program's commitment to honoring each student as a unique human being whose presence adds to the learning of others.[18] Everyone, including the professor, is interchangeably novice (in some areas) and expert (in others), creating a dynamism and fluidity that is unusual in conventional college classrooms.[19] The disruption of static notions of expert and novice begins with the week-long teaching institute, during which faculty are mentored by experienced Inside-Out facilitators, incarcerated students who design and carry out a significant portion of the curriculum.[20] In effect, faculty in training become outside students, immersed in the Inside-Out experience while simultaneously observing the pedagogy in action and imagining how their future course might play out. Embracing one's novice-ness is an essential part of being an Inside-Out instructor, beginning with the training and transferring to the classroom.

Connected to the upending of traditional conceptions of expertise and value is the importance of creating a learning space that affirms students' fundamental humanity and value. While such affirmation—what Bettina Love (2019) terms "mattering"—is important for all learners, it is of particular import for inside students and for outside students whose families and communities are system-impacted. Several faculty in our study emphasize mattering in their Inside-Out classrooms. As one colleague explains:

> [As] I am teaching … I see [my students], and I appreciate them … I honor … the roads that they have walked and will walk. I think, especially for the inside students, giving them a palpable sense of their own power in the world and their own unlimited potential…They have that already, but I think sometimes they don't see it …[21]

Another notes,

> "I have a lot of [outside] students who have been impacted by the criminal legal system… [T]hey have fathers, cousins, … who have been locked up… [And] having a professor who is outright saying people behind bars matter makes a difference.[22]

Because traditional schooling and college selectivity differentiate between who is deserving of respect and belonging, on the one hand, and who is excluded and irrelevant, on the other, mattering in the classroom is a deeply transgressive notion. The instructor sets the stage by actively decentering their authority in the classroom. Seemingly subtle changes can have significant impact, as the following faculty reflection highlights:

> It was not about me … as the expert coming in and having everyone … sit at my feet and listen to me [share] … wisdom. There was … this subtle thing of … [getting] us as instructors to sit down so we're no longer … vertically above our students, but … we're sitting at the same level … [A]ll these little things … send the message that *we are all in this together, that this is not about hierarchies and who's smarter, who has the most schooling behind them, but that we're all in this, we all have something important to say…*"[23]

Echoing Love, Inside-Out faculty replace "conditions of 'human hierarchy'" (p. 46) with conditions of human "entangle[ment]" (p. 47).

[17] Interview with Inside-Out professor, August 2, 2022.
[18] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 2, 2022.
[19] Interview with Inside-Out faculty, June 13, 2022.
[20] Interview with Inside-Out professor, June 13, 2022.
[21] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 2, 2022.
[22] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 30, 2022.
[23] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.

The Inside-Out classroom offers the structure, time, and space for participants to connect as complex human beings with inherent worth. In the words of one of our colleagues, "Inside students [shared] really deep experiences … and so did outside students, and that was a really *powerful equalizing moment when we realized that you never know what a person has walked through…*[24] Importantly, when students connect as human beings, a re-imagining of the classroom—and of society—becomes possible:

> The structural realities are … that the inside students are … in this … really dehumanizing situation and … the strengths [of Inside-Out] are tied to … recognition of that, about trying to take that away … to try … and *put people in a position where they treat each other like human beings, as opposed to … categories of … carceral figures …*[25]

The Inside-Out instructor's main role is to cultivate conditions for re-humanization and human entanglement, for students to reassess assumptions about who holds value, how we (are supposed to) interact with one another, who we (think we) are, and who we (imagine we) can be.[26] Because traditional schooling and college selectivity differentiate between who is deserving of respect and belonging, on the one hand, and who is excluded and irrelevant, on the other, mattering is a radical act. Mattering, moreover, can and should be understood as something potentially more powerful than a classroom practice. Ideally, it is transformed into a praxis of agentic re-imagination and re-creation beyond the classroom. To borrow from one colleague, Inside-Out is an enactment of the world we want to "live in."[27] Participants are not only learning together, but are:

> producing a … vision of what a participatory democracy could look like… and practicing [what] a participatory and egalitarian democracy could look like … *You're building a world in which we are throwing no one away, but everyone has full and equal value*.[28]

Transformative Disruption 2: A Vibrant Classroom Community

The bridging of lived knowledge and academic knowledge dovetails with a second theme. Our colleagues expressed surprise, first, at how vulnerable students are willing to be in an Inside-Out classroom and, second, at how vulnerability promotes strong interpersonal bonds. That a profound sense of community develops in a prison, within a few weeks into the semester, is remarkable. By "giving [students] the space to talk to each other, rather than [relying upon] the lecture-to-student, transmission model of knowledge," acknowledges one Inside-Out professor,[29] students "really can … flesh out … ideas themselves and … form a community where they talk about things beyond even just the class that eventually tie back into the class," observes another.[30] Even "…by the end of the first session," a third professor shares, "we had seen some movement, some coalescing into a class community. It took only one session; I expected it would take several weeks."[31]

What does it mean to form a classroom community? One Inside-Out faculty shares an instructive moment:

> … I really didn't know how community was going to form, but it did form, and… that was most amazing to me…just seeing how close the students got to one another [and] formed friendships. Because that's something that I don't really [see happening]

[24] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 2, 2022.
[25] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 12, 2022.
[26] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[27] Interview with Inside-Out professor, August 2, 2022.
[28] Interview with Inside-Out professor, August 2, 2022.
[29] Interview with Inside-Out professor, June 8, 2022.
[30] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[31] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 30, 2022.

> … in a traditional class. The … degree of … personal connection doesn't … come close to what you see in an Inside-Out class.[32]

A second Inside-Out instructor likewise explains, "When I teach inside-Out, there's [an] interconnectedness … And it because we spend time … cultivat[ing] that reflective component [that] we see how much more interconnected our lives get than … in a strictly outside class."[33]

While faculty may cultivate community in outside-only courses—perhaps using similar mechanisms (e.g., opening and closing circles, icebreakers, and small dialog groups)—the degree of bonding that occurs between students in Inside-Out courses is extraordinary. The following two faculty reflections depict the powerful classroom community that emerges, seemingly of its own accord, as students "connect on a deep level in a short period of time"[34]:

> It was … almost like magic watching these students come together … I've been teaching … for a long time, and I do often really try and build a sense of classroom community and have the students really support each other and be engaged in each other's learning. And I think, of all the classes I've taught, and I've been here in 19 years total, …the class that did that the best was my Inside-Out class.[35]

> Whatever stereotypes or fears [they may have] … going in, over time there is a bond that occurs, and if one of the students was missing people on the inside and vice versa wanted to know what happened. There is a kind of an empathy of caring for each other that I don't see in other classes. In regular classrooms, they are individual units, there isn't a community.[36]

As these two reflections suggest, community in Inside-Out takes on a particular meaning, one with disruptive and transformational elements. Community is about re-imagining the prison as a space for education and liberation. When inside and outside students navigate and re-imagine the classroom together, they are able to co-create a community that nurtures connection and creative inquiry and counters the dehumanization that exists in both conventional education and in the prison industrial complex. The shared act of resistance brings co-learners and co-teachers together in ways that are difficult to replicate in other contexts.

Transformative Disruption 3: Spatial and Emotional Unmooring

The Inside-Out pedagogy and the Inside-Out prison classroom, as we have documented above, are particularly effective at disrupting problematic educational practices and societal assumptions that we have inherited. In the previous last section, we discussed the seemingly spontaneous emergence of a classroom community characterized by radical vulnerability and relationship-building. Yet, faculty suggest that there is something additional at play that cannot be overlooked. Community is built within the space where Inside-Out classes take place: the prison itself (Wright & Jonson 2018). Prison thus serves as an unlikely venue for liberatory learning (Faisod Katzenstein & Frank, 2019). It is a jarring—as in startling and incongruous, but also as in unconventional and exceptional—educational experience for most professors and students, inside and outside. One of our faculty colleagues describes the prison setting as forcing participants to be "off kilter" in ways that are transformational:

> …it creates a kind of stressor that actually … reduces people's ability to … feel like they can control the situation. And so, when they don't have that sense of control, …

[32] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[33] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 17, 2022.
[34] Interview with Inside-Out professor, August 3, 2022.
[35] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[36] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 9, 2022.

> they can actually go deeper, be more open to talking about [difficult] issues [that matter]. And … they can push themselves to engage in a way that is … more active than it might be in a traditional classroom.[37]

In the paragraphs below, we delve into what being off kilter looks and feels like, as shared by our Inside-Out faculty colleagues. We use the term unmooring, which has both a spatial and emotional aspect, to depict this phenomenon. Unmooring, we argue, undergirds the two disruptive forces enumerated up to this point. We would go so far as to call it a necessary precondition for a transformative learning experience. Indeed, several faculty comment upon how being spatially and emotionally unmoored opens participants to learning from and valuing others in ways that conventional education often claims as a goal, but rarely practices.

Faculty offer insights into the power of being in a radically different learning space as key to Inside-Out's transformative potential. As one professor puts it, "one of the big things that breaks down [systems of power and domination in the classroom and on campus] is literally physically being in the space" of the prison.[38] They continue:

> … being inside and walking through the yard and seeing the individuals who are out there, you know, doing pull-ups or … hanging out with their friends, [and] recognizing that education can happen in [other] spaces that aren't … [predominantly] White, [middle- and upper-class] spaces, I think, is really important.

Another adds:

> Places and spaces are important. It puts [students] in a different mindset… That is a huge strength of the Inside-Out program: It puts us in an environment where people are feeling more. People have more emotions during an Inside-Out class than they do having a class here [lists several classrooms on campus]. And that makes content more memorable.[39]

As the above reflections relay, the prison as learning space expands both student and faculty conceptions of where learning can take place (it happens in the unlikeliest of places; it is pursued as a form of resistance; it exists outside of the Ivory Tower) and students' conception of what learning is (it is social, it is cognitive, it is affective). These disruptions to inherited understandings are reminiscent of what Kevin Kumashiro calls "learning through crisis" (2015), where students and faculty must unlearn much of what they have come to think about the university, their place within it, and who has access to it. Like students, faculty teaching inside the prison must confront a very different reality when it comes to power, control, and hierarchies. By working through conflict, discomfort, and disorientation, faculty find themselves receptive to having their beliefs and assumptions challenged in unexpected ways.

Our colleagues describe in detail how the disequilibrium of the prison classroom encourages all participants, inside and outside, to let go of fear and willingly unmask. We find this interesting because many scholars have written about how people who are incarcerated take on personas—alter egos or masks—to protect themselves while inside (Crewe et al., 2014; de Viggiani, 2012). Inside-Out instructors further note that the concept of self-protection applies to outside students in the traditional college context, as well, albeit in very different ways. In regular, on-campus outside-only, college courses, students often feel compelled to measure up to expectations that they appear, speak, and write in smart (i.e., academically

[37] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.

[38] Interview with Inside-Out professor, June 13, 2022.

[39] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 17, 2022.

trained, perfectionist) ways. The pressure to come across as polished can inhibit the development of community and authentic dialog. When students succumb to self-consciousness and classroom hierarchy, their engagement with one another suffers. They are neither actively listening and appreciating one another nor fully present with themselves and what they have to offer and receive.

The following two faculty reflections contrast the customary fear of taking risks and engaging deeply, authentically, and at times imperfectly in conventional classrooms, with the unmasking that happens in the Inside-Out classroom. According to the first,

> [I]n the [on-campus college] climate, [outside students] have to pretend to be a certain way in order to be seen as smart or talented … But when you're inside …, all that BS goes away. And you can get a little bit closer to the real student, which is beautiful…And part of that is, is also carrying some of the hurts of the students with you. It's hard to not be affected by that.[40]

The second reflection augments that understanding:

> [T]here's a lot of fear in [traditional] classrooms…And so, it can be a challenge sometimes to…talk about this…there's… sometimes a perceived homogeneity between people within a traditional classroom. And so, I've … grown worried that some of those trends have gotten worse over time, that students are more reluctant … to get too personal or to take too much of a step forward or to be very courageous and trying …to work through a problematic issue … [T]he Inside-Out pedagogy … just … explodes that in a lot of ways.[41]

Inside-Out becomes a haven of sorts, where students can unmask to be "more like themselves," even if for a brief three hours each week.[42] As one professor who teaches in the program puts it, the prison classroom "enables both sets of students [inside and outside] to let their guard down … and to … be open and experimental in how they talk about things," which "reduces … judgment against their own peers"[43]:

> [A] lot of incarcerated students …[come to the learning space without the] need to … put up fronts … They just want to [work through] the questions that they have… [T]here's an honesty to their approach…and I think that draws in the outside students to want to be more honest themselves.

The result is a higher caliber of conversation, as the following two reflections exemplify:

> I found that the students were very willing to engage in those topics [race, class, gender]…the students had no problem talking about sexuality. They were…willing to engage and have very candid conversations about what would be sensitive conversations here [at the college/on campus], but they were very willing to engage…[44]

> [I]n a … regular college classroom,…the band of people's ideology and interpretations of the world is … somewhat narrower … And one of the … surprising things…is that in an Inside-Out classroom you are radically expanding the kind of interpretive lens that people are bringing to the world…when you're having conversations about…racism or structures of inequality, the kinds of comments and answers…get expanded significantly …

[40] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[41] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[42] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[43] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.
[44] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 10, 2022.

> [it]… ends up being both [a] richer and then … more challenging…set of conversations.[45]

Finally, the disequilibrium of prison as an unlikely learning space expands student and faculty conceptions of themselves and what they are capable of in relation to and in communion with others. According to one Inside-Out professor:

> …ideally organically people are just coming together like this and saying, 'Oh, yeah, you're a real human being. You have all these desires and wants and capacities and everything that I should appreciate and respect.' But that doesn't happen so much in the real world. … And the converse also seems to be true…[T]here's not so many opportunities for incarcerated people to get into a situation where their intellectual contributions are affirmed through interactions with people who are respected as intellectual contributors…[it] gives inside students the opportunity to recognize their own capacity because they see themselves holding their own and sharing valuable kind of insights and recognitions with a class of people which they may have been disconnected from and who they may have thought themselves somehow fundamentally different from and therefore unable to interact with.[46]

Conclusion

Conversations with 14 faculty who teach in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange in a carcerally dense region of the U.S. highlight overlapping ways that the program upends conventional conceptions of college education, including what learning looks like and to what end. We have centered the present analysis on the theme of transformative disruption in the prison classroom as seen through the eyes and experience of faculty; yet, there are many themes to explore. Teaching inside is multi-faceted, complex, and complicated, and faculty have mixed feelings about their participation in the carceral state. Thus, while it is undeniable that the Inside-Out model of prison education has had palpable, positive effects on students, faculty, and classroom-level teaching and learning, we also want to examine its broader, systemic effects.

In line with our open-ended inquiry, we plan to also unpack faculty critiques of and reservations about teaching inside (Meisel, 2008; Tilton, 2021; Scott, 2013). We would be remiss if we glossed over a major abiding concern shared by several participants in our study: In contrast to the disruptive practices that Inside-Out fosters within the classroom, its effects beyond the classroom—in particular, its lasting impacts on the carceral state and on "outside" (non-incarcerated) college students—appear less clear. Two contradictory projects—education as a transgressive force and education as a tool for oppression—meet at the interstices of Inside-Out and in the most visceral of ways. The contrast between the pedagogical disruptions enumerated in this paper and frustrations with the broader phenomenon of systemic non-disruption is the focus of our next piece. As we will explain, many faculty understand pedagogical disruption and systemic non-disruption as entwined components of Inside-Out. They offer insightful observations as to why this paradox holds, suggesting pathways to channel the vibrant disruption students experience inside the classroom to the world outside.

[45] Interview with Inside-Out professor, August 2, 2022.

[46] Interview with Inside-Out professor, May 19, 2022.

References

Allred, S.L., L.D. Harrison, and D.J. O'Connell. (2013). "Self-Efficacy: An Important Aspect of Prison-Based Learning." The Prison Journal, 93(2), 211-233.

Ayers, W. (2002). "Creating the Teacher and Changing the World." In Elijah Mirochnik and Debora C. Sherman (eds.), *Passion and Pedagogy: Relation, Creation, and Transformation in Teaching.* New York: Peter Lang.

Biesta, G. (2009). "Good Education in an Age of Measurement: On the Need to Reconnect with the Question of Purpose in Education." *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21, 33–46.

Bozick, R., J. Steele, L. Davis, and S. Turner. (2018). "Does Providing Inmates with Education Improve Postrelease Outcomes? A Meta-Analysis of Correctional Education Programs in the United States." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 14(3), 389–428. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-018-9334-6.

Bransford, J.D., A.L. Brown, and R.R. Cocking (eds.). (2000). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press

Bushe, G.R. (2011). *Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Critique*. New York: Routledge.

Conti, N., L. Morrison, and K. Pantaleo. (2013). "All the Wiser: Dialogic Space, Destigmatization, and Teacher-Activist Recruitment." The Prison Journal, 93(2), 163-188.

Crewe, B., J. Warr, P. Bennett, and A. Smith. (2014). "The Emotional Geography of Prison Life." *Theoretical Criminology*, 18(1), 56–74.

de Viggiani, N. (2012). "Trying to be Something You Are Not: Masculine Performances within a Prison Setting." *Men and Masculinities*, 15(3), 271–291.

Davis, L.M. (2019). "Higher Education Programs in Prison: What We Know Now and What We Should Focus on Going Forward." Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE342.html.

Davis, L.M., J.L. Steele, R. Bozick, M.V. Williams, S. Turner, J.N.V. Miles, J. Saunders, and P.S. Steinberg. (2014). "How Effective Is Correctional Education, and Where Do We Go from Here?" Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR564.html.

Davis, L.M., and M.C. Tolbert. (2019). "Evaluation of North Carolina's Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education Program." Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2957.html.

Delaney, R., R. Subramanian, and F. Patrick. (2016). "Making the Grade: Developing Quality Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison," *Vera Institute of Justice*. https://storage.googleapis.com/vera-web-assets/downloads/Publications/making-the-grade-postsecondary-education-programs-in-prison/legacy_downloads/making-the-grade-postsecondary-education-programs-in-prison.pdf.

Drew, J. (2014). "The Right Preposition: Objectifying the Relationship Between Prison Postsecondary Education Programs, Departments of Correction, and Academic Institutions," *St. Louis University Public Law Review*, 33(2), 317–

28.

Emerson, R.M., R.I. Fretz, and L.L. Shaw. (2011). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Second Edition). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Erisman, W., and J.B Bayer Contardo. (2005, November). "Learning to Reduce Recidivism: A 50-state Analysis of Postsecondary Correctional Education Policy. Washington, DC: The Institute for Higher Education Policy. https://www.ihep.org/publication/learning-to-reduce-recidivism-a-50-state-analysis-of-postsecondary-correctional-education-policy/.

Fainsod Katzenstein, M., and J. Frank. (2019). Why Teach in Prison: Co-Constructing the Prison Classroom." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 52(1), 96-99.

Fouché, E., and S. Guillermo. (2021.) "An Analysis of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program: Outside Students' Empathy, Social Connectedness, and Criminal Justice Activism." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 33(3), 307-324.

Frazier, C.D. (2014). *Through Educators' Eyes: A Narrative Inquiry into Teachers Utilizing Transformative Pedagogy as a Practice of Freedom to Build Mutual Understanding and Respect Between Prisoners and University Students*. Doctoral Dissertation, Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International.

Giroux, H.A. (2020). *On Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gorgol, L.E., and B.A. Sponsler. (2011). "Unlocking Potential: Results of a National Survey of Postsecondary Education in State Prisons." *Institute for Higher Education Policy Issue Brief.* Available at: https://perma.cc/CL7Y-CZHA.

Hicks-Peterson, T. (2018). *Student Development and Social Justice: Critical Learning, Radical Healing, and Community Engagement*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hilinski-Rosick, C.M., and A.N. Blackmer. (2014). "An Exploratory Examination of the Impact of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 25 (3): 386–397.

hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge.

Imarisha, W. (2016). *Angels with Dirty Faces: Three Stories of Crime, Prison, and Redemption.* Chico, CA: AK Press.

Inderbitzen, M. (2015). "Active Learning and College and Prison Partnerships in Liberal Education." *Liberal Education* (Summer), 46-51.

Josselson, R. (Ed.) (1996). *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kumashiro, K. (2015). *Against Common Sense: Teaching and Learning Toward Social Justice* (3rd Edition). New York: Routledge.

Lang, J.M. (2016). *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Love, B. (2019). *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Maclaren, K. (2015). "The Magic Happens Inside Out: A Reflection on the Transformative Power of Self-Expression and Dialogical Inquiry in Inside-Out Prison Exchange Courses." *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 22(4). 371-385.

Martinovic, M., M. Liddell, and D. Palmer. (2020). "Learning behind Prison Bars: University Students and Prisoners' Experiences of Studying Together." In D. Palmer (Ed.), *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Criminology* (pp. 37–58). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

McLaren, P. (2017). *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*. New York: Routledge.

Mukamal, D.; R. Silbert, R.M. Taylor. (2015). "Degrees of Freedom: Expanding College Opportunities for Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Californians." *Stanford Criminal Justice Center*. Available at: https://law.stanford.edu/publications/degrees-of-freedom-expanding-college-opportunities-for-currently-and-formerly-incarcerated-californians/.

Pollack, S. (2016). "Building Bridges: Experiential and Integrative Learning in a Canadian Women's Prison." *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 36(5), 503-518.

Pompa, L. (2013). "Drawing Forth, Finding Voice, Making Change." In Simone Weil Davis and Barbara Sherr Roswell (eds.), *Turning Teaching Inside Out*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.

Iglesias Prieto, N. (1997). *Beautiful flowers of the Maquiladora: Life Histories of Women Workers in Tijuana.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Pryor, M., and D,E. Thompkins. (2013). "The Disconnect Between Education and Social Opportunity for the Formerly Incarcerated," *American Journal of Criminal Justice,* 3(3), 457–79.

Rapley, T.J. (2001). "The art(fulness) of Open-ended Interviewing: Some Considerations on Analysing Interviews." Qualitative Research, 1(3), 303–323.

Roberts, R.E. (2020). "Qualitative Interview Questions: Guidance for Novice Researchers." *Qualitative Report*, 25(9), 3185-3203.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Scott, R. (2013). "Distinguishing Radical Teaching from Merely Having Intense Experiences While Teaching in Prison." *Radical Teacher,* 95, 22-32.

Sokoloff, W.W. (2014). "Teaching Political Theory at a Prison in South Texas." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 47(2), 518-522.

Spellberg, M. (2019). "It Describes What God Is." *PS: Political Science and Politics* (January), 105-107.

Tilton, J. (2021). "Crossing the New Jim Crow Color Line: Confronting Race in Community Service Learning Behind Bars." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 27(2), 1–20.

Tanner, K.D. (2012.) "Promoting Student Metacognition." *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 11(2), 113-199.

Weil Davis, S. (2013). "Inside-Out: The Reach and Limits of a Prison Education Program." In Simone Weil Davis and Barbara Sherr Roswell (eds.), *Turning Teaching Inside Out*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.

Werts, T. (2013). "Access for Whom? Inside-Out's Opening Door." In Simone Weil Davis and Barbara Sherr Roswell (eds.), *Turning Teaching Inside Out*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan.

Wilson, M., R. Alamuddin, and D.M. Cooper. (2019). "Unbarring Access: A Landscape Review of Postsecondary Education in Prison and Its Pedagogical Supports." *Ithaka S+R*. https://sr.ithaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SR-report-landscape-review-postsecondary-education-in-prison-053019.pdf.

Wyant and Lockwood. (2018). "Pushing the Envelope for Evolution and Social Change: Critical Challenges for Teaching Inside-Out." *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 69(3), 49-67.

Zull, J.E. (2002). *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Teaching.* New York: Routledge

.

Table 1. Faculty Background, part 1

Were you a tenured professor when first taught Inside-Out?	**yes**	**no**
	11 (79%)	3 (21%)
Prior to teaching Inside-Out, were you actively involved in justice- or prison-related education, social movements, campaigns, and/or organizations?	**yes**	**no**
	9 (64%)	5 (36%)
Have you been directly or personally affected by the carceral state? For example, are you and/or your family members/loved ones system-impacted?	**yes**	**no**
	6 (43%)	8 (57%)

Table 2. Faculty Background, part 2

How would you describe your field/ discipline?	**STEM**	**humanities**	**social sciences**	**inter-disciplinary**
	2 (14%)	4 (29%)	5 (36%)	3 (21%)
How many years had you been at your current institution when you taught your first Inside-Out course?	**1-5 years**	**6-10 years**	**7-15 years**	**16+ years**
	5 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)

Table 3. Participant Demographics

	yes	**no**	**prefer not to respond**
Person of Color	7 (%)	7 (%)	0 (%)
First Generation College Student	4 (%)	9 (%)	1 (%)
LGBTQIA+	2 (%)	11 (%)	1 (%)

Appendix A: Data Selection and Coding

From May to August 2022, we interviewed 14 professors who teach Inside-Out in the Inland Empire (IE) region of Southern California, which extends across San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Just east of Los Angeles County, the IE is home to adult corrections facilities, youth corrections facilities, fire camps, and immigrant detention centers, lending it the distinction of "the highest density of carceral institutions in… the state of California, if not the United States."[47] From 2014 (when Inside-Out was first taught in the IE) to spring 2022 (when this research was conducted), 29 professors at seven colleges and universities in the region have collectively contributed more than 90 Inside-Out courses in STEM (math and science), the humanities (history, philosophy, literature, writing and rhetoric), social sciences (education, psychology, political science, sociology), and interdisciplinary fields (cultural studies, religious studies, organizational studies, ethnic studies).

Of the 29 instructors who had taught Inside-Out courses in the IE from 2015 to 2022, we were able to interview 14. This number was the confluence of several factors: Two were collaborators on this project, two were at the time program administrators, two had moved on to other institutions, two declined, four did not respond, and three were on leave or otherwise unavailable. All 14 faculty members in our study had taught at least one semester-long class using the Inside-Out pedagogical model and all were certified by the Inside-Out Training Institute. The earliest training attended was in 2012 and the most recent was 2021. Most (six) participants attended one of the training institutes offered in 2018. Three attended in 2019.

On average, interviews lasted 45 minutes, with the longest running just over an hour and the shortest 38 minutes. All interviews were conducted and recorded on Zoom, which generated a transcript and audio and video files that were automatically downloaded to a cloud server. We saved all transcripts to a non-networked storage device (a USB flash drive) kept in a locked drawer in one of the author's home offices and deleted the files from the cloud. Participants were provided with an electronic copy of their interview transcript, as well as an electronic copy of their signed consent form, for their records. We posed open-ended, exploratory questions (listed in Appendix B) that allowed for reflection upon a broad array of topics. While our use of individual narratives might be critiqued as anecdotal or case-specific, we find great value in the stories and recollections we were able to gather. Indeed, the power of critical reflection, individual as well as collective, is precisely why we embarked upon this study.

After re-watching the interviews in their entirety and making corrections to the Zoom transcripts, we spent several weeks reading, jotting, and coding in hard copy. In this way, interviews became textual objects subject to our reading (Emerson et al., 2011). Following the advice of anthropologists Johnny Saldaña (2016) and Robert Emerson and colleagues (2011), we approached each interview with a fresh eye and a firm commitment to grounded theory. We were open to whatever faculty wanted to share with us. We were not looking to test, bolster, or challenge "received and preconceived theory," but to let the narratives guide and inform our analysis (p. 173).

As we read through the 14 transcripts, first as individual texts and then as a collection of texts, we began to notice common themes across the narratives. We linked observations made by individual faculty to those made by other faculty,

[47] Lecture by Nigel Boyle, Director of the Institute for Global Local Action and Study, Pitzer College, October 27, 2022.

whether as echoing, clarifying, or contrasting perspectives. Out of these cross-narrative connections, we created and refined a series of analytic categories, which, in our estimation, best describe how faculty understand what happens in their Inside-Out classrooms and what lends those happenings significance. The set of analytic categories we settled upon and further refined became our interpretative framework for describing the wonder, complexities, and challenges that the 14 participants in our study thoughtfully recounted.

Before settling on our final set of analytic categories, we first printed out all the transcripts and read through them, appreciating their unique perspectives and narrative richness, circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining, and coloring rich or significant participant quotes or passages that struck us as worthy of attention (Saldaña, 2016). This was our pre-coding practice. Next, we used open, in vivo, line-by-line coding, entertaining all analytic possibilities (Emerson et al., 2011) contained within each narrative, viewing every faculty perspective as a rich universe of meaning unto itself. As we re-read, we hand-noted in the margins any statements or phrases that stood out to us, citing direct quotes as emerging themes. In stage two of our coding process, we engaged in focused recoding, creating a series of overarching analytic categories to capture how thoughts embedded in individual narratives connected to broader concerns shared across multiple narratives. In instances where an idea or point was mentioned by a single respondent or a minority of respondents, we retained the original code (and supporting quotes) and included it as a sub-category or contrasting view, depending on how the idea aligned with or contradicted patterns of significance found in the other narratives (Saldaña, 2016).

Finally, we compiled the full set of thematic categories into one long document, including emblematic excerpts from each interview under each of the categories that we interpreted as being of import to the faculty we interviewed. As we re-read through the entirety of the document—the themes we created and the excerpted passages listed beneath each—we were immediately struck by faculty descriptions of pedagogical disruption, or how teaching Inside-Out works to disrupt conventional classroom practices.

Appendix B: Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. What initially brought you to the Inside-Out program?
2. Think back on the first time you taught Inside-Out. What were your initial expectations?
3. *Follow-up:* How have your expectations changed or shifted over time, if at all?
4. What are the goals of your Inside-Out course(s)?
5. *Follow-up:* Do you have goals for your Inside-Out course that exceed content area goals? If so, what are they?
6. What do you think are the unique strengths, if any, of the Inside-Out pedagogy when considering the goals you just described?
7. We just spoke about the strengths of the program, now we would like to turn to limitations. What are the limits, if any, of the Inside-Out pedagogy when considering the various goals you shared with us?
8. How have you as a teacher, faculty member, and human being left your mark on the Inside-Out experience?
9. How has the Inside-Out experience impacted you as a teacher and/or faculty member, if at all?
10. In what ways has the Inside-Out impacted you *beyond* your identity as teacher and/or faculty member, if at all?
11. In your experience, what have been the most rewarding/valuable aspects of teaching Inside-Out?
12. In your experience, what have been the most surprising/unexpected aspects of teaching Inside-Out?
13. What abiding concerns, if any, do you have about teaching Inside-Out?
14. What, if anything, would you like to change about the Inside-Out model?

Appendix C: Positionality Statements

Reggie Bullock:

My positionality is shaped by my experiences as an incarcerated individual who has pursued higher education, challenged societal norms, and overcome barriers to personal growth. I am committed to leveraging my knowledge, skills, and perspective to advocate for educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals, dismantle systemic barriers, and foster a more equitable and inclusive society. As a member of the first cohort of Pitzer's Inside-Out Pathway-to-BA program, I worked to bridge the gap between the inside and outside world, breaking down barriers and promoting understanding and empathy. I engaged in rigorous academic coursework alongside traditional college students, embracing personal growth, challenging societal assumptions, and reimagining the future—for myself, my community, and higher education.

My lived history, college journey, and selection for the Jesse Unruh California Assembly fellowship (2022-2023) collectively position me as an advocate for transformative education, criminal justice reform, and social change. I am dedicated to using my unique perspective and experiences to challenge the status quo and contribute to a more just and equitable world.

Brian Charest:

As an educator deeply committed to the intersection of community and education reform, I am acutely aware of how my own positionality, shaped by my race and class, influences my perspectives and practices. Having taught in both Chicago and Seattle public schools, I have encountered a range of racial and socioeconomic contexts that have profoundly impacted my understanding of education. My roles as a high school teacher and now as an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Assistant Professor, and Co-Director of the Center for Educational Justice further highlight my dedication to fostering educational environments that address and bridge disparities. This background has reinforced my belief that schools must engage with their communities to effectively support students from diverse racial and economic backgrounds. I am committed to ensuring that democratic governance within schools, combined with a commitment to safety and equitable support for all students, is central to creating environments where every student can thrive.

For me, education is not merely about transferring knowledge but about creating spaces that embody love, respect, and liberation. Reflecting on what it means to be educated in a democratic society, I challenge my colleagues to envision schools as more than institutions; they should be dynamic environments that actively promote creativity, kindness, collaboration, collective wellbeing, and personal freedom. By pursuing these ideals, we can reimagine educational settings that support and uplift every student, particularly those from marginalized racial and class backgrounds, ensuring they are empowered to reach their fullest potential.

Barbara Junisbai:

My commitment to liberatory education comes directly out of my scholarly research on authoritarianism (in post-Soviet Eurasia) and my personal experiences living and

working in a variety of oppressive contexts. Irrespective of content, all my courses center self-reflexivity and human agency, interdependence and loving accountability, and organizational denaturalization and reimagination. I came to academia late in life, after following a circuitous and serendipitous professional and personal trajectory, including living abroad and raising a multi-cultural, transnational family.

As a white-passing, bi-racial, middle-aged, college-educated, CIS woman working in higher education, I embody numerous privileges in a racialized capitalist economy. I am also shaped by my family and communities of origin, having grown up in a single-parent, low-income, immigrant household that mirrored the neighborhoods I lived in and the public schools I attended. My family and my closest friends' families are directly and intimately shaped by war, US imperialism, and the carceral state. I am the beneficiary of the California State University system and the limited US welfare state. These intersectional identities shape how I teach, who I teach, and what I teach.

4. We are enough…Poetry in/as Community

From debris we write./
We learn–
I feel,
I think,
I learn./
In community,/
we learn, feel, think, and take action./
In reflexivity–I try to make sense of it all…

Opportunities, shackled to each other's/
deface realities./
Joy
sliced open./
Favor goddess, destiny, *True* North–the embodiment of hope./
Seeds planted–blessed,/
breathing life./
I am enough./

We are enough./

–

A roadmap to co-creating

Michal Rubin, Sheree Mack, Mary Kay Delaney, Christina Fiflis, Liza Bevams

Enter the room—a cocoon for intertwining paths,
together, seekers of unkown destinations
revealing truths.

A poem is read. Yours. Maybe someone else's.
Listen
Invite

Take time to find strings, broken and unbroken,
let the odd letter open itself,
write the resonating **words or phrases**

Another poem is read. Someone's poem.
Listen
Invite

wait for the right chord to vibrate
for the weight of words to call your name
write the words that are doorways to imagination

A poem is read. It brings its own world into the room.
Listen
Invite

hear them, the words
behind the seasons that are yet to come
breathe life into the words that called you
write the words freely

We come together.
We call out our words
We place them on the board
freely, untamed
allow them to intermingle
weaving the reality of the moment
to create the cento that is us, today

Poetry as Essential Praxis for Activating Social Imagination and Connection

Mary Kay Delaney, Michal Rubin, Liza Bevams, and Sheree Mack
MaryKay.Delaney@du.edu

Reading poetry aloud in relationship

Because "[w]e are in reciprocal relationships with the natural world," poet Ada Limón explains, "It is our work together to see one another." Through our work, we seek to create an educative space, a space and place for multiplicity of perspectives, complexity, thinking and emotions; a space that invites us to see one another.

In November 2023, at an alternative session of the American Educational Studies Association annual conference, we, an international group of poets, all women, read from our original individual work. We also read a choral poem co-created by our group for the conference which included lines from all of our poems. From the collaborative poem, we wrote more poetry—centos[48]—and our words took on new meanings and directions.

The journey is the thing: The process and organization of a collaborative poem writing workshop

We appeared in the session in multiple formats, with readers in-person, on live zoom, and in recordings, and the readings included some images. Individual poets read their work and together we read the poem co-created by the group for the conference. We asked participant poets to write/type, as they listened, words and/or lines that stuck with them or to them.

Later, we asked participants to write lines or descriptors describing where they were—physically, temporally, spiritually, emotionally, and/or analytically. "Where" was left to the poets. Then the poets combined words and lines from each of their lists to create new lines of poetry. Each poet read a line or two or three aloud. The room filled with new visions. Finally, participant-poets read poems they had brought with them. More voices and more visions.

New cento

Together we created new poetry. A deeply respectful and accepting space emerged as participant poets shared aloud their new poetic lines. Participating poets, invited to bring their own poetry, read us into new places. The space moved with visions of recalibrated and re-formed worlds. The room, even in silence, pulsed with poetry and meaning. Words from the session continue to reverberate in our bodies and minds.

The cento created during the session structures this issue of the journal. This article provides some background on our experience with poetry as essential praxis for activating social imagination and connection.

We are poets. You are a poet.

Here, as you may have already noticed, we refer to you, ourselves, and the poets in our session as poets or writers or both. You have poetry inside of you, on the tip of your tongue, at your fingertips, within your sight and hearing. We

[48] A cento is poem made mostly from lines of poems by other authors.

believe that all people are writers. We think that the world includes infinite ways to write and many forms of writing.

As a society, we encounter barriers and messages that tell us we are not writers. One of those barriers is a romanticized version of writers as loners who devote their lives to their craft and write genius first drafts. Another is almost the opposite: that we *have* to learn to write through explicit lessons delivered by an "expert". We reject all of this.

We see ourselves and you as writers. Most of us write in the in-between spaces of our lives–crow barring spaces in time in order to work on our craft because we want to and because we are moved to say something in a particular way. We write dozens of drafts of our works. We learn, yes, every day. We learn by writing, by talking, by reading, by taking classes, by reading our work to others, and by writing some more. Wanting to express our commitments and our longings for the world or seeking to describe moments of beauty and peace, we write and we learn. We write toward "not-yet" worlds and to try to see this world otherwise (Maxine Greene).

Collaborative poetry making

As an international group of poets–all women, we meet regularly to write together, via zoom. We write toward a world that is more just, more safe, more free. For each poet and our writing community, writing and sharing poetry constitute essential social praxis. While each of us writes/reads from individual experiences and frameworks, we find power in writing together. Each community writing session expands our craft, individual and collective social imagination(s), and connections to self, each other, nature, and the social world.

The seed

The content and process of our work for this collaborative writing responded directly to the questions AESA issued in the call. In particular, through our poetry readings-performances of original works, we responded to: "How can we empower and work in community to activate collective social imagination' and activism?" We sought to address, directly and indirectly, in multiple voices: "What are our responsibilities…? Where can we find hope and openings…? What is your imagined vision?"

Why poetry? Contexts and frameworks

The questions posed by AESA conference organizers required/require a range of responses that resist simple, monolinguistic narratives. Thinking, feeling, observing, and responding requires taking up processes of "unknowing," re-positioning, and re-arranging language and authority. Responding requires a desire for and commitment to building new worlds.

Poetry has the capacity to carry complexities and truths. Limón reminds us that poetry gives an "experience with language that is more disjointed…that makes more sense for the human experience." Poetry "makes room…holds all the truths at once…makes room for all those things." (Ada Limón, 2/23, 2023) Limon, remember, also comments, "We are in reciprocal relationships with the natural world."

Because of this reciprocity, our/the poet's job, she explains, is not, for example, to describe a tree. Rather, "It is our work together to see one another." This quality of poetry describes one aspect of how each poet in our writing group takes responsibility--engaging and growing her/their own social imagination, activism, and interconnectedness by writing/reading poetry, by reflecting as poets. Our writing group fosters a collective belonging through our shared experience as diverse beings coexisting together.

We find strength and expansion of imagination in our community of poets. A poem or group of poems can sing out to other poems (and other types of work) creating new shared space. Poetry connects small things, like birds outside, with the larger world, like noise pollution and global warming, and empowers us to see how the everyday connects to wider natural/social worlds, reminding us of our interconnected lives (and deaths). Thus, the collaborative readings in our session were less about discrete poems and more about the space that poems create when multiple poems sing to one another—enlarging our social imaginations. Poetry, an art frequently informed by "formal" research and always involving search, engages and archives memories and autobiographies and makes them available to many others. Poetry as art has the capacity to engage and connect our autobiographies in ways we could not have imagined (Greene, 1995).

These and other qualities of poetry have prompted recent scholars to engage poetry in critical research. In its Developing Qualitative Inquiry series, Routledge includes *Poetic Inquiry: Craft, Method and Practice.* Sandra Faulkner (2020) details the purpose of the book, "Through discussions of poetry as research method, poetry as qualitative analysis and representation, and Poetic Inquiry as a powerful research tool, I make an argument for the importance of considering the form and function of Poetic Inquiry in qualitative research." (2) The book has examples of poetic inquiry at all stages of research.

Scholar and poet, Eve L. Ewing, on her way to writing *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side,* wrote a book of poetry called *1919 Poems.* This book comes out of Ewing's archival research for *Ghosts*, specifically, a 1922 report: "Its stated purpose was to dissect the 1919 race riot that had happened in Chicago three years prior." (p.3) Ewing writes, "This collection of poems is meant as a small offering, an entry point into a conversation about a part of our history that I think is worth talking about much more than we do." (p.4) In a spirit similar to Ewing's, we offer consideration of poetry as critical social praxis.

Poetry-approaches

As poets the primary sources for our work are our experiences, within and outside our bodies, in the world. Some of us turn to workplaces, inner lives, families, archives, cities, countries, schools, status–exile or not, current events or states of things. As a collective, we engage a wide range of primary source materials.

Coming from different perspectives and backgrounds and working from different poetics and poetic traditions (and breaks from traditions), we find that each time we write together we create new possibilities. We have begun to think about each other's thinking as we write: How would Liza solve this dilemma? What would Michal say back? How might Christina re-frame? What somatic, body as archive, experience would Sheree turn us toward? In what unexpected ways would Trystan connect these experiences?

In this way, our writing group creates not only a rich multivalent space on zoom, it also leaves us with a kind of polyvocality that inspires imagination and fills us with possibilities. In our voices, you will hear whisperings from our fellow poets and you will also glimpse our teachers: contemporary teachers who have taught us in classes and workshops, contemporary teachers who reach us through their written and spoken works, and teachers who speak to us from the past through their written works, leading to more voices in our group and more voices for each poet to conjure with..

Approaches/methods

In this section, each of us describes briefly our approach(es)-methods. You will read specific primary sources of our work which include but

are not limited to: state-defined processes for defining and "managing" borders and belonging (not belonging); historic documents and stories that carry racism and classism; stories and cadences from our pasts; acts of oppression/injustice in international and national events; talk about schools; school practices; archived scrapbooks.

Liza Bevams: I create from community, for community. My poetics is rooted in improvisation and experimentation with sound, somatic poetry, and deep listening. I believe that liberation can take the shape of a poem and can also evolve in the process of creating a poem

Michal Rubin: As a psychotherapist and as a poet, I engage in I-Thou relationships, either with the client or the reader. Both, in sessions or in writing, I bring forth the challenge of distinguishing truths from myths, awareness vs. denial, conformity vs. individuation.

Christina Filas: My intention with writing is to think hard about and explore whether and how an articulation of "I AM" is essential to being human. Attendant to that is the challenging question of: Where, in the realm where "I AM" resides, are the borders of one's sovereign authority? And from where does that authority derive? And, how then should it manifest in the work of one's life?

Mary Kay Delaney: I engage documentary poetics to witness how racist documents, e.g., old deeds and past "moral" tales, silently and loudly shape intimate lives in white neighborhoods and families–including deficit talk about schools and curriculum that perpetuate racism. I witness to re-see, re-listen, un-forget, and un-erase. "If a poet considers herself a witness, you can't put a border around what she witnesses." Patricia Smith

Dr. Sheree Mack: "When we love the earth, we are able to love ourselves more fully. I believe this. " bell hooks. The whole premise of my practice is LOVE - LOVE is a powerful tool. Love has the power to create belonging to this earth, to ourselves and each other.

Trystan Popish: I delight in playing with sound and unexpected internal rhymes, bringing a sonic levity to poetic explorations of mental health, disability, family trauma, grief, and survival.

Our Teachers: Select List

In 2022, we all found ourselves in the new year in a workshop led by poet, Toby Altman. After the workshop ended and inspired by writing in community, we, the members of this writing group, continued writing together. We've written together for almost three years now. We thank Toby deeply for teaching in ways that inform, empower, and embolden his students to keep going. We also express deep gratitude to many people, past and present, who have informed our work. The following list includes thinkers, poets, writers, and other artists and scholars who represent a fraction of those whose work informs our work and from whom we continue to learn.

Toby Altman
Jane Austen
Gwendolyn Brooks
Martin Buber
Patricia Hill Collins
Kimberlé Crenshaw
Carolina Ebeid
Cass Eddington
Eve L. Ewing
Nancy Frasier
Paolo Friere
Maxine Greene
HR Hegnauer
bell hooks
June Jordan

Ilya Kaminsky
Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot
Jenny Lawson
Phillip Levine
Zeus Leonardo
Emmanuel Levinas
Ada Limón
Layli Long Soldier
Audre Lord
amanda lovelace
Ladane Nasseri
Diane Khoi Nguyen
George Noblit
Nel Noddings
Martha Nussbaum
Shane Rhode
Elizabeth Robinson
Muriel Rukeyser
Solmaz Sharif
Patricia Smith
Foluke Taylor
Natasha Tretheway
Lev Vygotsky
Derek Walcott
Virginia Woolf
Carl Whitaker

Select References

Greene, M. (1995) *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ewing, E.L. (2019). *1919 Poems.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Ewing, E.L. (2018). *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings in Chicago's South Side.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Faulkner, S.L. (2020). *Poetic Inquiry: Craft, Method and Practice.* New York: Routledge.

Limón, A. (2023). Interview with Ada Limon. 'To Be Made Whole.' *On Being with Krista Tippett*. https://onbeing.org/programs/ada-limon-to-be-made-whole/

<no title>, excerpts from collaborative poem responding to AESA 2023 conference questions

Christina Fiflis, Liza Bevams, Mary Kay Delaney,
Michal Rubin, Trystan Popish, and Sheree Mack
MaryKay.Delaney@du.edu

We write road maps of who we are;
our paths intertwining, some well-worn, some mystifying;
seeking destinations that reveal truth.
Today's compass is a blue jay's whistle,
yesterday it was the rising heat;
two days ago it was two crows…

> We desire direction, these compasses,
> these invitations toward resolution, to be real—
> A single blossom of seaweed clusters in the shallows. Its slimy mahogany is the shine of a hundred mornings.

Chronicles of sin, violence, and domesticity, documents on a desk,
demand return to archives; my fingers tapping reaching for an opening
as if a magical button will reveal

> There's a doorway between how I activate my imagination… and how I
> … suck in more air and advance.
> Simply shining a light requires resistance to self…
> brought up in this body in this world

us, I wonder of us, who is us, and my fingers still tap with the rhythm of the us we create with words
create with the wind

> And we find our compass fails us. It's trickier than it seems to find true north…
> the right chord to vibrate
> the blink of the lash

…waiting for waiting for waiting for
the odd letter to open itself

> A robin far away, chickadees nearby
> Only these keep my senses straight
> I know where I am, I resist where I am…

They cut an opening in me,
slicing through muscle,
pushing aside organs,
pulling out a new woman fully formed…

See the history of the world in the eyes of someone you love
See the history of the world in the eyes of each other
Try to know each other however lovely or brutal or imperfect

Stories of the broken

Michal Rubin

a cento, drawn from a collaborative poem written by Michal, Christina, Liza, Mary Kay, Sheree, and Trystan

In the eyes of someone I learn to read,
find the planted garden, walk into
a library of the unburied speeches
someone tried to hide, fill my heart with
wildflower nectar of struggle.

In the eyes of someone I see an odd letter
opens itself, the dead breathe their wisdom,
the poetry heard by the plants, I see
the waiting, the waiting, waiting for
the chickadees nearby to keep the senses straight.

In the eyes of someone I see the right chord
vibrate, the blink of the lash, the flicker
of a candle, the not enough truth, the tapping
of fingers in rhythm creating words, I see the trees
talking, the movement of the earth with the wind.

In the eyes of someone I see relief with the raindrops,
the droplets knitting the sea, the wonder of us,
the question of who is us, us and the song of birds-
a compass to the doorway for the chronicles
still hidden in the unbuilt libraries.

In the eyes of someone I see
agony of violence, the sins,
the wished for, the resistance,
a compass, a roadmap, a plea.

In the eyes of someone I see
A single blossom of seaweed clusters
in the shallows, the glisten
of a hundred mourning mornings.

I see history,
a witness of destruction mouthing words,
splashing graffiti over walls,
telling the stories of the broken,
washing off the obscuring of truths.

10/15/2023 | Rabi‘ I 30, 1445 AH | 30th of Tishrei, 5784

Michal Rubin

will there be a day
tomorrow

there is a silence of horror
not knowing where to go
whom to talk to
what to say
which words are forbidden
which feelings need to melt
melt with the pain
melt into the day it is
into a tomorrow

and the blue sky of fall

will there be more ~~videos~~
slayed babies in their cribs
posts of the raped
~~last~~ words broken
will there be a day

after tomorrow

and the blue sky of fall

swastikas or celebrations ~~of atrocities~~
celebrations
heinous acts
as if they are liberating

will tomorrow be
trail of tears
of the homeless
between the bleeding ground
and the blue sky of fall

the fall of the fallen ~~hopes~~
the fall of all falls

refuge

Christina Fiflis

the smell of the sun
shimmers off the junipers

a slip of snow-melt
glides toward the shadows below

we are not perfect here

We

Christina Fiflis

a cento, drawn from a collaborative poem written by Christina, Liza, Mary Kay, Michal, Sheree, and Trystan.

We write road maps
of who we are, our paths intertwining
some well-worn, some mystifying

Our compasses are a blue jay's whistle
a single blossom of seaweed cluster
a lightning storm, the rising heat
an eclipse of the moon
a drum circle beat

When we wait, it is
for the right chord to vibrate
We unbury, deface, defy, decorate
We create

We write our own destinations
our own way home
chronicles of refuge, revolution, revelation
imagination and celebrations
sin, brutality, resistance, struggle and grit
in high relief
We splash graffitti over walls
We write lit

My Furious Mind

Trystan Popish

It constantly interrogates me.
Am I good enough?
I don't even know
what "enough" is.
Thin enough
Pretty enough
Happy enough
Smart enough
Wise enough
Rich enough
enough enough enough enough
—Enough.

My furious mind can go to hell,
tell someone there
they're not enough.
But I am through.
I am only accepting
loving self-acceptance
from here on out.
No doubts, no
belabored questioning
and pawing at the ground,
trying to find more.
Stop digging, Self.
Smooth over that rough dirt
and plant a seed.
Flower or weed,
it doesn't matter.
Let it grow into a ladder
to carry you away from your mind,
leave behind that self
who's not enough
and simply
be
for once
more than enough
for yourself.

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl

Trystan Popish

A cento, drawn from a collaborative poem written by Trystan, Christina, Liza, Mary Kay, Michal, and Sheree

They cut an opening in me,
slicing through muscle,
pushing aside organs,
pulling out a new woman fully formed,
a miniature Athena, if Athena came
from a woman's gut
instead of a man's head.

I am her doorway to the world,
this "not enough" world where
the dead breathe
their wisdom into the deep
archives of the earth,
the earth our feet are on
but which we ignore.
Brought up in this body in this world,
I let its weight ground me.

I want to tell her
that we are the rain
on a droplet-knitted sea

I want to tell her
that we are the shine
of a hundred imperfect mornings

I want to tell her
that we are the stardust clusters
wading in the shallows of space

I want to tell her
when we become lost or afraid, we write,
fingers tapping, reaching, intertwining
destruction with who we are.
My fingers still tap with the rhythm
of the us we create with words,
the us we create with the wind.
And we will know by the flicker of the candle
what the dead have whispered.

Plans Cackle

Liza Bevams

From a valley's hairline
green buds split imperfect
arrivals in a wailing world
thrumming taut tongues.

Perhaps the world is on fire
again. The day fields the hands

plans cackle.

You push pollen and smoke
back through a cracked door.
Set water and honey in three bowls.

Dust windows, push doors, pull
smoke again, try to reach your brother.
Scribble recipes and addresses to cut
the wind, as you turn to whisper
a poem to the sky —-

wolf jaw relaxed.

Sweet Field Archive

a cento from a collaborative poem by Liza, Christina, Mary Kay, Michal, Sheree, and Trystan

The shine of a hundred mornings cuts an opening in me
unburies a speech slicing through muscle

an organ here an organ there
push push push

tomorrow, pull out a demand to rebuild
place the resistance, the sin, the violence, the domesticity,

the wished-for, the high relief that hides
behind doors, behind

the waiting, behind two crows
a compassing relief that forms the 'e' in ease

and waits on the back of a bite to eat
I wonder if these words can altar my seaweed heart

white crests gobble raindrops
be flicker to the candle be blink to the lash

robins far away, chickadees nearby
keep my senses straight

I know where I am, I resist where I am
self, stop digging, self

reborn in the reconstruction / and now
where light and possibility meet

and be not temporary.

House of Memory, Oakwood Cemetery 2023

Mary Kay Delaney

In a scrapbook of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1935-1936, I read an article describing the 1936 dedication of the House of Memory, Historic Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh, NC. This open-air Gothic structure is in the Confederate veterans cemetery at Oakwood. The memorial houses over a dozen bronze plaques honoring the participation of soldiers from North Carolina in every war from the Revolutionary to the Gulf War. On the day of the dedication in 1936, of the 9 plaques, 6 memorialized support of the Confederacy during the Civil War ("War Between the States" on the plaques). I visited the House of Memory on February 24, 2023.

I have lost time, time is meaningless
Time is the past in the present in the future
Time is lost to me

The building is beautiful, I shake my head
Look for trees and birdsong
Steady—the building is beautiful

Bramble boundaries gush with sparrow song
Towering trees erupt in cardinal calls
Juncos, warblers, a dogwood, smell of grass

I cannot configure space, space undulates like heat
I walk to birdsong: trees and briars my periphery
Ignoring my separation from self

A robin far away, chickadees nearby
Only these keep my senses straight
I know where I am, I resist where I am

Grass smells of heat and dull cement
Bugs dance on white headstones
Blinding me in sunshine.

Entering the building I feel relief
under cover, granite cooled, memories in brass
I shake my head. I resist again.

Stone walls, almost sweating
Golden plaques, recently tended
Metal and stone—permanent shelter

I step out, into sun, stare down at clay;
only crows call now; I breathe their gossip,
Turn back, noticing everything, touching nothing.

Re-vision

Mary Kay Delaney
MaryKay.Delaney@du.edu

A cento sestina drawn from a collaborative poem written by Mary Kay, Christina, Liza, Michal, Sheree, and Trystan.

Our fingers tap toward blue jay's wings and rising crest of seas,
searching maps of shrouded words, we find ourselves mystified.
We stall, craving invitations, devouring false compasses.
We stack records, phantom sounds unseen, on desks, our archives.
We dance our bodies in visions and reckonings, shine lights
on seaweed bloom; its mahogany a hope for hundred mornings.

We rhythm the us we create for one hundred mournings
and our thousand million tears forming Cs and seize and seas
We build from chilly air and moths afloat in shining light
on violence and known-abouts while the wished-fors mystify.
Near us, seas gobble rains, wet before water, briny archives.
We wait for wanting to form your 'e' in ease, to encompass.

We tap to—'how real is true north?' Our bodies, our compass?
Doesn't proving one, any Truth, slide into greenish mourning
for flick of candle inside cells, in this body archive?
for right chord to vibrate on the lip of inland seas?
for wonder at a blink, sight and sense mystified?
Wanting for waiting for an odd letter's shining light

Or, odd letter to open itself, L or O, shining light.
We tap the dead whose onion skin breathes compasses
into our "not enough" words; and their spell-breaking mystifies.
We unearth the elders' calls honoring their mornings/mournings.
We song their seeking in breezes humming on open seas
We hide-and-seek behind and beside, finding new archives.

We unbury the stench of speech still working its arching lies
We squint the unseen, not-yet-buried, against the dawning seas
Gather story stones our elders left, our tiny shining lights
Train our ears to robin's calls and crow's laments, our compasses,
'I know where I am, I resist where I am,' our prayer morning/mourning
Inscribed on monarchs' wings and catnips' scent in ways that clarify.

We garden communities blinking with blooms to amplify
We assemble shards of family back back in our archives
Today's compass, blue jay's whistle rushes into dove's mourning,
Two days past with two crows, we were afraid; their shining lights
called other birds to come home, lit up 'get on home' compasses,
we were relieved when red-breasted finch called to cresting seas.

We tap to deface realities adorned with shining lights
We graffiti walls with yearning and mystify old compasses.
We flicker archive shadows afloat on morning seas.

Teacher Reflections

Zariah Nicole and Noah Nelson
School of Education, Johns Hopkins University
znicole1@jh.edu and nnelso20@jhu.edu

We hope these poems find you well. As you read over our teacher reflections, we implore you to appreciate and notice the experiences and emotions we shared. Walk with us through these memories and join in with our reflection. Each of us has had a different teaching journey; these differences are reflected in our writing processes and styles.

A Cento of Teacher Reflections

Zariah Nicole and Noah Nelson

I fear not any check in for the sake of
Control.
"We need… you need to…"
policies and practices that harm my students
"The district is visiting"

Am I supposed to be scared?

However, I do fear that my voice becomes
Too much. My presence
Too large.
From what water I have left, I pour
Yet, I fear my students drown
their minds are too curious,
The kids have questions, they *need* to know
What's up?
I invite their questions and
accept pushback, Still, I fear
that the space of my voice
takes up every seat bestowed upon my students.

Poet's Note: Writing process for A Day in the Life (poem on next page)*:*

I started by reminiscing on a typical school morning. As my administration became increasingly toxic, I established boundaries on communication with them. The only messages I responded to after business hours were from my families, any from admin could wait till I report for work. This meant that I would wake up to emails, texts, and missed calls from various administrators. Unfortunately, the second I would arrive on campus I typically had to greet them first and be held up outside with their requests and concerns, leaving me to clock in late. But then I walk down that hall! I'm greeted by my Girl Scouts and former students first as I walk down the hall to my current babies! Depending on the holdup, they are lined up at the cafeteria doors or seated by the bathrooms for our morning break — because the principal made a rule that students can only use the restroom on whole class bathroom breaks. I finish this poem with the feelings that swell when I think of my students. With each scholarly endeavor, I think of them and their families as anchors in my pursuit of liberation for us all.

A Day in the Life

Zariah Nicole

Eee-Eee-Eee
Smack!
5am
Wipe the sleep from my eyes
Think of my kids… my why
Missed calls and texts from admin
"We need… you need to…"

3 new ARD meetings taking up class time, lunch, and planning
"The district is visiting"
Am I supposed to be scared?
Change my plans?

"We're all overwhelmed"
So, I should take on tasks that don't serve my students
Grin and bear policies and practices that harm my students
Click! No more notifications
Gotta get ready,
Gotta show up for my kids!
19 miles to get there
Time to think
Time to plan
Time to breath.
Just a couple more
breaths, in the car before I face them.
Here they go
Admin stops me at the door,
Holding me up
Know they making me late
Ooo, but once they let me go!
I get to see my babies,
Woo, they have so much energy before 8 am!
Their smiles and laughs are infectious.
They are my why
Why I fight the system at every turn
Why I get them resources for clothes more than worn
Why I prioritize their well-being over lesson plans
Why I give them recess against admins demands
Why I invite their questions and accept pushback
Why I focus on their strengths, not what they lack
I'll keep taking the heat,
I'll do it all again

Poet's Note: Writing process for Why come? (poem next page)

My students had a lot of experiences and perceptions of what school means by the time they entered our classroom. Some of those concepts included teachers/adults always being right, being reprimanded for questioning teachers/adults, being forced to apologize to teachers/adults who do not return the same gesture, etc. That's not the kind of environment I saw our relationships growing and flourishing in! I encouraged the curiosity of my students. I wanted them to question me and the system. When I didn't have answers, I was honest about that; when I got things wrong, I apologized for that. I wanted our classroom to be a model for the skills and practices that can bring positive change, equity, and justice to our society. In this piece, I am reminiscing on the questions we grappled with together, and the lessons we learned.

Why come?

Zariah Nicole

"Why come?" was never met with,
"You mean why?" or "…how come?"
Real quick, this question of curiosity
becomes a declaration of invisibility
More than a question deferred, their presence is dismissed, so
Why
come?
But we know what we mean
So together we build
Together we grow
"Why come" added a welcome element to the question
Like "come closer",
it's a call-in
And ohhhh were we *all* called in.
Called in on standardized tests
Racism and classism clear to them, just as it was to me
Called in on January 6th
"If they'd looked like us, that would've gone real different!"
Called in on COVID-19
Science was the PPE to protect against the infection of misinformation
Called in on respect
How you gonna demand respect, while you bully and degrade children?
The kids have questions, and so do I!
Called in on honesty
Lies getting carried so far, tossing 'em over the finish line feels easier than letting 'em go
Called in on antiblackness
Brown stepped up (in the absence of white) to be better, smarter, nicer than Black.
Segregated from kinder through grade two, integration was no easy feat.
No one wanted to sit at tables with "the other"

Spit to the forehead of a Black girl almost took me over
But we made it just to be

Called in about equity
Why come they get to use this or that?
"Why come they get pulled out?"
"Can you *please* just write them up!"
From academic to behavioral accommodations, they *needed* to know what was up!
Every question produced conversations
Those conversations brought us closer

Brown pools

Noah Nelson

Everyday I gaze upon those brown pools in class,
And they invite me to witness their dreams,
Joys, and love for a world they do
Not even know
Yet.
Boy do I,
I have witnessed it with my own brown pools,
Mine however has gotten less depth over years.
Drained incessantly of life because of death of
Black surfaces.
Living long enough to die unnaturally.

I cannot let that happen to them.
This unnatural relationship must cease.
These brown pools need to stay full of water
Nurturing its own life and autonomy.
From what water I have left, I pour
Thinking mine is reaching its limit,
Only to find I am being filled back by you all.

Then from my deepest thoughts, I hear a tiny voice yell,
“Hey Mr. Nelson, when are we starting?”
Snapping out of it to see wide brown pools across the class
Full of life, joy, and dreams,
And so I begin.

Fears of Freedom

Noah Nelson

Whenever I walk forth into
my classroom, I fear not any lesson,
I fear not any check in for the sake of
Control. I fear not of running out of markers
Or even a power outage. I fear not.
I fear not a day I show up late, I fear not a lesson that
Does not go to plan.
We've been prepared for all that.

However, I do fear that my voice becomes
Too much. I fear that the space of my voice
takes up every seat bestowed upon my students. I fear
my students drown in the words that utter from me
in careless fashion. I fear that my words form walls
like bricks and concrete, surrounding your intellectual.

They never asked for that,
their minds are too curious to allow it so freely.
Yet it happens ever so often. You are meant to explore
And float in the words of your vast imagination.
Every word, one after the other, dancing in harmony with
Those around you.
So every day I tell myself, be fearful, for that allows them
To be fearless.

5. *We dance*…Poetry as social praxis

Remember fully the triple recipe of the stray of Jesus./
Time is meaningless./
We are not perfect./
Enough!/
It's always enough on our way home. But how real is the true north?/
Breathe life first./
Dance./
You are here. You are home./
Enough.

We dance,/
breathing life,/
flowing into the goddess

Present with Poetry

Silvia Bettez
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
SCBETTEZ@uncg.edu

My body tells me where I am
Curiosity
Tingling
Fear
Sweaty palms
I resist where I am
What was I doing?

My body tells me where I am
Rib pain
Shocks me back to embodiment
The moment I realize
I forgot to breathe
Breathe
Breathe
I begin again

My body tells me where I am
Clenched fist
Softening
Intrigue
Butterflies
Thought spiral
Where am I?

Oh right, my body tells me where I am
Heart beat
Pulsing
Hand on stomach
Centering
Feet grounded
My body tells me where I am

Poet's note

One point I want to make, that is not part of the poem and was a significant part of my comments as discussant at the AESA 2023 poetry reading and writing session, is: *What would it mean to let go of our tendency as academics to analyze and get lost in our heads, and instead, upon hearing and/or reading poetry, pay most attention to what we feel in our bodies?*

Heavy Hours

Maddie Neufeld
Teachers College, Columbia University
mn2710@tc.columbia.edu

1.
Arriving belatedly at the
Scene of my body

Sweating overdeterminations

Placate on blueberry muffins
So tender

2.
When you asked me
If you could go to the bathroom

I didn't realize that you meant
Kaleidoscope into pieces

Outside the scope
Of the curriculum

So I broke into
My own constellation of tears

3.
I do We do You do
Our daily transcript
Spilling over into hallways

Watching girls in the bathroom cry
in front of no mirror
Tending to tell them
please go back to the ocean

Bound by Lines, Yet Boundless

Carol Schoenecker

In the halls of learning, echoes bounce
Off of brick walls, rigid and unyielding
As young minds cautiously balance the weight of prescribed texts
Against their own curious hearts

Radical education
A belief in the power of "what if" over "what is"
A challenge in the status quo, a relentless questioning
Asking why, for whom, and for what purpose

Where 'No Child' and 'Race to the Top' faltered
We witness thorns in our path to the ideal
Our hearts hang in the delicate balance
Between the world as it is and the world as it could be

In recognizing that every young mind is a universe
Expansive and unique
Deserving of a way to journey through the galaxies of their imagination

The Schemes of Capitalism and Politics

Josette Ferguson, Ph.D.

Raw

Naked

Exposed

To all elements

Looking for comfort
Company
Shelter

A place to call my humble abode

But there's no home in sight

Nowhere

To retreat
To rest
To restore or rejuvenate

Just barren places and spaces
That once held so much

Love
Light
And joy

Now the remnants remain

The skeletons and
Torn carcasses

Of those who tried to create
Oasis
In these barren
Places and Spaces

Yet were ripped to shreds by

Hungry corporate vultures

Democratic well-meaning politicians

Corrupted community leaders and activists
They parade around as our
“Heroes of Justice”

“Gods and Goddesses of Creativity and Enlightenment”

“The Chosen Ones of Diversity”

Only to masquerade
In balls of
Rich, Wealthy, white donors
That want to "do their part in social

justice" However, this is only a facade

An ironic contradiction

Because their day-to-day life
Is built on the very thing
They want to help change

Where does it end??
How do I make it stop??
Before I get chewed up
And spit out by a corporate robot
Dressed in a friendly face and kind demeanor
Yet reeks of the wine of the world
Telling me they're different than the rest

Should I trust them?
And their well said colloquial phrases
Of how they

“Do things different”
“Respect a work life balance”
And are “willing to try anything”

Because these the same words

of Liars, thieves, and frauds…

I gotta trust my gut.

When in doubt
Always trust my gut.
So I don't become
Beholden to the schemes of
Capitalism and Politics

The incompressible trip of the normalista-teacher Lucio Cabañas Barrientos to Durango.

Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon, Ph.D.
College of Education and Human Development
University of Nevada, Reno.
rfregosobailon@unr.edu

Lucio Cabañas Barrientos, a normalista-teacher, founder and leader of the Party of the Poor, was a prominent figure in the Mexican and Latin American history. In January 1973, he temporally left the struggle for social justice in mountainous region of the state of Guerrero, Mexico, to seek medical treatment for severe headaches in Mexico City. Ten years earlier, Lucio had been assigned to a small town called Tuitán, in the state of Durango, as part of his role as a normalista-teacher. His journey to Mexico City in 1973 was also motivated by a personal desire to reconnect with a woman he had met ten years prior. While the specifics of their relationship remain unclear for the history of Latin America, this poem seeks to fictionalize their story, highlighting the humanity of this extraordinary normalista-teacher who dedicated his life to fighting for his people.

I'm on the highway now,
Alberto driving me in his car. From Mexico City to Durango, it's a long journey, I know, and incomprehensible too.
There are so many risks.
Since the first days I started the struggle in the mountains,
when no one supported me,
when I was hunting rabbits to cheat hunger,
I knew you were the most wonderful mistake,
Yes, because terrible mistakes are a good thing, even if parents and TV commercials say otherwise.
Love is an accident, a sickness. I shouldn't be making this long journey. They may find me and all the peasants who want to see social justice will be disappointed. But I have to see you.
And I will tell you: you can see, I am still thinking of you.
When I was just a rebellious teacher,
In that first meeting where I reported to you because you were the principal of the school, I felt something,
I didn't see something in you,
But a force in our midst made me see the reflection of that force in you, otherwise I would not have felt the courage to tell you that intellectual confidence in that formal meeting. I was instantly impelled to see you as the place where I should plant the tree.
Then, one day I had to go to your office,
you took a cookie
And you told me to take it with me on the road.
For a reason I still don't know, I didn't see the cookie crumble when I took it,
because the same thing happened to me as it did to the cookie: you, just by how you handled yourself and the cookie, while looking at me.

When it was the first vacation, I couldn't take it anymore and gave you a discreet gift: a music record. They were big records. Side A, side B.
Days later, after the morning classes, when the kids were screaming in the playground, I went to your office to show you my copy of the record.
You stretched out your hand to take the one I had given you and with your finger you showed that you had underlined your favorite line from one song, side B.
I know that even today neither you nor I can recover from the sand blow of that moment: I showed you in surprise that I had also underlined that same line, from the same song, days before, on my own, at my house.
Now I am going to see you because love is a plague. I have lived, between the social struggle, in the relief of knowing that I am not to blame,
because love is a disease,
which like all diseases comes by accident,
on the other hand, with the resignation that there is no remedy, even if I see you.
that is why I make this incomprehensible and dangerous journey,
not to forget you.
Before I left Durango, ten years ago, without words,
you made me understand that you would drink water without sugar,
you would discipline yourself to duty and good habits,
and you wouldn't eat flour to cleanse yourself of this disease, ours.
Now that I see you, I do not expect you to accept me,
I only make this journey as part of the acceptance of my condition,
of someone who feels dragged by a river and also lets himself be carried away by that same river.
To love is to fall into the abyss. I have not stopped falling. Loose to your forces I go on.

A heart transplant: Imagining Intersectional Justice

Shawn S. Savage
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
Wilmington
drshawnssavage@gmail.com

Julia A. Lynch
University of North Carolina,
julialynch1208@gmail.com

Contested curriculum in contentious times
the perennial and multigenerational issues of our lives
we teach, we write, we devise

A plan to outlive
live beyond
live in spite
of the premeditated
heartbreak
Heart failure

We dance,
A slow-moving rhythm using our hands
our feet
our soul
to the beat of our ancestors' drums
marching in our civil war
toward a liberated peace

breathing life,
into the possibilities of what could exist
beyond the fight

in a war
for a country we love
that doesn't love us
back

The freedom
flowing into the goddess.

But politics and policing keep us cyclically in regression
after every seeming
Progression

arrhythmia
too fast to slow
no pulse

Cardiac
Arrest-

Nevertheless

We dance,
pulse activated
beat by beat
heart pounding, spirit revived
as a united front in sync with our brother tears
marching in our civil war
toward a liberated peace

breathing life,
dreaming of better years
like yesterday
when our hearts beat with joy
our eyes filled with tears
of joy
flowing into the goddess.

So we continue to dream, work, and weave–possibilities that might enable potentialities
we read, we learn,
we teach, we write, we devise…

Constantly dreaming, beaming, breaking, and molding
hoping for the betterment of schooling and our collective lives
we teach, we write, we devise…

We dance,
A new dance

Imagining intersectional justice
imagining freedoms
imagining futures

breathing life,
beautiful and bountiful for all
we teach, we write, we devise…

flowing into the goddess
we raise our voice
to freedom
we plant our flag
to justice

For a new heart
a heart transplant

6. Seeking doorways...of Becoming

Collaborative Cento Poem

Zariah Nicole, Shawn S Savage, Julia Lynch, Josette Ferguson, Carol Schoenecker, Amy Senta, Vicki Boley, Raul Olmo Fregoso Bailon, Maddie Neufeld, Tania Ramalho, Travis Crowder, Silvia Bettez, Paula Groves Price, and all poetry session participants

A woman's gut be a belly full/
fat and fatigued,/
building new worlds and knitting the sea with debris./

Ooohhhh

Although…will there be a day tomorrow/
where the woes and joys of womanhood don't collide?/
A day where I can tell myself to stop digging/
because I,/
us,/
we,/
create life,/
we breathe life…

This weight/
a stone around my neck,/
ash gray and cracked down the center of me./
Strange fruit./
Somewhere, someone is singing./

Far away someone is singing./
What is the difference between philosophers and poet?/
None./
Plato's book Republic is full of poetic images. But Plato rejected poets./
Someone
is singing/
a far away/

Debris liquid gut/
sliced open/
Reaching to sop up that which spills./

Community/
shackled to each other's heart,/
breathing life,/
liberation./
The embodiment of mind, body, and spirit./

Chronicles of refuge/
we write.

From debris we write./
We learn–
I feel,
I think,
I learn./
In community,/
we learn, feel, think, and take action./
In reflexivity–I try to make sense of it all…

Opportunities, shackled to each other's/
deface realities./
Joy
sliced open./
Favor goddess, destiny, *True* North–the embodiment of hope./
Seeds planted–blessed,/
breathing life./
I am enough./

We are enough./

Remember fully the triple recipe of the stray of Jesus./
Time is meaningless./
We are not perfect./
Enough!/
It's always enough on our way home. But how real is the true north?/
Breathe life first./
Dance./
You are here. You are home./
Enough.

We dance,/
breathing life,/
flowing into the goddess

Someone is singing,/
breathing life, planting seeds, building new worlds with debris./
Overflowing with emotion, finding joy in the ordinary, or perhaps/
grieving alone./
Someone is singing,/
Writing from bed, seeking doorways, asking,/
Will there be a tomorrow?