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TRANSGRESSIVE PEDAGOGIES AND RESEARCH

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Cover Art
The cover art for this issue of Socialist Studies/*Etudes Socialistes* was graciously donated by **Christi Belcourt**. Christi is a Metis visual artist with a deep respect for the traditions and knowledge of her people. The majority of her work explores and celebrates the beauty of the natural world. Author of Medicines To Help Us (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007), Beadwork (Ningwakwe Learning Press, 2010) Christi has won recognition for her fine artistry through numerous exhibitions.

Her work has been commissioned by the Gabriel Dumont Institute (Saskatoon), the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Centre for Traditional Knowledge & Museum of Nature (Ottawa), the Indian and Inuit Art Collection (Hull) and is found in the permanent collections of

the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and Canadian Museum of Civilization, First People's Hall. Christi is a past recipient of awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Chalmers Family Fund and the Métis Nation of Ontario. She has been studying traditional plants and plant uses for numerous years.

You may view some of her works online at www.christibelcourt.com.

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CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO EDIT THE SOCIETY FOR SOCIALIST STUDIES JOURNAL

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Prospective applicants should email Elaine Coburn to register interest and for inquiries. Please note that ideally at least one applicant will be based in Canada.

Article

THE DIALECTICS OF PRAXIS

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Abstract

This paper takes up the theorization of the dialectical relationships between consciousness, praxis, and contradiction by drawing primarily on the work of critical feminist and anti-racist scholars Roxana Ng and Paula Allman. Beginning with the important Marxist theorizations of the lives of immigrant women, the state, and community services made by Roxana Ng, we move forward with asserting that Roxana's commitment to making social relations of power and exploitation 'knowable' and 'transformable' is based on a complex and revolutionary articulation of the relationship between thinking and being. This dialectical conceptualization of praxis is necessary for any potentially coherent revolutionary feminist anti-racist project. The challenge posed by Roxana is two-fold: not only how best to 'know' the world, but how to teach this analysis and generate revolutionary practice.

Keywords

Consciousness, praxis, contradiction, learning, pedagogy

For Roxana Ng: An unfinished conversation

Roxana Ng was our friend, colleague, and teacher. She left us unexpectedly on January 12, 2013. We are still trying to come to terms with the huge intellectual and emotional void left after her passing. The hurried urge to engage with aspects of Roxana's work, which has touched us so profoundly, is in part to help us overcome the sorrow of not having her around. However, writing this piece is also an attempt to remind us of her influential and radical scholarship on gender, race, class, state, social relations, and

ideology. Roxana's approach to knowledge was integrative. It crossed the boundaries between academia and activism and body/mind. It was transformative, focused on meticulously articulating ruling relations of power to challenge domination and subordination of marginalized women and men. In this rich body of knowledge, there is much with which we can engage. However, we have decided to focus on one critical issue: the dialectics of praxis. We call it *critical* in order to point out the importance of fully grasping the dialectics of theory/practice and to suggest possibilities for revolutionary social transformation as a conscious act for the emancipation of humanity (Carpenter, 2011; Ritchie, 2013). This ambitious claim requires some contextualization and historicization.

Our Standpoint: Revolutionary Feminism

We are educators. We consider ourselves to be radical/revolutionary educators/activists and we work from the standpoint of the struggle to develop revolutionary feminist praxis. Over the last few years we have immersed ourselves in (re)reading some of the original Marxist texts in order to fully grasp the philosophy and method of historical dialectical materialism, with the aim of deeply connecting this mode of analysis with feminist and anti-racist political projects. In this collective attempt, race and gender constituted the tethered cords to hold social relations together. This reading is a profound expression of the act of weaving. Much like the weaving of fibers, we know that the development of revolutionary feminist praxis requires the re-weaving of the threads of everyday social life. In reading *The German Ideology,* for example, we examined the dialectics of productive and reproductive labour as class relations historically constituted through race and gender relations. We, like Roxana, argue that "contrary to the orthodox Marxist position,… class is not an autonomous phenomenon; it is a tapestry embroidered with gender and race, among other ingredients" (Ng 1996, p. 10).

Our deep and close reading of Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto, Capital, Grundrisse*, 'On the Jewish Question,' and of Lenin in *What is to Be Done?, State and Revolution,* and *Imperialism,* in conversation with contemporary Marxist-feminist theorists, culminated in the co-edited book *Educating from Marx: Race, Gender and Learning* (Carpenter and Mojab, 2011a). We marked the end of the book with a new beginning by raising the question: How to formulate a theoretical framework, drawing on anti-racism, postcolonial studies, feminism, and dialectical historical materialism, through which we could better understand the particular historical moment in which we live? From this standpoint, how do we make invisible social relations visible? Finally, how do we teach this? Acknowledging the simple but not simplistic nature of these questions, we ended by stating:

> In the third chapter of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx demonstrates for us how, theoretically, capital has no limits. It is untrammeled in its ability to expand, enact, confuse, and obfuscate. People, however, have limits; we can become exhausted, physically and spiritually, by the struggle to move, and sometimes even breathe, in the midst of such oppression and despair. Marx, however, quickly moves on and by chapter nine has imposed on capital a colossal, but timid, limit: the power of humanity; the power to work and to learn and to change. Similarly, the social relations of difference we have deemed 'natural,' 'biological,' and 'inescapable' must confront their limit as well: our adherence to their power. Thus, we conclude, this learning is necessarily class struggle (p. 223).

This Marxist, feminist, and anti-racist understanding of class relations and class struggle brought us back to a fuller engagement with Roxana Ng and Paula Allman.[1]

The Dialectics of Race, Gender, and Class

Roxana and Paula insist in their work that we must treat class relations as *social relations*, which is indispensable to any theory of social relations, consciousness, or praxis. Roxana wrote in the conclusion of her study on community services:

> Returning to Marx and Engels's original formulations, the present study insists on treating class as a *social* relation which is fundamental to and permeates capitalist productive and reproductive activities. … When we take this view of class, we come to see that class relations are embedded in very ordinary features of everyday life (Ng, 1996 p. 84 emphasis in original).

Equally significant is Roxana's explication that class is also a set of practices that organizes relations among people. This is the profound contribution of Roxana's empirical work; her extremely meticulous study of the actual human and institutional practices that organize class relations. However, she takes this further by demonstrating that 'class practices' are also 'gendered practices' and 'racialized practices,' illuminating clearly the ways in which class, race, and gender are mutually organizing social relations rather than fragmented social realities that interact upon 'the body.' She denoted in her doctoral research, *Immigrant Women and the State: A Study in the Social Organization of*

[1] Paula Allman, a Marxist educator who also unexpectedly passed away on November 2, 2011, profoundly influenced us with her seminal discussion on Marx, consciousness, praxis, and learning (1999; 2001; 2007).

Knowledge (Ng, 1984) and her seminal book *The Politics of Community Services: Immigrant Women, Class and State* (Ng, 1996), that "…class cannot be understood as a separate phenomenon from gender and race. As my explication of the construction of immigrant women as a labour market category shows, gender and ethnicity/race are essential constituents in the organization of people's class location" (Ng, 1996, p.10). Significantly, present in Roxana's analysis is a theoretical and political commitment to the dialectical explication of social relations that never leans towards or compromises with idealist constructions of 'intersectionality' and 'subjectivity' within feminist theory (Aguilar, 2012; Bannerji, 1995; Ng, 1995).

To make the practices that organize class, gender, and racial divisions visible and 'knowable', Roxana also wrote (Ng, 1996):

> To make sense of the tensions and contradictions I witnessed at the employment agency, I followed a line of inquiry in sociology adapted from Marx's method of political economy… This approach has been called "institutional ethnography" by Smith… Unlike standard ethnographic research, which describes a local setting as if it was a self-contained unit of analysis, institutional ethnography seeks to locate the dynamics of a local settling in the complex institutional relations organizing the local dynamics (p. 20).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully develop a critique of Institutional Ethnography (IE) as being practiced today in academia, but we feel an urge to pause, albeit briefly, and provide some preliminary reflection on this important matter. Institutional ethnography, as an approach to research, aims to reorganize 'the social relations of knowledge of the social' (Smith, 2005, p. 29). The goals of institutional ethnography are not simply to produce knowledge on a given subject, but rather to reorient our ways of thinking about social reality and how it can be known. The undisputable power of Institutional Ethnography from the feminist-materialist standpoint is that it is a method of inquiry that actualizes the ontology and epistemology developed by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* (1991) and offers us an empirical method for dis-covering the processes of praxis and consciousness in the everyday organization of learning and social relations. However, to utilize the approach to these ends, as Roxana did in her groundbreaking research, requires what is affectionately referred to amongst institutional ethnographers as 'making the ontological shift' (Smith, 1987). The importance of this shift cannot be underestimated. Without it, IE, like any other qualitative approach to inquiry, will be reduced to a set of interview and textual analysis practices that, at best, can illuminate the workings of bureaucracy and at worst, simply replicate the ideological methods of knowledge production whose ultimate unraveling sits at the heart of the entire project (Carpenter, 2009). Roxana recognized

that institutional ethnography, used in this way, is an empirical approach to exploring the dialectics of race, gender, and class.

In this way, Roxana studied a community employment agency for immigrant women and asked "how immigrant women were organized into the positions they occupied in the labour market hierarchy" (Ng, 1996 p. 13). In the process of observing and documenting ways in which the agency was socially organized, she saw "how 'immigrant women' were *produced* as a labour market category, …[and] saw how class relations were reproduced in the ordinary activities of daily life" (p. 13, emphasis in original). Referencing Mao's work *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, she emphasized

> …it is precisely out of the process of bringing such contradictions to consciousness and facing up to illogicality or inconsistency, that a person takes a grip on his or her own fate. Politically it is vitally important that we understand how we change (Cockburn, 1983 as cited by Ng, 1996, p. 25).

We are extensively drawing from one of Roxana's earlier works, first to argue the importance of the reading of Marx that she offered, and second to expand on some notions such as contradictions, practice, experience, and social change which were not fully explicated in her writings, but are essential to her intellectual and political aims. We consider these notions key in understanding the politics and pedagogy of resistance against racist, colonial, and capitalist patriarchies. To do our theorization and show its implications for revolutionary social transformation, we have dedicated our group readings to the topic of Marxist-anti-racist-feminism. This is the conversation that we did not have with Roxana; we regret it.

Theorizing Consciousness and Praxis

Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity and put forward some ideas in order to open up the possibilities for a renewed debate on the dialectics of experience, learning, consciousness and practice in relation to the problematic of revolutionary feminism. The use of the term 'praxis' has a long and complicated history within educational theory. While the source of its growth, generation, change, and application are much debated, we have observed a fundamental problem in how the two parts of this relation (theory and practice) are theorized *in relation to each other*. This struggle is in part due to deficits within critical pedagogical theory that do not devote adequate attention to the foundational texts of the Marxist tradition of educational philosophy (Carpenter & Mojab, 2013). Given this struggle, an over-simplification of the concept of praxis is taken by educators from the complex notions articulated by Freire and Gramsci (Allman, 2001; Mayo, 2012). Its most common features are the conception of a linear,

sequential process of praxis, as a pragmatic method in with theory and action impact each other but do not form each other, or as a circular process of reflection that, while appearing different than the sequential linear model, poses no real differences in its conceptions of the relations between theory and practice. In both of these cases theory and practice are analyzed separately from one another as distinct social processes. Not only does such a usage obscure the unity of consciousness and praxis, it also shifts the terrain of what is knowable and ultimately plays a role in crippling the political outcomes of our theorizing work as feminists. In revitalizing the debate on the dialectics of praxis, therefore, we seek to emphasize the unity of theory and practice and so shed light on the significance of Roxana's insight that the mutual constitution of exploitation and racialization is knowable through a dialectical reading of people's practices.

Roxana's work expresses consistently that experiential reality is the starting point for any feminist or anti-racist inquiry and theorization into the constitution of social relations and everyday life. This commitment to 'standpoint' and the everyday as problematic was driven by her profound understanding of the complexity of experiential reality as a multiplicity of moments. Roxana detailed for us how any 'experience' is inseparable from both the social relations and conditions under which such an experience takes place as well as the consciousness and meaning making of the subject. Her rejection of the analytical processes that would pull apart experience in either pragmatic or reductionist directions or through theoretical tools that would fragment self from the social is not only embodied in her scholarship, but in her political activism and pedagogical commitments.

The theorization of experience as the object of critical inquiry and learning is embedded within the largely problematic of praxis (Carpenter, 2012). Within non-dialectical conceptualizations, experience is held at a distance from consciousness, as an object of inquiry that can be 'known' only by being separated from the 'knower.' This formulation obscures experience as an active, sensuous, conscious human activity, by which we mean that experience is always embedded within thinking and being. It is through our experience of thinking and being that we begin to know the social relations in which we live, for example relations of race, gender, and class. However, a second problematic theoretical tendency is to conceptualize experience as an individualized phenomenon. This is in contradiction with the historical and materialist articulation of the everyday present in Roxana's work, which adheres to Marx's argument:

> What is to be avoided above all else is the re-establishing of the 'Society' as an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual. The individual *is the social being*. His [her] life, even if it may not appear in the direct form of a *communal* life carried out together with others is therefore an expression and

> confirmation of *social life*. Man's [woman's] individual and species life are not *different* (1844/1978, p. 86).

If the sensuous practice of daily life is social, it is this practice, in both its individual and social expressions, that is the subject and object of the formation of critical or revolutionary consciousness, a consciousness that seeks a dialectical understanding of contradictions (Allman, 2001; Au 2007; Tse-Tung 2007).

The Dialectics of Contradictions

A central concern to further explicating the notion of praxis is unpacking the problem of contradictions. Roxana's work begins with the important processes of identifying and describing relations in contradiction (Ng, 1996). However, and this is an essential and often overlooked contribution, her work does not end with observing the presence of these contradictions or describing their appearance. Rather, she points out that within each observable contradiction we find, at a deeper level, a more profound contradiction obscured by processes of ideology. Any pedagogical approach to the problems of praxis and contradiction must begin with the understanding that contradictions are not flat. Some are deeper, more essential, than others. Imagine walking along the face of a volcanic rock. In this surface of the earth, a fissure is encountered; the rock has cracked open. While the crack in the surface can be observed in relation to its immediate surroundings (the grain and texture of the rock, the temperature of the air, the winds or tides), these surface appearances do not explain why this fissure has emerged. The rock has cracked because of its own internal pressure; the stress of its own internal force has produced the visible deformation. In order to pry the rock open and understand what has produced this rupture, theory is necessary. Theory, however, can only be built through the continued, unrelenting examination of the rock in relation to its surroundings and its deep essence, what is going on beneath its surface.

There are two essential elements in this example for immediate use by the pedagogue. First, the contradictions are not flat, they relate to one another in specific, historical, and material ways. For example, there is the persistent problem of a mechanical/non-dialectical reading of capital and labour in which labour power, as the core constitute of the contradiction, is undermined by the surface contradiction between these two supposed opposite (Rikowski, 2001). The feminist analysis of labour power in the processes of production and reproduction seeks to undermine this mechanistic approach by highlighting how it is that labour power disappears in this simplistic reading of the capital-labour contradiction (Fortunati, 1995; Federici, 2004). Without reaching for the relationality between contradictions, the value of reproductive labor remains invisible. It can only be known through both a feminist standpoint and a deeper engagement with

gender, race, and class contradictions. Second, returning to our rock metaphor, while we may separate the pieces of the rock into categories for theorization and observation, it is still the *whole earth*. This suggests the ways in which thought and action, praxis and contradiction, relations in unity, are historically co-incident. To argue that arise simultaneously, we are making the point that Mao has made by arguing that only on the plain of epistemology are these relations divisible; ontologically they are whole (Carpenter & Mojab, 2011b).

Thus we arrive at a dialectical conceptualization of praxis, through which we orient our inquiry and action towards the revolutionary transformation of the social whole. We have argued that the social is understood as internal to human practice, or that 'society' and the 'individual' cannot be abstracted from one another. Discursive and situated epistemologies have and do bring important narratives forward, and thus express and inspire the bubbling up of particular fundamental contradictions. For example, the recent incident in Cleveland, resulting in the rescue of three women, has become culturally significant in the United States in part because of the unintentional contributions of Charles Ramsay. Ramsay, an African-American neighbor, upon providing assistance to a white woman to escape her confinement, responded to a reporter by saying, "I knew something was wrong when a little pretty white girl ran to black man's arms." In this way, Ramsay is expressing a deeply situated knowledge of not only race relations in the United States but gender relations as well. Using our previous metaphor, he is, drawing on experiential knowledge, pointing out the crack in the rock. However, to go deeper into what he is alluding to we must overcome the epistemological limitation of experience in order to ontological unite the knowable with the knower. Working dialectically we understand the question of what is knowable as internal to people's practices, and as such cannot be separated from praxis (Allman, 2001). By emphasizing the dialectical motion of contradictions, our discussion challenges the notion that simply identifying contradictions is a sufficient horizon for critical inquiry and education. Rather, we argue that this important process is intimately related to the radical theorization of consciousness and the negation of contradictions through praxis.

Self and Society

Given this analysis of praxis, the centrality of theorizing consciousness comes clearly into view. Paula Allman has provided the most radical theorization of the relationship between experience, ideology, and practice. In her last short but theoretically dense book, *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx* (2007), she succinctly introduces us to the ideas of Marx on consciousness and praxis. She states: "Marx's theory of consciousness was actually a theory of praxis, i.e., a theory of the inseparable unity of thought and practice rather than a sequential theory of

praxis" (p. 33-34). There is, in this sense, an inseparable unity of thought and action, and thus we are internally related to the objectified world. In short, self and society are mutually constitutive. Allman suggested that Marx's theory of consciousness and capitalism enables us to critically question existing social relations and the transformation of these relations into two different and opposing forms: "critical/revolutionary praxis" or "uncritical/reproductive praxis" (Allman, 2007 p. 34). Reproductive praxis is simply the active re-making of capitalist social relations, and thus the general reproduction of existing forms of consciousness. As she noted, even when there is a definite interest in progressive social change, ideological explanations (which may insightfully describe the appearance of social relations but also obscure the essence of capital) can orient praxis towards the reproduction of existing social relations and the reform of oppressive social conditions. Critical consciousness and praxis, therefore, require that we struggle to see beyond the current appearance of global capital, and critically question the essence of the mode/relations of production and its associated forms of consciousness. Roxana's critique of the ideological practices of community services begins from this problematic: the well-meaning provision of social services to marginalized communities that, while providing basic social provisions, also reproduces the relations that constitute their exploitation. Allman's articulation of consciousness and praxis provides the grounds from which we can describe and problematize the unfolding of our current relations and struggles.

Central to Allman's reading of Marx is the point that consciousness is social *and* individual as well as materially situated, and thus objective, but not static. She postulated that Marx's dialectical-historical-materialist philosophy formulates a theory of consciousness that is not based on a dichotomy or binary separation between consciousness and reality. In fact, "…reality is conceptualized dynamically, as the sensuous, active experience of human beings in the material world. Therefore, at any one moment in time, consciousness is comprised of thoughts that arise from each human being's sensuous activity," and "the consciousness of any human being will also include thoughts that have arisen external to the individual's own sensuous activity, i.e., from other people's sensuous activity both historically and contemporaneously" (Allman, 2007 p. 32). There is a dialectical movement to consciousness that emphasizes its unity with praxis, and as such the unfolding of social relations is understood here as rooted in the dynamism of human activity.

As a point of departure for research and analysis, consciousness is a framework from which we can bring into view the individual's experience of social relations without fragmenting the social or reifying individualism. The unity of consciousness and praxis, moreover, means that human agency and social struggle are the forces behind societal change and the unfolding of history. In this sense, our individual and collective consciousness and praxis are at the heart of material social relations. For the purposes of developing revolutionary feminist praxis, we must take up the problematic of

consciousness and praxis. For this reason, Allman's work has been important to each of our respective areas of study because it provides a clear framework for expressing and fleshing out some of the important tensions between forms of resistance and the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Her explication aims to critically engage with the ways in which consciousness is oriented away from critical praxis by the social processes and ideologies that have developed as part of the capitalist mode of production. Her argument, however, is hinged upon the capacity of people to choose revolutionary praxis.

For Allman, critical consciousness begins when we choose to question the material relations in existence and work towards altering them so that life is better for *all* people (Allman, 2007). In Allman's words, "Neither critical/revolutionary praxis nor authentic revolution can be imposed on people; both must be chosen on the basis of a critical understanding of capitalism and a deeply integrated desire to begin the process of shaping our own and thus humanity's future...." (p. 34). To be clear, we do not to mean to suggest that people cannot freely make this choice. Rather, there is a subtle circularity to Allman's point that requires further critical reflection. People begin the process of struggling for critical consciousness and praxis when they choose to understand how to critically engage with the essence and appearance of capital, that is, whether or not to dig into the rock. However, this consciousness emerges out of the process of struggle.

The Dialectics of Contradictions in Social Struggle

In numerous readings of Paula Allman's work and through contemplation on her insights, we think we have finally been able to identify the additional work that we, as revolutionary educators, need to use in order to fully grasp the depth of Marx's theory of consciousness. Before explicating this claim further, let us outline one observation that we think will make the task of elaborating this point easier. With the rise of social movements globally, from the "Arab Uprising", the "Occupy Movement", the Chilean and Québec student movements and most recently the Indigenous led movement "Idle No More" in Canada, a range of debates on these movements have emerged. However, the range of debates has embedded within, certain assumptions about the methods for emerging critical praxis. It is our argument that the lens of contradiction would bring a much needed dimension to the discussion of the generation of critical praxis. For example, what *contradictions* are these movements identifying? How do they envision tackling these *contradictions*? Finally, what methods would they use to resolve these *contradictions*? We have intentionally highlighted the notion of *contradictions* in order to emphasize the fact that we have failed to assess the practice of these movements within the framework of what Allman calls "critical/revolutionary praxis" or "uncritical/reproductive praxis." In other words, these debates, often and at best, has been

limited to labeling the practice and consciousness of today's social activists as 'centrist,' 'reformist' or 'liberal.' Our argument is not that the naming is incorrect; rather the naming does not specify the theoretical slippages of non-dialectical modes of analysis of consciousness and praxis that lead to 'centrist,' 'reformist,' or 'liberal' social movements. The lenses of contradiction and revolutionary praxis are invaluable tools to resolve the fragmented landscape of social movements and the seemingly unresolvable and unbridgeable divides between 'the local' and 'the global' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010; Choudry, et al, 2012).

Therefore, returning to an earlier point, we intend to expand Allman's insights on Marx's theory of consciousness and praxis by introducing Mao's dialectical and materialist analysis of 'contradictions' and 'practice'. Allman writes,

> As always, with Marx, his conceptualization of ontology and epistemology is relational. His relational conceptualization of ontology leads to a theory of social 'being' and 'becoming', which is based on the internal relation between our individuality and our collectivity, rather than one that focuses solely on individuals. In addition, Marx's conceptualization of epistemology pertains not just to the relational origin, constitution and nature of knoweldges but also to our relation with knowledge (2007, p. 52).

Mao contends that knowledge begins with a dialectical conceptualization of experience, understood as ontology and subjectivity, and that there is a dialectical and materialist relationship between knowledge and knowability or epistemology and objectivity. While praxis is, for Allman, "a theory of the inseparable unity of thought and practice," for Mao, the relationship between thought and practice, as well as thinking and social being, is one of the "unity and struggle of opposites," a relationship in which one always divides into two, where consciousness transforms into matter and matter into consciousness. We contend that Mao's dialectical approach deepens our understanding of the theory of practice and activism. He stated (1973),

> According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes

> on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction (p. 101).

If we undertook the project of collectively mapping the 'universality' of these contradictions, the 'particularity' of the contradictions, the relations between contradictions, the 'identity and struggle of the aspects of contradictions,' we would dig substantially deeper into the cracks in the rock.

Given this critique, we have flagged the limitations of social movements built upon non-dialectical modes of thinking, specifically, their failure to see contradictions, internal relations, universality and particularity, or the local and the global. These movements are diverse and contested social forms, driven by competing forms of analysis, practice-based knowledge, and many 'ways of saying' what exactly is going on. However, we argue that our historical moment calls us to bring a sense of universality to our movement building. As much as we must pay attention to and appreciate the particularity of struggle at the local level, we must, in a very sophisticated and dialectical way, connect these struggles to universal social relations through a passionate engagement with contradictions.. If we seek to overcome the limits of reform, these limits can only be understood through the ongoing struggle to not just change the world but understand it, meaning that this project can be driven to higher levels through a ceaseless push to revolutionize praxis (Tse-Tung, 1997). We can then return to Allman, where she concludes, "[T]herefore, Marx's theory of consciousness involves not only the dialectical, or internal relations between consciousness and material practice but also, by logical extension, an internal relation between human objectivity and subjectivity" (Allman, 2007, p. 33).

What we have argued in this paper manifests our deep theoretical curiosity on how to understand and change the world, an undertaking that presents us daily with more complex challenges and has the propensity to fragment mind/body or society/self. Let us take a moment and think about local and global conditions which (re)produce poverty, war, violence against women and youth, slavery, occupation, dispossession, environmental destruction, displacement of communities, and other devastations. Let us also think about modes of resistance in prisons, on the street, in unions, in universities and schools, in workplaces, and other imaginative spaces of arts and social media. Do we need more evidence and ingenuity to declare that we do not deserve injustice and inequality? Shouldn't we instead think through *subversive* pedagogical possibilities that can draw attention to the local and global material and historical reality of lives of women and men? At the core of the subversive pedagogy should be the understanding that people live in relations, the state is the structure to arbitrate ruling relations, and it is the totality of the capitalist relations of power that should be dismantled. Roxana (1995) thought this

through in her chapter "Teaching against the grains: Contradictions and possibilities," where she discussed sexism, racism, and power relations in the classroom and addressed, albeit briefly, the relationship between consciousness and contradiction. In our classroom dialogues, we have consistently noticed the disappearance of *relations* and the *state* from participants' analysis. Individuals' 'agency' and the processes of being 'empowered' through civil society, market or state mechanisms are instead presented as 'oppositional' to the status quo. This seemingly 'oppositional' stance confuses the freedom of personhood with human emancipation. Marx labeled freedom of personhood as 'political emancipation' in contrast to 'human emancipation' to specify the possibilities and limits of bourgeois/liberal democracy. In liberal democracy we become equal to one another, formally, before the law, and in the market. In other words, "[T]he freedom to be *unfree* characterizes our daily existence" (Carpenter & Mojab 2011, p. 221, emphasis in original). It takes enormous intellectual energy and courage to suggest, as Marx did, that "men [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" (Marx, 1852/1978 p. 437). This pre-existing condition is called *necessity*, that is, the conditions and structures that constitute the social relations that we are born into and we inherit from the past. As we have argued previously,

> Only through the collective will to transform such necessity will any real freedom be achieved. Only by working to change such necessity, to transform the materiality of daily life, can consciousness of freedom be changed. This is where democracy can be achieved not only in appearance, but in essence as well. To put it differently, this is where bourgeois democracy and its notions of freedom will be confronted as ideology and can be transformed by revolutionary democracy (Carpenter & Mojab 2011a, p. 221).

Dismantling such structures cannot be realized without understanding them. For example, without feminist knowledge, it will not be possible to dismantle patriarchy or without anti-racist knowledge, racism will not be eradicated. As colleagues and students of Roxana, we know well her deep understanding of this proposition and her commitment to the classroom as a cite of 'undoing' these relations. However, her informed perspective on how to 'undo' was constantly engaged with the realities of social reproduction. Her attempts to revolutionize learning were drawn from and in opposition to the easy options to simply reform such as a space. In other words, she knew that she could not theorize a revolutionary space without a deep understanding of its contradictions and its propensities towards reproducing racialized patriarchal capitalist social relations (Ng, 1993).

Roxana bravely led the way in embodied learning, a pedagogical approach where mind and body are understood and treated as an integrative whole. In this approach, she effectively and powerfully covered the impact of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy on body, mind, consciousness, and ideology. We know that she did not exchange materiality for emotionality, or thoughts for emotions. She remained committed to the interconnectedness of thought/body/action; surely it is recognizable that Roxana's exploration of embodied learning was itself an exploration of contradictions. She herself argued, that any kind of activist or critical learning or research requires the unearthing of contradiction.

> As I see it, the analyst's responsibility is to make visible the structural constraints within which groups have to operate. In identifying existing sources of contradictions, the analyst can help groups to develop an ongoing analysis of new areas of struggles and change…Ultimately, analysis of these contradictory processes enable us to discover how the state works to constrain and limit the actions of working people. Importantly, they can help us to assess the strengths and weakness of various community actions and movements, so that we may work more effectively to transform the conditions of our lives (p. 95)

Acknowledgements

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In Memoriam

ROXANA NG: THINKING AND ACTING 'AGAINST THE GRAIN'

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Keywords
Embodied learning, institutional ethnography, migrant workers, Roxana Ng

Roxana Ng, advisory board member and an important supporter of the Society for Socialist Studies and the journal, died on January 12, 2013. What follows is an inadequate reminder of her life and especially her work but I hope even this short remembrance will encourage scholars to return to her writing or discover it anew.

Roxana's academic and activist work informed each other. In her research, she was engaged in unmasking how class, gender and race inequalities are reproduced through mundane institutional relations. She emphasized that intentions are less important than the ways we all work within contexts of unequal social relations, so that reflexive awareness of the 'how' of these social relations is an essential and necessary first step to challenging intertwined racism, sexism and class exploitation. Her activism and in another way her research supported efforts, particularly by and for immigrant women workers, to create solidarity as part of the process of building new kinds of social relations, both for here and now and to prefigure a radically transformed world of social(ist) justice.

In her classroom, Roxana practiced innovative embodied pedagogies that practically deconstructed taken-for-granted mind/body dichotomies through the practice of Qi Gong, whilst also laying bare the ways that racism, sexism and class inequalities played themselves out in the classroom and outside of it. As she recounted and analysed in her article 'A Woman Out of Control' (1993), this often came at the cost of marginalization by the administration and frank hostility from (some white male) students made uncomfortable by her relentless tracking of the expressions of power relations in everyday interactions. Many others, especially but not only minoritized women, gained strength and insight from her deconstructions of the often-invisible

relations of power and exploitation that shape everyday life, including in the classroom.

Among her many activities, academic and activist, Roxana was a firm and enthusiastic supporter of *Socialist Studies/Etudes Socialistes*. In response to the journal's efforts to engage more consistently with feminist, anti-racist, Indigenous and other counterhegemonic approaches, as they inform socialism, she wrote to me in September 2012, "I am VERY pleased that Socialist Studies found a way of moving forward…. I have always supported the group and the publication. We NEED a forum in Canada to put forward issues from a socialist perspective. So I am totally supportive." And she was supportive, practically, in lending her expertise and scholarly reputation to the scientific board and in helping me identify other scholars whose involvement I should seek out for the journal. This support will be missed. Most of all, it is difficult to think of the engaged conversation that has been interrupted, from a woman whose every day life was an example –in the classroom, in her writing, in her activism – of energy and commitment to social(ist) justice.

We will honour Roxana next year, with a special issue around her work, coordinated by Sedef Arat-Koç, a member of editorial board. Here, appropriately for an issue on transgressive pedagogies and research, are some of Roxana's own words. In them, she advises us to think and act "against the grain" of hegemonic practices and discourses, in and outside of the university, even when this comes at a cost to ourselves. Indeed, she knew herself, too well, the costs of thinking and acting against the grain (Ng 1993) without letting this ever defeat her commitment to transformative social change. Moreover, she sought practically to make these costs more bearable, by working for and in solidarity with marginalized, exploited and dominated classes and groups. Here she is, in her own words (Ng 1993):

> I recommend that we try to think and act "against the grain"…. To act against the grain requires one first to recognize that routinized courses of action and interactions within the university are imbued with unequal power distributions which produce and reinforce various forms of marginalization and exclusion. Thus, a commitment to redress these power relations involves interventions and actions that may appear "counter- intuitive. We need to rupture ways university business and interactions are "normally" conducted…
>
> We must develop a critical awareness of the power dynamics operating in institutional relations, and of the fact that people participate in institutions as unequal subjects. We must take an antisexist/antiracist approach to understanding and acting upon institutional relations, rather than

> overlooking the embeddedness of gender, race, class, and other forms of inequality that shape our interactions…
>
> We must speak out against normalized courses of action that maintain existing inequality, although this may alienate us from those in power as well as those close to us. We must actively support our minority colleagues in their teaching, administrative, and other responsibilities, and consciously open up spaces for previously silenced or marginalized voices to be heard. We must create spaces for students to interrogate existing paradigms and to explore alternative ones, and support them in other endeavours. We must also constantly interrogate our own taken-for-granted ways of acting, thinking, and being in the world…
>
> Finally, I want briefly to take up the issue of safety and comfort, because these words have become currency in debates around discourses and practices that challenge existing modes of thinking and working. Understanding oppression and doing antiracist work is by definition unsafe and uncomfortable, because both involve a serious (and frequently threatening) effort to interrogate our privilege as well as our powerlessness. To speak of safety and comfort is to speak from a position of privilege, relative though it may be. For those who have existed too long on the margins, life has never been safe or comfortable. Understanding and eliminating oppression and inequality oblige us to examine our relative privilege, to move out of our internalized positions as victims, to take control over our lives, and to take responsibility for change. Such an undertaking is by definition risky, and therefore requires commitment to a different vision of society than that which we now take for granted.
>
> Teaching and learning against the grain is not easy, comfortable, or safe. It is protracted, difficult, uncomfortable, painful, and risky. It involves struggles with our colleagues and our students, as well as within ourselves. It is, in short, a challenge.

Roxana fearlessly took up that challenge herself and now we are left to assume this challenge ourselves, but without her. She will be missed.

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Poetry

LONG WAY FROM HOME

EMMA LAROCQUE

1994. Reprinted with permission from
ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature. Vol.25:1.

Long Way From Home

I've walked these hallways
a long time now
hallways held up by
stale smoke
thoughts

I've walked these hallways
a long time now
hallways pallored by
ivory-coloured
thoughts

I've walked these hallways
for a long time now
hallways without windows
no way to feel the wind
no way to touch the earth
no way to see

I've walked these hallways
a long time now
every September closed doors
stand at attention
like soldiers

guarding fellow inmates
guarding footnotes

guarding biases

as I walk by

I do my footnotes so well
nobody knows where I come from
hallways without sun
the ologists can't see
they count mainstreet
bodies behind bars
they put Ama's moosebones
behind glass
they tell savage stories
in anthropology Cree

My fellow inmates
they paste us prehistoric
standing in front of us
as if I am not there too
as if I wouldn't know
what they think they show
showing what they don't know
they don't know what they show
they take my Cree for their PhD's
like Le Bank
as my Bapa would say
they take our money for their pay

When I first came to these hallways
I was young and dreaming
to make a difference
thinking truth

With footnotes pen paper
chalk blackboard
I tried to put faces
behind cigar store glazes
I tried to put names
behind the stats
of us brown people

us
us brown people
in jails
in offices
in graveyards
in livingrooms
but to them it was
just Native biases

I've walked these hallways
a long time now
hallways hallowed by
ivory-towered
bents

way too long now
hallways whitewashed with
committee meetings memos
promotion procedures
as fair as war
pitting brown against colonized brown
choosing pretend Indians

When I first came to these hallways
I was young and dreaming
to make a difference

but only time has passed
taking my Ama and Bapa
my Nhisis my Nokom
my blueberry hills
I've walked these hallways

a long time now
I wanna go home now
I'm tired of thinking for others
who don't wanna hear anyways

I wanna go home now
I want to see the evening stars

get together for a dance
the northern light way
like Ama's red river jig
I want to see the sun rise
hot orange pink
like Bapa's daybreak fire

no one could see the morning come
as my Bapa
no one could scurry in the stars
as my Ama

I wanna go home now
but where is home now?

I do my footnotes so well
nobody knows where I come from
my relatives think
I've made it
they don't know
how long I've walked these hallways
my feet hurt
at 43
I wanna play hookey
but I can't
I have credit cards to pay
footnotes to colonize
My relatives think
I've made it
they don't know
who all owns me
they won't lend me money
from their UIC's
my relatives laugh.

Oh I did my footnotes so well
nobody knows where I come from

I've walked these hallways
with them a long time now

and still they don't see
the earth gives eyes
injustice gives rage
now I'm standing here
prehistoric and all
pulling out their fenceposts of civilization
one by one
calling names in Cree
bringing down their mooneow hills
in English too
this is home now.

Article

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

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Keywords

Co-existence, dialogic encounter, indigeneity, Indigenous research, social science

Biographical note

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Research does not exist outside of place nor outside of history. Thus, I begin by recognizing the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, now known as the continent of North America, on whose Land I stand today. As a scholar of African descent my Indigenousness is lived in cultural memory and in my body. I share my Indigeneity with others on whose Land I have chosen to settle. At the same time, by choosing to settle on Turtle Island I recognize I have also become complicit in the White colonialist/settler occupation of other peoples' land. Other perspectives I bring to this discussion come from my intellectual and political position as a sociologist with a critical questioning

mind informed by my solidarity with other Indigenous peoples. Therefore, I see my scholarship and politics as incomplete if such work does not further a project of questioning the occupation of "Stolen Lands". To this end I want to push the edges of the intellectual envelope and troublesome taken for granted assumptions that guide much of social science research. Throughout this text I take up Indigeneity as an identity, a part of myself that I can take for granted because of my rootedness in Indigenous social relations and places. At the same time – and somewhat paradoxically – Indigeneity is a process of coming to a specifically Indigenous consciousness.

Social Research and 'Unquestioned Answers'

I recall a conversation very long ago with a colleague who argued that 'research' is "alien" to Indigenous peoples given the colonial history of dominant social science research. Historically, dominant social science research has been parasitic, in the literal sense that normal social scientific practices have siphoned off Indigenous knowledges, without contributing to the survival or wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, scientific 'research' has used Indigenous peoples as 'guinea pigs' in the furtherance of the development of Western [social] science disciplines, up to and including murderous 'experiments' on Indigenous peoples.[1] At the time, I argued strenuously that despite this, research is not a monopoly of Western 'science'; rather research is something that all peoples can lay claim to and that all peoples may use. I have not changed my thoughts on this and still support the potential for social science, including social science by and for Indigenous peoples. However, increasingly I have become wary of social science research and its colonial impositions. Hence, I have wondered if my friend was right, after all? Recently, in a graduate class on 'Frantz Fanon and Decolonization: Pedagogical Challenges' at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, a doctoral student of mine, Rainos Mutumba reiterated a similar critique of 'academic research' arguing that academic research is so thoroughly compromised by its entanglements with colonialism that it is fundamentally incompatible with Indigenous communities and their priorities.

To ground the sources of the contention we should first ask: what is [social] research? I see research as an investigation, as a search for knowledge and as a variety of ways to communicate such knowledge to others in the spirit of shared understandings of our worlds and mutual co-existence. If we accept this operational definition of research that I am putting forward here, then it stands to reason that research has always been a central part of all existence and that the passing on of knowledge in communities constitutes a research activity. Defined in this way, it becomes clear that from time

[1] The notorious case of the sex workers in the Majengo, Nairobi slums, who have been 'studied' for decades for their resistance to HIV, without any meaningful improvements in their lives, is just one example.

immemorial Indigenous Peoples have done research: they have studied, analyzed, interpreted and communicated their cultural and natural surroundings to themselves and to others. Their methods of knowledge, however, are quite different from mainstream colonial research. Dominant approaches to social science are just one way of doing research but certainly not the 'only' way.

In his book *Research is Ceremony* (2008), Cree scholar Shawn Wilson speaks of research as being all about unanswered questions but also a process of revealing *our unquestioned answers*. Wilson also posits that an Indigenous paradigm of research holds true to principles of relationality and of relational accountability (p. 6). By this, he means that ideas develop through relations we have with others, including kin, and that in our research we are accountable to those with whom we have relationships. Indeed, Wilson argues that our ideas only make sense within the context of our relations, maintaining that '(a)n idea cannot be taken out of this relational context and still maintain its shape' (p. 8). Thus, Wilson maintains that relationality is a major difference between conventional 'academic'/Western research and Indigenous research. In Indigenous research, he argues the emphasis is not on rules and abstractions, but on building relationships, for example through storytelling, that allows for the sharing of life experiences. In this relational view, knowledge cannot be ethical unless it helps create positive changes in the lives of research participants. With Wilson, I would argue that this relational approach is research too: a way of searching and of coming to know, but grounded in resolutely Indigenous worldviews.

The Indigenous Research Agenda

This paper sets out to tease out some of the parameters of Indigenous research. I do not focus so much on the methodological approach to Indigenous research. I am more interested in a philosophical or conceptual discussion of what Indigenous research is or is not. I maintain that Indigenous research is different from mainstream colonial/Western science research. I also reiterate unapologetically that the days of Non-Indigenous peoples becoming 'experts' on Indigenous peoples are long over. Everywhere Indigenous scholars and researchers are resisting and writing from and for their own communities. In the discussion I bring my own personal and scholarly perspectives on Indigenous research, the aims, scopes, practices that I see as most critical. A key argument I hope to convey is that that Indigenous research is just one aspect of a much broader, transformative project of Indigenous resistance (and decolonization) in all spheres of life.

Indigenous research has a particular research agenda. Indigenous research (like anti-colonial and anti-racist research) has a specific political and academic goal to subvert the dominant ideology that seeks to dismiss, downplay and decenter the importance and relevance of local peoples knowing in everyday practice (see Dei and Johal, 2005). A

critical Indigenous research methodology must explore how the subjects of study resist continuous colonizing relations and practices, including many of the 'normal' practices of social science. Research must explore the nature and extent of the popular forms of consciousness that inform Indigenous resistances and the local peoples' interpretations of everyday practice and experiences. In this way, Indigenous researchers challenge the dominant approach of researching Indigenous people for 'data', an oppressive practice that transforms Indigenous peoples into research 'objects' to be 'mined' by the researcher. Indigenous researchers argue that Indigenous peoples lives cannot be pursued as research 'content', so that they become mere descriptive appendages to theoretical formulations. Instead, research must recognize the ways Indigenous peoples themselves make and create knowledge.

It is important to reiterate from the onset that I am not calling for doing away entirely with Western science knowledge and research. For one thing we can't: co-existence of knowledge already exists in our communities. The issue then becomes how we deal with the dilemmas of this co-existence. As Andreotti, Ahenakew and Cooper (2011) have argued, in other contexts, as Indigenous researchers/scholars if we are to present Indigenous knowings/research as "too different' we risk being interpreted as making "no sense" and therefore not worthy of "knowledge/research practice" (p. 45). Or, if these knowledges/research practices are presented as very similar to dominant ways of knowing/research, then Indigenous knowledges/research can be perceived as having no value and/or not adding anything new nor significant to Eurocentric or colonial knowledge and research.

Another issue that arises is the nature of the co-existence of Western and Indigenous knowledges. Are we talking about parallel bodies of knowledge, and if so, how do we challenge the dominance of Western humanist ideologies and research practices that tend to devalue other bodies of thought and local communities? Or are we interested in producing a new synthesis that would rupture power relations of knowledge production in the Western academy? How is this to be practically accomplished given the risk of the asymmetrical assimilation of Indigenous knowledges into Eurocentric research practices? Yet another challenge of negotiating the co-existence of Western and Indigenous research is that in the Western academy we are constantly asked to separate our scholarship from our political activism. But as Indigenous researchers we do not stand apart from our local communities. After all, our communities help sustain us in the brutal world of the Western academy and its colonial satellites all over the world.

Ultimately, I would argue that Indigenous research is a complex decolonized approach of producing, interrogating, validating and disseminating knowledge based on Indigenous peoples' cosmology/worldview or 'worldsense' [Oyewumi, 1997]. Indigenous research is rooted in diverse Indigenous values system that bring with them their own unique methodological and theoretical framework, accepted by an epistemic community of Indigenous peoples (and not only 'certified' Indigenous scholars). Yet in arguing that

Indigenous research is part of on-going colonial resistance other key questions arise. For example, what constitutes research in Indigenous communities? How do our epistemologies and conceptual frameworks engage questions of politics and embodiment? What do we see as the moral, ethical, spiritual and cosmological dimensions of producing knowledge about Indigenous peoples and their communities? In all this, there is a danger of epistemic insularity that must be replaced with epistemic openness. This is not only true of Indigenous research; to expand the explanatory power of the science of research, we must subvert the ethnocentrism of Western science's research as a lens to interrogate Indigenous communities and the Indigenous human condition (see Dei, 2011).

Indigenous Research as Healing

We must challenge the one trick pony of Western research methodologies. For contemporary research on and in Indigenous communities, we must interrogate issues that are specifically excluded from dominant Eurocentric approaches to research. These include questions of how we bring emotional attachment and embodiment to the subject of our pursuit; how our research becomes relevant to our communities and not just to our academies and to the demands of publication linked to professional advancement; how we rethink communities in research collaboration and how we engage local communities in our work as key and equal partners in research. Raising these questions is part of the broader commitment to strengthening local peoples' capacities to undertake their own research.

The question of embodiment in Indigenous research is more than understanding knowledge as socially and discursively constructed and it is more than a plea not to intellectually distance ourselves from the knowledge we produce. Embodiment in Indigenous research is also about "sentient perceptions and the search for symbiotic relationship between physical, mental, emotional and spiritual experiences" (Batacharya, 2010). Taken this way, research becomes a way to connect to our physical, social, emotional and spiritual selves. Apart from placing embodiment in a social dynamics and context of research, there must also be a recognition that embodiment hurts. When we conduct research we implicate our bodies in taking responsibility for the knowledge we produce. Thus research holds possibilities for spiritual and physical wounding. The understanding of embodiment in Indigenous research therefore should touch on healing. Put another way, for the colonized and oppressed, Indigenous research can and must be a healing process. It is an approach to study and understand ourselves and our communities, including to understanding and healing pain resulting from colonial relations.

Indigenous Research as a Dialogic Encounter

As Wilson emphasizes, Indigenous research seeks a relational status with our communities in the search for knowledge. Local peoples are seen as legitimate co-producers of knowledge, in ways not typically recognized in Western research with its emphasis on the exclusive expertise of the certified researcher. Moreover, Indigenous research is aimed at sustaining local peoples' capacity to undertake their own research, under their own terms and rules of engagement. It is about building human capacities in local communities. In this way, Indigenous research asks: how do we co-produce knowledge with our communities in ways that fundamentally shift the established ways of knowledge production? In other words, how can Indigenous research challenge Western ways of knowing, including within the social sciences?

In practice, challenging dominant ways of knowledge production involves critical dialogues among multiple parties – a sort of 'dialogic encounter' with an 'epistemic community'. Elsewhere (Dei, 1999) I have defined the "epistemic community" as scholars and community workers with shared intellectual leanings and a shared commitment to equity and social justice. This includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. This epistemic space is a place for researchers and learners to openly utilize the body, mind, spirit and soul interface in critical dialogues about understanding their communities. It is also a space that nurtures conversations that acknowledges the importance and implications of working with a knowledge base about the society, culture, and nature nexus. Among other things, this epistemic space considers nature – the land, water and our relations with non-human species – as a vital part of knowledge production and knowledge sharing. Such spaces can only be created when we open our minds broadly to reimagine research as a site and opportunity to challenge dominant paradigms and academic reasoning (see Dei, 2013a).

With regards to decolonizing research in the academy, the two key areas of recent focus are: developing Indigenous methodologies for the study of a phenomenon and developing research protocols with Indigenous peoples and communities. We know Maori researchers have already taken significant leads on these two fronts in their own communities. We must search for ways of affirming and validating a wide range of such Indigenous methodological approaches in the (Western) academy. At a minimum, this means recognizing that research is not a one-way conversation. Indigenous research seeks to establish relationships between researcher and local peoples by developing a high degree of trust as a priority to ensure openness, honesty and integrity. It places emphasis on establishing true rapport with subjects in order to generate meaningful field data. This is meant to ensure that the researcher is not the sole and sovereign arbiter deciding whether data is meaningful or not – the meaningfulness of findings is the outcome of a relationship and ongoing conversation between the researcher and Indigenous

communities. Practically, this means that short-term research relationships are eschewed in favour of strong lasting and responsible relationships with respondents.

Regarding developing research protocols with Indigenous communities, the emphasis is on how we maintain ethics and the integrity of a research process or what Wilson (2008) refers to as axiology – the ethics or morals that guide the search for knowledge and judge which information is worthy of searching for. Axiology also concerns itself with how that knowledge is gained and asks: "What part of this reality is worth finding out more about?" "What is ethical to do in order to gain this knowledge and what will this knowledge be used for?" (Wilson 2008, p. 34). Our approach to scientific research should be in meaningful power-sharing partnership with local communities, upholding our responsibilities to local communities and addressing questions of academic responsibility and social expectations on the part of the academic researcher. Indigenous research protocols relate to the conduct of the actual research, including ways of gaining entry into local communities, what is research on, how research information is gathered and used and who has final control and ownership of the research process.

The Transformative Potential of Indigenous Research

Indigenous research questions the problematic of veiled neutrality and asks about the transformative potential of social research. Radebe (2012) rightly notes that "colonial discourses continue to permeate knowledge production…[and] despite [Indigenous and minority bodies] increasing representation in academic scholarship," research in the arts, humanities and the social and natural sciences are dominated by non-Indigenous protocols and researchers who are assigned discursive and ethnographic authority on Indigenous communities (see also Harding, 2004; Smith, 1997; Smith, 1993; Swigonski, 1993; Longino, 1993 in related contexts). Mainstream research continues to speak as if it were 'universal' while embodying the priorities and concerns, but also the ways of knowing, of those in relatively powerful social locations. But this claim to universality can no longer be sustained. We know that a researcher's social location, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and age are far from irrelevant to research, whether done by the powerful or by those in relatively dominated social locations. Social locations offer particular knowledges that are relevant to and do influence the conduct and interpretations of research (Dei and Johal 2005, Litowitz, 2009; Khan, 2005; Loutzenhesier, 2007). Practically, this means that white male 'experts' can no longer speak as if from places of universal authority; while Indigenous researchers and their unique insights must be newly appreciated for what they can bring to a transformed social science, especially when it comes to explaining and describing Indigenous experience.

For many of us doing critical anti-racist, anti-colonial and Indigenous research we have come to realize that there are obvious limitations in the ability of traditional or conventional social research paradigms and methods to capture and explain the experiences of Indigenous, minoritized, colonized and oppressed peoples. To counter and redress these limitations the primary focus in Indigenous research methodology ought to be on the experiences of the Indigenous, colonized and oppressed subjects as key to understanding issues of Indigeneity, oppressions and the pursuit of transformative praxis (see Smith, 1999). Indigenous research works with the "epistemic saliency" (i.e., acknowledging the relevance, authenticity and primacy of local claims of knowing) of marginalized voices in accounting for their own experiences of oppression and colonization. Such epistemic saliency refers to the authenticity of local subject voice but not in the sense of purity or a voice uncontaminated. Rather, it rests on the important recognition of the centrality of such voice in a researcher coming to know and understand the lived experiences of the researched. Indigenous research foregrounds such voice, as well as the personal, experiential and a political subject in search for social change. But Indigenous research does not take a "romanticized view" of subject voices, and neither does it exclude research participants from participating in theory building, data analysis and interpretation (Loutzenheriser, 2007; p. 15).

Local peoples' narratives are well-woven together with theoretical explorations in Indigenous research. In effect, Indigenous research foregrounds local participants/peoples' voices *in research,* rather than subordinating their contributions to the researcher's analysis and the literature. Indigenous research places the self, subjectivity at the centre of social analysis, and subjectivity is viewed as an important site of knowing and learning. Indigenous research reflects on research as a personal and a political journey. Indigenous research embraces the idea of community and common destiny and research becomes a recovery of one's humanity, personhood and spirit. In effect Indigenous research is about making the material, physical and spiritual connection in the search for knowledge through social research.

Indigenous Research as Life-Changing Ceremony

In understanding research as colonial or Indigenous, it is important to put the matter of scholarly research in a broader context. There are some fundamental questions to be asked regarding the conditions and the socio-political contexts for research; what are the forces behind the push for social research; what type of research is being done and how, and to what intents and purposes? Indigenous research is about heralding such questions, including: what does it mean to develop a research culture in the Western academy and for a faculty to develop a research profile? Within the academy, so-called 'scholarly research' has always been pursued in a competitive landscape and for the most

part is driven more by needs of the market than the interest of the communities under study. Indigenous research demands that Western-based and Western-trained academics and researchers begin to rethink the what, when, how and why of social research. Indigenous research is driven foremost by the interests of the local communities being researched rather than the interests of the academic disciplines of the researcher of the corporate funders of the research being undertaken. What this means is that questions of the relevance of knowledge and research are and should always be at the forefront of a researcher's intellectual pursuits. Similarly, Indigenous research aims at transformation as an end goal. This research seeks to transform communities rather than maintaining the existing order of things. This calls for research to always examine the exercise of power and the ways asymmetrical power relations structure a given community and the subject of study. Indigenous research is thus in many ways about domination studies from an anti-colonial perspective.

Indigenous research continues research as a sacred activity or as ceremony, a "raising of consciousness," as positioned by Wilson (2008). He goes on to assert that "Indigenous research *is* a life changing ceremony" (Wilson, 2008, p. 61). The sacredness of research activity associated with local research rests on the connection between the physical and metaphysical realms of social existence and how knowledge about the human condition connects issues of spirituality, Land teachings and the reverence of Mother Earth. Research in Indigenous communities cannot proceed without the spiritual blessing of the ancestors and Mother Earth. Research activity then is accorded a reverence given the blessing of Elders, ancestors and the cultural custodians in local communities. As Wilson (2001) claims, as a researcher "you are answering to *all your relations* when you are doing research" (p. 177). The central place of the spiritual and spirituality in research serves to distinguish dominant/colonial [social] research from Indigenous research. Dominant research resting on the trappings of a limited understanding of science tends to dismiss the spiritual as anti-intellectual and not knowledge. Conventional [social science] research is still struggling to study and engage spirituality in knowledge production and social science research methodologies are yet to be appropriately engaged to fully comprehend the place of spirituality in human lives.

Indigenous research also raises questions about intellectual property differently. It is not so much about who own the knowledge or field data as how is due recognition given to local subjects as the producers of knowledge gained. Indigenous research acknowledges a central tenet in Indigenous knowledge; the idea that knowledge is based on the association of the social and natural worlds and that such knowledge so acquired should be shared among all people for the betterment of humankind. The idea of knowledge through research being sold in the market place of ideas is *alien* to Indigenous research. Knowledge obtained through indigenous research methodologies cannot be appropriated by any one individual or body. Indigenous research also asks for recognition of the co-producers of knowledge. Local subjects are not just 'informants' or

'sources of data'. Their communities are legitimate knowledge producers in terms of the source of data collection and the explanation/theorization of such data. In effect, Indigenous research does not work with a separation of the researcher and the research subject. Such a research approach helps create a "community of learners" among researchers and local participants in research, operating with shared responsibilities about the goal, purpose, ethics and values of social research.

Indigenous scholars in the Western academy must always be conscious and wary of being caught in the web of the colonial project. Researchers cannot take for granted but must ask the following questions: what constitutes scholarly academic research, what is 'good' research and how should such research be approached and pursued? As I argue in a forthcoming paper on 'The Black Scholar' (Dei, 2013b) we must understand the myriad readings and positionalities of the Indigenous researcher to ground critical scholarship in questions of ethical responsibility, social and community relevance and political change. In effect, the worth of an Indigenous scholar cannot simply be measured in the philosophical grounding of our work (research, writing, dialogues etc.); but also, in how such work offers a social and political corrective to our communities. Indigenous research methods and methodologies can be applied anywhere. However, Indigenous research is imperative if we want to understand Indigenous communities. Too often, as researchers we claim a "right" in a space to do research, where such "rights" are dangerously conceptualized as our property or entitlement; an idea of rights so removed from Indigenous cultures that scholarly pursuits carried out with this rationalization should be questioned. Personally, I have also had to struggle with coming to terms with what it means to be a 'scholar and researcher' in the Western academy, how we remain true to ourselves as Indigenous scholars and researchers, and not becoming preoccupied with continually seeking validation, legitimation and acceptance in the eyes of a truly White/Eurocentric academy (see Dei, 2013b). For one thing, I know that if we fail to speak out and act to transform our presence in the academy as a colonial and colonizing space, then we continue to sow the seeds of mistrust that our communities have come develop of our educational institutions. Through Indigenous research we ease this burden and open up the university and research as spaces where Indigenous peoples – too often ignored, denigrated and hurt -- may be heard, valued and even begin to heal.

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Article

CHALLENGING KNOWLEDGE CAPITALISM. INDIGENOUS RESEARCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Indigenous research, knowledge capitalism, Maori, western science

Biographical note
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There is, of course, nothing new about the idea that Indigenous people conduct research. Indigenous peoples have been conducting research since time immemorial, in the sense of investigating and uncovering knowledge and developing new ways of understanding the world. Arguably what might be new, at least as far as the last thirty or so years are concerned, is the formalizing and positioning of Indigenous research as both an act of re-claiming Indigenous sovereignty and authority and as an anti-colonial process of engagement by Indigenous scholars and researchers with mainstream, western science, an engagement that is transforming western research. At the same time, Indigenous researchers claim their ways of knowing and doing research as valid, legitimate and essential ways of understanding and interpreting the world.

The last decades have also seen re-newed attempts within some sections of the academe to discredit both Indigenous ontologies and research methods. In such cases, Indigenous research is deemed inadequate unless it meets western standards of validity. In the context of the neoliberal turn, with its emphasis on market relationships and the related pressures to monetarize research, the efforts to discredit Indigenous researchers take on a dangerous new dynamic. In the past, political correctness concerns dismissed Indigenous research as the misguided political appeasement of disgruntled 'minorities'.

Now such political correctness issues are recast as an insistence on the importance of promoting markets and private-public, or Indigenous-industry partnerships. Indigenous research is deemed important only insofar as it is compatible with overriding concerns for knowledge that creates profits. As I have argued elsewhere, the elevation of the market as the main driver of the academy has profound implications for how we think about knowledge. For Indigenous peoples in particular, this approach constitutes a form of cognitive imperialism which impacts on Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous scholarship in deeply contradictory but ultimately very damaging ways.

In this article, I reflect on these issues within the context of an environment that is in many ways familiar in its relative inhospitality to Indigenous research and in other ways changing at bewildering speed. But first there are some important disclaimers. I make no attempt in this article to define Indigenous people, an important and extensive debate that is however outside the scope of this paper. Nor do I attempt an authoritative definition of either Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous research. Just as there is no single definition of Indigenous people or even of 'western' knowledge or research, nor can there be single, authoritative definition of the nature of Indigenous knowledges and research. Rather, I briefly explore concerns raised by Indigenous scholars and raised by my own and other Indigenous experiences before considering the potential for radically rewriting the postcolonial project against new forms of imperialism, including within the academy. As Foucault points out, the genealogy of subjugated knowledges is important. Thus I take as my starting point the trajectory of Indigenous research within the academy.

Historicizing Indigenous research

Since the earliest days of colonialism over five hundred years ago, the colonial endeavor has sought to codify, quantify and tabulate flora, fauna and peoples. Early anthropologists in 19th century Britain, for instance, literally 'collected' specimens of Indigenous peoples and displayed them in zoos. Within the last hundred years, the identification and study of Indigenous peoples, including their knowledge, ways of being and cultural practices has been dominated by anthropologists and to a lesser but still important degree by historians. The trajectory of Maori Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand underlines the role of anthropology in particular (see Steve Webster (1989), Ranginui Walker (1990), Hirini Mead (1983) and Catriona Timms (2007).

Maori Studies was established as a separate subject of academic study as early as 1952, when the University of Auckland established a branch of Maori Studies within the department of Anthropology. As Hirini Mead observes, the predominant view at the time was that Maori Studies was not worthy of a place within the academy in its own right and should not be "seen as separable from anthropology" (Mead, 1983, p. 335, cited Timms, 2007). These were the heady days of an 'Enlightenment' tradition that for centuries has

treated 'others' as their own private zoo to be identified, categorized, codified and tabulated (c.f. Stewart-Harawira 2005: 61-64), sometimes literally as we have seen. In particular, cultural anthropologist Steve Webster (1989:49) describes the detrimental influence of the positivist tradition of noted anthropologists Malinowski and Firth for Maori peoples and culture. These social scientists redefined and reconstructed Maori culture in ways that made sense to them within a worldview both foreign and in many ways opposed to Maori culture, accruing considerable prestige and advancing their careers at the same time as they developed deformed and distorted accounts of Maori social and cultural life.

At that time, measuring 'acculturation' was an important anthropological project, associated with a covert assimilation agenda and implying the inevitable absorption of the Maori into colonial development. The merger of social anthropology and psychology during the 1950s and 1960s saw the strengthening of the assumption of western social scientists of the right to explain and defines Maori social functioning, personality development and the directions for future Maori social and economic development. Indices for measuring 'Maoriness' (Ritchie 1963: 39) based on the survival of belief and behavior from pre-European Maori culture discounted more recent elements of Maori world views and cultures and simultaneously assumed non-Indigenous 'experts' had the authority to decide who was and was not Maori. As settler anthropologist James Ritchie asserted in his study "Rakau Maoris who continue to base their identity on their Maoriness do so at their own peril" (Richie, 1963: 191). In other words, as Webster argues, anthropologists' cultural definitions and normative assumptions about the 'dangers' of continued Maori identity, as defined by anthropologists, were an expression of colonial power, both over what constitutes Maori identity and regarding the (lack of) desirability of that identity in a context where settler development was assumed to be the destiny of Maori peoples (Webster 1989: 48) 55). The assimilationist agenda of social psychology and anthropology became the commonsense belief of many Maori who absorbed the notion that they must subsume their 'Maoriness' for the greater good, although there has always been important Maori resistance.

It is against this history that Maori research in particular, and Indigenous research more generally, can be understood. In claiming the rights of self-definition, the right to tell their own histories, recover their own traditional knowledge and culturally grounded pedagogies, epistemologies and ontologies, Indigenous scholars are engaged in an arena of struggle which is systemic and sustained. In Aotearoa New Zealand, as elsewhere, at the centre of this struggle are relationships of power and the right of Maori to sovereignty. Nor is this story unfamiliar outside of the Maori context. The complaint that Aboriginal people had been "researched to death" reported by Marlene Castello (2000: 31) regarding the 1992 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada echoed complaints from many Indigenous communities over many decades. To a large degree this sense of being "researched to death" drove Indigenous initiatives to assert their own sovereign authority

over the right to name and claim their own identities, definitions, traditional knowledge and cultural practice. Most notably, this encompasses the right to their Indigenous intellectual and cultural property and to the repatriation of cultural treasures referred to in the social science community as 'artifacts'. Integral to this movement was the politicization of Indigenous communities and activists during the 1960s and 1970s. The background and details of this global Indigenous movement and its connection to ongoing misappropriation of traditional lands and the loss of language and cultural knowledge has been well recounted by those who were in the forefront of this movement (c.f. Harold Cardinal [1969] 1999; Linda Tuhiwai Smith [1999] 2012; Graham Hinangaroa Smith 1997, Kathy Irwin 1994; Marie Batiste 2000). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada and the USA, Indigenous education initiatives by and for Indigenous people emerged alongside legal challenges to states for redress of illegal land appropriations (Smith, 2005; Walker, 1990). In Aotearoa New Zealand, early childhood immersion language programs in Maori expanded to include elementary schools and colleges and leading ultimately to the establishment of autonomous Maori Studies programs in certain universities (for a more detailed account, see Smith, 2005). Similar processes occurred in Australia Canada, the US and elsewhere

In the early 21st century, Indigenous studies programs are significantly different from colonially oriented studies of Indigenous peoples. Once, such studies limited their attention to the cultural artifacts of ethnic groups who expected to pass peacefully or otherwise into oblivion. Today, Indigenous Studies Faculties, Schools and Departments exist within multiple universities across Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and the Pacific, testimony to the ongoing survival and strength of Indigenous communities once programmed for cultural and in some cases, physical, genocide. These academic programs include post-graduate instruction in Indigenous law, international politics, arts and literature, pedagogy, epistemology and research, all recognized as integral to the success of Indigenous post-secondary students and programs and to the broader project of decolonization, not least within the university. Yet these successes have not been achieved without constant and determined negotiation and re-negotiation on the part of Indigenous scholars who have continued to struggle within and without a system whose environment today, while familiar in many ways, is undergoing rapid changes. First signaled in the late 1980s by the World Bank followed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the 1990s, the reconceptualization and reconstruction of the academy as the driver of the new 'knowledge economy' heralded a new kind of struggle over the nature and meaning of knowledge (Peters 2003). Accompanying this redefinition of knowledge within the academy, without the academy has been an inexorable resurgence of the re-appropriation of Indigenous lands and identities, often through legislative measures which redefine Indigenous self-determination as economic development, remove environmental

protections over lands and waterways, and reduce requirements to consult the traditional Indigenous landholders prior to initiating resource development activities on those lands.

The politics of reclaiming

Before turning to the new challenges posed by this reconceptualization of the university, it is necessary to consider the politics of reclaiming historical research by and for Indigenous peoples. As discussed above, Indigenous historiographies have frequently been subjected to invisibilization, misrepresentation and misinterpretation by historians trained in the positivist tradition, as well as some more critical traditions. Thus the reclaiming of those historiographies and the insurrection of subjugated Indigenous cosmologies and ontologies continue to be central in Indigenous peoples' resistance to the homogenising impulse of modernity, including in its current manifestations. At the heart of the decolonizing project has been the restoration and legitimation of Indigenous knowledge systems and methods of conducting research. For some Indigenous scholars, an important step on the journey has been to see the convergences between Indigenous and qualitative research methods (see for instance Kahakalau, 2004; Smith, 2008) For others the most important part of the process is to distinguish the nature of Indigenous knowledge and research from dominant western forms of knowledge, for example comparing individually based approaches to knowledge and research to the collective approaches of most Indigenous communities (c.f. Bishop, 1998; Urion, 1999). Often these comparisons take the form of 'writing back' against mainstream interpretations which describe Indigenous peoples' information-gathering methodologies as evidence of the 'prescientific', precausal nature of Indigenous knowledge systems, proof of an inability to conceptualize in an objective symbolic manner (c.f. Widdowson and Howard, 2008). Thus it is not unusual to see Indigenous thought systems described by Indigenous scholars (and some non-Indigenous scholar) as circular or spiral in nature and inclusive of both experiential and intuitive data. This contrasts with western knowledge systems, frequently described as linear and concerned primarily with empirical data and materiality. Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr. describes Indigenous conceptions of knowledge as intrinsically connected to the lives and experiences of human beings, both individuals and communities and emphasizes that all data and all experience is seen as relevant to all things. All human experiences and all forms of knowledge contribute to the overall understandings and interpretations, with no experience or piece of data seen as invalid. The critical task, Deloria (1999) explains, was (and is) to find the proper pattern of interpretation. Knowledge itself is commonly described as sacred, having come from the Creator. Rather than being limited to a 'codified canon', a canon separated from everyday life and taking place only in the special conditions of the laboratory, the experiment, as 'field work' and in other highly codified ways, traditional or Indigenous

knowledge is an expression of life itself, of how to live, and of the connection between all living things. From an Indigenous perspective, everything is living. This includes inanimate objects that are understood to hold their own energy, or in Maori terms, *mauri*, through which they are connected to the energetic web of the entire planet. Thus, as Vine Deloria wrote, nothing is considered in isolation, rather, all data within the whole system is carefully included.[1]

In short, interconnectedness, or relationality, is frequently described as the foundational principle in Indigenous ontologies and cosmologies and the epistemological and ontological base of Indigenous research. In this respect, it has much in common with some kinds of 'western' scientific discoveries in the field of quantum physics and related canons, although there may be important differences too. For instance, Métis professor Carl Urion insists that Indigenous knowledge is at once spiritual, emotional, physical and mental. In contrast, even 'holistic' western approaches like quantum physics fail to take seriously spiritual and emotional experiences as well as physical, material and mental ones. From this Indigenous concept of relationality derives sets of ethical principles that define the boundaries for engaging in Indigenous research.

Considering method

Indigenous research operates within a complex set of interrelationships and rules whose specifics are always determined by the Indigenous community itself. Indigenous research has been defined as emerging from an epistemological base that foregrounds the legitimacy and validity of locally determined Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies (cf Pihama, Cram, and Walker 2002), is conducted only with the full consent and participation of the Indigenous communities concerned, and within the boundaries, protocols, principles and practices determined by the community. Within this space, protocols, relationships, reciprocity, methods, process and ownership of data and findings define the parameters of the research project and are carefully and thoroughly negotiated with the community. At the heart of Indigenous research lie issues of who benefits, how, and to what purpose. Not infrequently, these questions may be negotiated over and over again in the process of a major research project. At any given point, the community may decide to discontinue the research. And at that point, the research stops. In a very important sense, then, this is the heart of Indigenous research.

Intuition, dreams, and insights and ceremony frequently play an important role in the protocols of Indigenous research. Ceremony, the details of which vary widely from continent to continent and group to group, can prepare and open the mind to the possibility of intuition and insights. As well as opening the mind, ceremony and prayer are important mechanisms for ensuring that the researcher is of good mind, good heart,

[1] This section has to a large extent been drawn from Stewart-Harawira 2005, pp. 35-39.

and good motive – all three critical in conducting Indigenous research – and that the proposed research is in alignment with the highest good. Often a project will not begin without this preparation. Notwithstanding that intuition, insight, and reams have not infrequently been the catalyst for new discoveries and understandings within 'western' sciences, principles and practices such as these that are often the target of mainstream scholars' critiques which understood them as 'unscientific'.

Another common target for critique is the recovery of data that is orally held and sourced. Indigenous research recognizes that important historical and cultural knowledge is often held in Indigenous communities in the form of story and songlines. Jo-ann Archibald (2008) describes deep storying, or storywork, as an Indigenous research methodology which builds on seven critical principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy that form a framework for understanding the characteristics of stories, appreciating the process of storytelling, establishing a receptive learning context, and engaging in holistic meaning-making (Archibald, 2008). Meaning-making can involve the process of comparing and cross-matching oral accounts and it also involves careful interpretation of the language in which the information is held, be it song, chant, story. Linguistic changes over time mean that often such knowledge is described in language not readily accessible today, thus the need for careful discernment of the pattern of interpretation, as Deloria points out. On this basis, the notion that orally held knowledge lacks validity and verifiability is readily challengeable by those who have access to understanding these processes. Stories' in fact provide a rich source of verifiable data that can be cross-matched and compared from multiple perspectives when viewed through the right lens. The trick is in the knowing. Just as mainstream knowledge systems have their own processes for 'gate-keeping', Indigenous communities also have strategies for protecting the integrity of knowledge. These are but some of the critical issues that are shaped and negotiated within particular frameworks and relationships when entering the space of research negotiation with and for Indigenous communities.

Inevitably, gate-keeping strategies have both positive and negative consequences. Among the latter are gross misinterpretations and misrepresentations of, for example, the rationales for particular cultural practices, the genealogy of certain aspects of knowledge – often delivered in only partially accurate forms, in order to protect both the receiver and the knowledge itself. For instance Maori have commonly held the view that in certain cases the right to particular aspects of knowledge has to be earned, whereas in other cases that right may be ascribed. Similarly, aspects of historical events, practices, and rationales, may be creatively reinterpreted for the listener. In each situation the objective is protection of that knowledge base. The difficulty, of course, is that these partial truths are often replicated through dissemination activities by western scholars and administrators such as presentations, publications, and texts. Ironically, these partial truths are frequently mobilized by western scholars to justify attacks on the credibility of

Indigenous cultural knowledge and research methods; in fact, this is simply partial knowledge that has been decontextualized and therefore robbed of its meaning, which appears only within the proper relational context.

Careful observation and testing, often over hundreds and thousands of years, is equally part and parcel of Indigenous research methods. When Indigenous scholars write about Indigenous scientific knowledge they are referring to minutely detailed knowledge of the natural world and comprehensive understandings of the nuances that signal phases of change within the natural world. Some of this is reflected in the traditional practices of naming, as is also well documented and hardly needs recounting here (see for example Basso, 1996) From the multitude of possible examples from Aotearoa New Zealand, Huhana Smith's (2008) doctoral thesis carefully tabulates five years of painstaking, rigorous community research seeking out, analyzing and applying the necessary information to restore a badly polluted and diverted river system. This provides an outstanding example of an Indigenous methodological approach to research. The methods utilized by Huhana Smith and the community included identifying, cross-matching and analyzing oral stories and histories, songs, proverbs and other forms of orally recorded information. The vast reservoir of traditional knowledge that emerges from such painstaking tabulation and recording certainly can and does contribute immeasurably to eco-system restoration. Its importance in enlarging scientific understandings of the impacts of, for instance, climate change or industrial development has been well documented (c.f. Gadgil, Berkes, Foke, 1993; Berkes, 2008; Green, D. & Raygorodstky, 2010; Tyrell, 2011). The astronomical and cosmological knowledge recorded in some communities may also contribute to our understandings of the potential effects of proposals to mitigate the effects of its climate change. The possibilities are limited only by the narrowness of our gaze.

As the academy undergoes deep and radical reconstructions, the unequal status and ongoing attacks upon Indigenous knowledge and research demonstrates the "epistemological tyranny" of 'Western' science, its rules for determining truth and so its rules for disqualifying and marginalizing Indigenous ways of knowing (Kinchloe & Steinberg 2008, pp.144-145). On the extreme end of such critiques are scholars such as Widdowson and Howard who insist that the term 'traditional knowledge' is tendentious, and that each item of purported traditional knowledge should be evaluated on the basis of the evidence for and against it. Unless and until subjected to scientific (western) methods of validation, traditional knowledge – which they distinguish from Indigenous knowledge defined as a postmodern construct – can make no claims to validity. On the other hand, they argue, if traditional knowledge is subject to the same kinds of scientific method as western knowledge e.g. replicating and testing, what is the point of distinguishing it from scientific knowledge? (Widdowson & Howard 2008, p. 231-240). Small wonder that Indigenous scholars tend not to rely for validity on western science research methods by which 'heads, you lose; tails, you lose'. Yet arguments such as those presented by

Wddowson have been met with enthusiasm by many western scholars and critics of the Indigenous turn in the early twenty-first century.

New Zealand scholar Elizabeth Rata, whose critiques of cultural relativism target Maori education policy and practice, is more refined in her argument. Rata attacks the equalizing of status of Indigenous knowledge in New Zealand universities, the unfortunate creation of what she terms a 'global industry' (2011, 1-22), arguing that the deployment of culturally appropriate pedagogies in education and by extension, traditional cultural knowledge which is described as an expression of "immanentism – the practice of asserting a necessary movement of history that confers subordinate groups with objective interests in radical change" – works against social justice goals for those whom it is intended to benefit. Her argument rests on what she holds to be the blurring of the social knowledge and disciplinary knowledge within the curriculum following the turn towards constructivism. The problem, she argues, lies with the relativist claim that all knowledge is socially constructed, a claim that extends to worldviews, ways of knowing, and 'knowledges' and consequentially to the equalizing of status between social and disciplinary or 'scientific' knowledge. Attacks of this nature are symptomatic of an ongoing and systemic cognitive imperialism, an imperialism that fails to recognize the ways that western science is historically and socially constructed. Far more troubling than such attacks, however, is the radical shift to monetized knowledge and research and the implications of this for Indigenous knowledge and research within the academy.

Futures for Indigenous research

As universities are reconstructed as the drivers of knowledge capitalism, the challenges to Indigenous scholarship and research are significant. The conundrum faced by Indigenous scholars and researchers in this environment is played out in our entry into the global market model of knowledge capitalism in scholarship, in the discourses of excellence and best practice, and in academic performance reviews which measure the value of research in terms of its marketability. This substitution of industry and the operation of the market for the pursuit of truth and meaning as the main driver of the academe constitute a new form of cognitive imperialism which impacts on indigenous knowledge and indigenous scholarship in deeply contradictory but ultimately damaging ways.

On one hand, the new 'knowledge economy' operates to marginalize Indigenous philosophical knowledge and traditional ways of being in the world as valid and legitimate forms of study, insofar as Indigenous ways of knowing do not immediately produce profitable research. On the other hand, it repositions (some) Indigenous knowledge and scholarship within the discursive framework of innovation, excellence and contribution to economic wealth. As university-industry partnerships substitute public funding and demands and scholars and researchers are faced with monetizing

their teaching and research in order to maintain programs and spaces of engagement, there are difficult decisions to be made, especially by those of us who see our work as holding the space for Indigenous community-University relationships and engagement. At the root of these decisions lie ethical and philosophical principles that are complex, contested and contradictory. For Daniel Heath Justice (2004), the academy is a place of engagement where "the world of ideas can meet action and become lived reality." It is here, he argues, in this borderland space of profound contradiction that cultural recovery work can begin. Here also, I believe, is the place where the intersection of western and Indigenous science can address the triple crises of ecological and economic catastrophe and human wellbeing that confronts us – and which our children, and their children's children, will inherit (c.f. Addison, et al, 2010). On this account, a radically different paradigm is required. Perhaps that, after all, is the true challenge of decolonization. Most certainly, outside the academy, that sits at the heart of the rising crescendo of struggle over the right to maintain, protect and preserve lands, waters, and ecosystems.

There is no question that inequity regarding Indigenous research and knowledge is prevalent within the academy. There is equally no question that Indigenous knowledge and research together with those of social and natural sciences provide a complex and dynamic set of skills and understandings. These may yet enable humanity to find its way out of the worst set of crises in the known history of humankind and towards a radical reconceptualization of the complexity of interrelationship and the nature of being.

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Article

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AS RESISTANCE[1]

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Indigenous research is a form of resistance to centuries of colonial domination. As such, Indigenous research is part of a much broader political, economic, cultural and spiritual project of Indigenous resurgence. As the well-known Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. observed, for hundreds of years "whites have had unrestricted power to describe Indians any way they choose" (1998, 66), but Indigenous peoples are now reclaiming that power for themselves, including in university spaces. In the process, Indigenous research is transforming the social sciences, bringing new ways of being and knowing to the academy and undertaking research in ways that often challenge taken-for-granted Enlightenment models of research. From perspectives at once diverse and revealing important common ground, I consider the work of three Indigenous researchers here: scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson, a Goenpul woman from Minjerribah, Quandamooka First Nation in Queensland, Australia, African-Canadian George Sefa Dei, who is a traditional chief in Ghana and Makere Stewart-Harawira, Waitaha, part of the New Zealand Maori diaspora in Canada. Two of the texts I refer to, by Dei and Stewart-Harawira, are in this issue of *Socialist Studies/Etudes Socialistes*. Each scholar underscores the ways that Indigenous scholarship raises fundamental questions for contemporary colonial relations and for mainstream social science, while playing an important role in broader processes of decolonization and Indigenous resurgence.

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Decolonizing Research

In her pathbreaking work, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2004), Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that scientific research has been implicated in the "worst excesses of colonialism." She observes that the "collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized" (1-2). The collection and display of Indigenous bodies as 'curiosities' and later as 'artifacts' in museums is just one example of the violence, at once material and spiritual that (social) science has exercised upon Indigenous peoples. Indeed, through such social scientific practices, scholarly research participated and participates in the creation of the collective colonial imagination about the Indigenous 'other' as inferior, savage and doomed to disappear (see, for instance, LaRocque 2010, 55-72). At the same time, such "naming and claiming" of Indigenous experiences –and even, literally, bodies and body parts—is a way for colonizers to possess Indigenous peoples and experiences. This 'scientific' process, Tuhiwai-Smith contends, is part of the same movement of dispossession as the "naming and claiming" of Indigenous lands (80-83) for European invaders.

It is against this context of research-as-colonization, that Aileen Moreton-Robinson (forthcoming) insists that Indigenous research, "undertaken for and with our communities," is an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty. It is a decolonizing act, insofar as it claims for Indigenous peoples the "sovereign right to determine our research agendas informed by our politics and our commitment to social justice for our people." Indigenous research is, in short, an unashamedly political project, but one with many other dimensions, at once inextricably economic, cultural and spiritual. As Makere Stewart-Harawira emphasizes, Indigenous research may only be properly understood in holistic terms, rooted in an openness to all aspects of individual and human collective experience. This may typically include an important and explicit role for intuition, dreams and ceremony that are often excluded from textual accounts of highly-codified colonial science, even when they inform western research in practice. At the same time, enacting such Indigenous practices is a way of valuing and renewing Indigenous knowledges discredited through colonialism. Indeed, in his contribution, George Sefa Dei argues that Indigenous research is "a complex decolonized approach of producing, interrogating, validating and disseminating knowledge based on Indigenous peoples' cosmology/worldview or 'worldsense'."

Emphatically, this does not mean the appropriation and incorporation of fractions of Indigenous knowledge into pre-existing Enlightenment models of science – as, for instance, with the decontextualized absorption of aspects of Indigenous spiritual and

natural knowledge into "Traditional Ecological Knowledge" as part of narrowly-conceived environmental assessment procedures (Simpson 2001). Such approaches distort Indigenous meanings by presenting what Stewart-Harawira refers to as "partial truths," truths devoid of context. The real sense and significance of such partial truths is obscured, since their meanings are only made properly apparent when placed within specific, ethical relationships governing the communication of knowledge and embedded within corresponding worldviews. Instead of being ripe for piecemeal appropriation by mainstream research, Indigenous research should be understood as one site for the integrated praxis of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing. This may include a range of approaches unfamiliar to mainstream colonial research, including the painstaking cross-referencing of centuries-old knowledge expressed through stories, chants and songs – and exactly what cross-referencing 'makes sense' and should be prioritized may only be clear within specific Indigenous worldviews and moral commitments. Through such Indigenous research, Indigenous peoples who have long been the stigmatized "objects" of the expert colonial gaze participate as sovereign actors of their own histories in the academy, using research to answer questions that matter to their communities.

'Good' and 'Bad' Science

Of course, many scholars working within mainstream social scientific paradigms reject the claims implicit in the idea of 'decolonizing research' and related terms like 'colonial social science'. They insist that there is no such thing as colonial and Indigenous science but only 'good' and 'bad' science. The point of research, they argue, is to arrive at universal truths or at least to rigorously use scientific methods that have proven real-world results, not forward a political agenda of any sort. Indeed, they worry that an explicit political agenda for research will warp the relentless pursuit of objective truths at the heart of the scientific endeavour. Moreover, they fear that research, understood as an expression of Indigenous sovereignty, may result in the exclusion of non-Indigenous researchers from research about and with Indigenous communities. They regret the potential loss of access to previous 'fields' in which they were experts – and this is a reasonable concern, insofar as some Indigenous communities have banned researchers while many others have placed increasingly important restrictions on access (Tuhiwai Smith 2004, 178). Further, many mainstream social scientists ask why a researcher's 'racial' identity as settler or Indigenous matters, arguing that the only criteria worth considering is the merit of the scientist and the scientific project.

While acknowledging that social scientists have sometimes, even often been complicit with colonialism, mainstream researchers observe that many non-Indigenous social scientists have, in fact, worked cooperatively over many years with Indigenous peoples. In this capacity, social scientists have played a vital role in documenting and so

helping to preserve Indigenous knowledges and ways of life threatened by colonialism. For instance, the supportive role of archaeologists and anthropologists, among others, as legal witnesses for Indigenous land claims suggests scholarly solidarity with Indigenous struggles rather than domination over Indigenous peoples, including by 'settler' academics. This implies that traditional mainstream forms of research, as a specific, rigorous way of understanding the world, are not oppressive but in fact useful to Indigenous communities. Finally, there are concerns that as a consequence of Indigenous concerns about mainstream science, non-Indigenous researchers are being "policed", even subject to law suits because of their research. Whether realized or not, such political pressures dangerously interfere with fundamental academic freedoms to write and speak the truth as social scientists understand it.

Indigenous Research: From Margins to Centre

Many Indigenous researchers counter these arguments and concerns, not as the central aim of their scholarship, but as a way of explaining the contours of Indigenous research to those more familiar with mainstream social science. Of course, the necessity of doing this suggests the ways that Indigenous research speaks "from the margins to the centre" to use bell hooks' phrase (2000). Indigenous researchers must routinely explain and justify their approach against standard scientific theories and methodologies, while non-Indigenous researchers do not typically have to explain and justify their assumptions. Even when writing about Indigenous concerns, for instance, non-Indigenous researchers are compelled by no professional standards to explain why they do not adopt Indigenous research paradigms. Moreover, there is neither prestige nor academic rewards attached to such reflexivity by non-Indigenous researchers who may even be professionally chided for centering "minor" concerns about Indigenous worldviews in their scholarly work. At the same time, for Indigenous scholars, a certain fatigue results from the continual need to explain Indigenous approaches against established research. Within the university, furthermore, Indigenous scholars may find their academic employment and career advancement threatened since research centering Indigenous concerns and approaches is devalued as "objectively" concerned with "minor" issues, published in objectively lower-ranked, "minor" specialized journals and presented at "minor" specialized conferences (see Smith 1999, 37-44, for a description of such processes for feminist researchers). Indigenous research may not even be recognized as such or may be dismissed as folklore rather than science. Indeed, as Stewart-Harawira observes, recent attacks on Indigenous research maintain that only Indigenous research that meets western criteria of validity should be considered science, making the idea of specifically "Indigenous" research redundant.

This institutionalized de-centering of Indigenous perspectives, Moreton-Robinson argues, is at once a scientific and political problem since it masks the

specificities of non-Indigenous research and the imperial ambition that disguises historically specific colonial science as universal truths. Against such claims to universal, scientific truth, Moreton-Robinson draws on feminist Sandra Harding's (2004) standpoint theory to argue that there is no such thing as universal, much less value-free science. This position echoes relativist debates in its insistence on the existence of multiple and incommensurate ontologies, epistemologies and related methodologies. But it is not straightforwardly relativist, because underlying Moreton-Robinson's argument is a story about science as the exercise of political power and even as a form of violence. She maintains that the dominant paradigm's exclusive claim to universalism and expert scientific truth-telling is a powerful way of disqualifying and marginalizing Indigenous (and other subaltern) ways of beings and knowing. Against this universalistic claim, Moreton-Robinson lays bare the unstated premises of mainstream research – and it is arguably because she writes from an Indigenous perspective that she is well-equipped to do this.

Moreton-Robinson maintains that what masquerades as universal science – what she calls the view at once "from everywhere and nowhere" – is in fact as "shared, situated, relational, multiple, complex and contextual" as Indigenous women's worldview. Specifically, mainstream, patriarchal social science is premised upon what Moreton-Robinson refers to as a "new age" version of the Cartesian model. This model assumes a radical separation between mind and body, objectivity and morality and, it might be added, between the human, natural and spiritual worlds. These particular assumptions of mainstream research only appear universal, rather than historically and culturally specific, because they are so dominant that they have become the commonsensical standards for understanding what constitutes (good) science. Yet, in fact, mainstream social science is neither a view from nowhere nor everywhere, but rooted in specific, binary ontological and epistemological commitments, assuming radical oppositions between mind/body, objectivity/morality, man/nature and nature (or materiality)/spirituality that are rejected by many Indigenous peoples, among others. Of course, not all western science accepts these binaries. But even mainstream sciences that specifically investigate, for instance, the mind-body connection as in some branches of neurology, eschew reflexive consideration of the ways that the researchers own scholarship may be informed by the researchers' own mind-body connections (the mind-body connection is understood as the object of research, not as informing research processes).

It follows that if there is no such thing as 'universal' science, then there is no problem-free and obvious way of deciding what is science, much less what is good science. Instead, the very definitions of what constitute good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable science and the criteria for what constitutes a meretricious scholar and worthy scholarly project, depends upon underlying conceptions of being, of knowing and of basic moral commitments. Indigenous ways of answering these questions, including regarding what constitutes a worthy, meaningful social science project, have not been

taken seriously under colonialism. Yet, this state of affairs is the result of the historical accident, many might say nightmare, of colonialism and need not be so. In the meantime, Indigenous communities and Indigenous scholars are not waiting for academia to grant this – they are already asserting their rights to make these scientific judgements for themselves. As Stewart-Harawira observes, for instance, Indigenous communities have taken seriously chants and oral histories as a source of centuries-old knowledge, an approach that has critically informed successful efforts to improve the water quality of polluted streams. Moreton-Robinson's own research contributions have been importantly grounded in her connections to specific features of Quandamooka country, which she understands as imbued with the spirits of her ancestors. This knowledge enabled her, for instance, to intuit as non-Indigenous a book purporting to be from the perspective of an Indigenous woman, before it was formally unmasked as the product of two settler men. From her standpoint as an Aboriginal woman, it was evident that the book's outlook was curiously detached from relations to rootedness in the land and natural environment, in a way foreign to Aboriginal ontologies. Such Indigenous approaches to research represent a (healthy) challenge to mainstream social scientists, implicitly requiring them to make explicit their own research premises, including the ontological and epistemological but also moral commitments underlying their research.

George Sefa Dei answers to other concerns expressed by mainstream social scientists. In his contribution, he writes that he is "unapologetic" when he states bluntly that, "the days of Non-Indigenous peoples becoming 'experts' on Indigenous peoples are long over." Like Moreton-Robinson, he maintains that non-Indigenous scholars are not the arbiters of what constitutes truth, meaning and science for Indigenous peoples; only Indigenous peoples hold this power. This is true, moreover, because Indigenous peoples have always been doing research, in the sense of searching for knowledge and communicating that knowledge to others. Often, Dei points out, this has been done in ways not recognized as research in mainstream traditions, including storytelling but also attentiveness to ancestors and the natural and spiritual world in ways that moreover inform everyday survival. Hence, Indigenous peoples never ceased to be experts within their own communities about their own experiences.

Of course, not all Indigenous peoples and Indigenous scholars hold the same worldviews and as Dei points out, this means there is controversy about what exactly constitutes Indigenous research as opposed to research carried out by Indigenous people. Moreover, Indigenous scholars may write in ways that are thoroughly colonial in approach, methods, values and writing style (see also Tuhiwai Smith 2004) – either because they have assimilated dominant viewpoints or because they have adopted these strategically for the purposes of communicating Indigenous concerns to non-Indigenous expert audiences. The point is that non-Indigenous peoples, including credentialed experts, do not have the authority – although historically they have acted as if they did –

to decide these vital questions for Indigenous communities, even in the name of a supposedly disinterested universal science.

This does not mean that Indigenous research is a totalizing project, seeking to take over the academy and make Enlightenment forms of social science disappear. In the first instance, some Enlightenment methods of science might be usefully appropriated by Indigenous peoples as they seek to answer questions that matter in their communities and strategically as they seek to convince a public unversed in Indigenous research. More profoundly, Dei argues, a uniquely Indigenous science is unrealistic even if it were desirable: co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is a fact and this implies the ongoing co-existence, the mutual influencing and transformation of different forms of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research. The issue is the terms of that co-existence, which Dei maintains must be based on the political meeting of equals. If Indigenous communities feel this premise cannot be met, then they may refuse access to their communities by non-Indigenous (and even some Indigenous) researchers. But this should not be understood as a taking away a prior right to 'access', since non-Indigenous researchers never had the unfettered right to move and work within sovereign Indigenous communities, despite the conventions and practices of colonial administrations that assumed and assume otherwise.

The Violence of Social Science Research

Within the strictly scholarly realm, this premise of political (and human) equality means that Indigenous peoples can no longer be treated, as Dei puts it, as "mere descriptive appendages to theoretical formulations." Treating other human beings as mere "data," all the while deriving credentials, academic esteem and prestige from this research activity, is, in this view, an immoral act of violence and exploitation. Moreover, historically many non-Indigenous representations of Indigenous peoples have been very damaging, with the explicit or implicit aim of reproducing and comforting colonial justifications for rule over Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples may understand concerns about the academic freedom of non-Indigenous researchers, but argue that these considerations about academic careers pale against the contemporary stakes of research for Indigenous communities. These stakes include not only Indigenous wellbeing but literally Indigenous survival given the still-credible threat of genocide through assimilation in many colonial contexts. The academic freedom of non-Indigenous researchers, they argue, can only be a secondary consideration to the primary concern of ensuring Indigenous peoples' sovereignty as a necessary condition for continued Indigenous self-expression and existence as Indigenous peoples.

Granted the full sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, however, there is no reason, in principle, that non-Indigenous researchers, like myself, can't sometimes work with and for Indigenous communities, as indeed settler researchers sometimes have in the past.

This has to be done cautiously, because of the risk of misinterpretation by non-Indigenous scholars of Indigenous worldviews and because even sincere efforts at solidarity may reproduce relations of domination. For instance, white anthropologists who testify on behalf of Indigenous land claims do not play an unambiguous role. Rather, their "support" is strategically necessary in a context in which settler justice systems (at once party and judge in treaty disputes) do not recognize Indigenous expertise; hence white anthropologists are enacting and reproducing a "white expert" role at the same time as they seek to show solidarity with Indigenous land claims through their testimony. Of course, it is a symptom of the colonial disregard for Indigenous knowledges that 'white' experts are frequently treated as more reliable and authoritative interlocutors about the Indigenous experience than Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous scholars, themselves. Undercutting this is a constant problem. Indeed, this article can be read as a 'white expert' interpretation of Indigenous scholarship, as if the Indigenous scholars whose work I describe cannot speak adequately, eloquently and forcefully on their own behalf. That this is not my intention does not moot the danger, although by alerting readers to this I can arguably circumscribe my own (limited) authority.

The point is that decolonizing scholarship does not mean that no cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and scholars is possible. Rather, the reality of the ongoing colonial context means that the underlying principles guiding any cooperation with Indigenous peoples must be the Indigenous 'rules of engagement', as Moreton-Robinson puts it, for that relationship. Non-Indigenous scholars who reject this as a capitulation to political correctness forget that their own approach is just as political, but instead insists upon a non-Indigenous baseline for all research collaborations. Given the historical complicity of social science with colonialism, the burden of proof regarding the value and morality of mainstream science is now on non-Indigenous researchers. In the meantime, Indigenous scholars are carrying out research in ways coherent with their worldviews and commitments to social justice for their communities. As Stewart-Harawira points out, this means a constant negotiation between the researcher, whether Indigenous or not, and the Indigenous community so that research may be halted or carried on, but on an altered basis given new concerns expressed by the Indigenous community about the research process. On this basis, George Sefa Dei argues, Indigenous research by and for Indigenous communities may become a site of healing, including potentially renewed Indigenous-settler relationships.

Revitalizing Indigenous Scholarship

Unsurprisingly, Indigenous research faces strong challenges from dominant social scientific approaches. In such mainstream paradigms, nature is an exploitable resource, rather than a sacred source of life that vitally informs how and what we know, even what questions are worth asking. Relations with the land, water and non-human life often

appear as irrelevant to much social science research and how it is carried out. Dominant research paradigms emphasize and privilege the role and words of credentialed researchers at certified academic institutions. Authority is gained through degrees, through written texts and oral presentations at academic ceremonies known as conferences, and through titles conferred by certified institutions, as well as through footnotes, references and peer appraisals by other similarly credentialed professionals. In Anglo-Saxon countries in particular, pressures on university research within a context of neoliberal austerity politics means reduced public funding for research and increased reliance on private sources, often driven by underlying commitments to research that supports the generation of profits and that understands research as "intellectual property". Thus, as Stewart-Harawira points out, the historical moment is not particularly propitious for Indigenous research that has no obvious connection, and may in fact counter the priorities of profit-seeking private funders that increasing orient research agendas.

Although it is difficult to make statements across quite different Indigenous traditions, a few generalizations may be hazarded. Thus, for instance, Cree-Métis scholar Emma LaRocque insists on the ways that Indigenous research and teaching moves "from land to classroom" (2000), emphasizing the vital ways that connections to the natural world inform Indigenous research. In her own research, Aileen Moreton-Robinson observes the critical importance of meditation on the wisdom of ancestors in sacred places and underscores her deliberate privileging of the voices and words of Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous women. In Indigenous research, authority may come from specific, privileged relations with the spirit world and relations with other Indigenous peoples rather than formal credentials. As in the late Haudanausee scholar Patricia Monture's work, footnotes may refer to the orally transmitted words of "my grandmother" (Monture-Okanee 1992, 240) and the wisdom of Elders, rather than to PhDs in anthropology whose words are sacralised in mainstream paradigms only once they are written down in specific textual forms. Much Indigenous research is oriented by a strong commitment to social justice within Indigenous communities rather than answering externally-funded profit-making agendas, while the notion of "intellectual property" is rejected in favour of the transmission of knowledge in specific, often face-to-face, relationships.

In this and other ways, Indigenous research challenges the assumptions and conventions of mainstream social science. Of course, Indigenous research is not the only significant challenge of this kind. Other dominated communities and classes have challenged dominant social scientific ontologies and epistemologies. For instance, Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins (2009) emphasizes the wisdom – as opposed to credentialed 'knowledge' – of Black women, including that of the schoolgirls, former slaves, preachers and family members' she draws upon in her work. Collins counters abstract, theoretical knowledge that values "objectivity" with an argument for a Black feminist social science

rooted in lived experiences and informed by an ethics of caring, personal accountability and dialogue (260-290). Like this Black feminist approach and other counterhegemonic approaches to social science, Indigenous researchers offer a "standpoint" from which the fundamental assumptions of mainstream social science are laid bare. These assumptions may be defended, but even in such cases, Indigenous approaches have the merit of making dominant social science paradigms' underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions explicit, especially naïve postivist and post-positivist approaches with their assertions about the human capacity to directly grasp an objective social and material world.

Worldwide, there is a movement of Indigenous resurgence, although this is taking place unevenly and is not without important internal contradictions and recent challenges. Thus, if the emergence of Indigenous research reflects gains from broader political struggles by Indigenous peoples in the 1960s, as Stewart-Harawira describes, current attacks on Indigenous sovereignty suggest greater challenges are ahead for Indigenous research. In Canada, for instance, the federal government recently passed legislation that unilaterally rewrote colonial-Indigenous relations as set out in the (highly problematic) Indian Act, while simultaneously facilitating the opening-up of Indigenous lands for the primitive accumulation of capital through resource exploitation by private corporations. Such basic attacks on Indigenous sovereignty vitally threaten Indigenous connections to the natural world upon which Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are based. The recent Indigenous-led Idle No More movement in Canada, which arose in response to these threats suggests the vibrancy of ongoing Indigenous resistance. But this new, aggressive moment of age-old processes of colonial lawmaking over Indigenous peoples and of capital's restless incursion onto Indigenous lands in search of profits poses serious threats to Indigenous wellbeing. Inevitably, this will affect Indigenous research that depends for its ongoing existence upon the strength of the Indigenous community outside of the academy. Moreover, within the university, as Stewart-Harawira decribes, Indigenous research is being marginalized on the grounds that it is not marketable, while fractions of Indigenous knowledge are being integrated in a piecemeal way into for-profit research projects – sometimes as "intellectual property" – so destroying the holistic approach integral to Indigenous research and transforming Indigenous knowledge into a commodity that may be bought and sold like any other commodity.

Still, there is what might be called an "Indigenous revolt" (Le Bot 2009) or Indigenous resurgence (Alfred 2005, 179-286), taking both institutional forms, like the 2007 signing of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Rights, and less formal shape, like the Idle No More movement and associated efforts like the teaching of Indigenous languages that may be less obvious outside Indigenous communities. As Tsalagi (Cherokee) scholar Jeff Corntassel has put it (2013), this process of Indigenous resurgence is one of seeking to "live in a longer now" through the decolonizing praxis of

remembering and renewing histories and cultural traditions through relations with sacred homelands and waters. This decolonization confronts, as it has in the past, the often brutal takeover of Indigenous lands by capital with the backing of colonial states. Thus, living these remembered and renewed relations with the natural world requires bitter political battles, upon which the continued development and practice of specifically Indigenous ways of being, and doing – and so Indigenous research – depends.

Indigenous research represents both a challenge and a possibility for mainstream stream research, unmasking the assumptions of colonial research and so potentially opening up new ways of thinking about and doing research. Ultimately, however, whether or not mainstream social science is unsettled by Indigenous research is secondary to the immediate importance of Indigenous research for Indigenous communities themselves. Historically, social science has been an expression of the colonial project; now, for many Indigenous communities, Indigenous research is becoming one site for the affirmation of Indigenous peoples as actors, rather than objects, in social science research. In other words, I have argued that Indigenous research matters for traditional social science; but the broad social significance of Indigenous research is that it is one way that Indigenous peoples are affirming their authorship of their own histories as Indigenous peoples, shaping rather than submitting to history. Whether or not Indigenous researchers succeed, however, is ultimately not an academic question. Instead, it rests upon how robust movements for Indigenous sovereignty are outside of and within the academy.

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Article

NEITHER BITCH NOR MOTHER: QUEERING SAFETY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Reciprocity between teachers and students has been central to transformative pedagogies since the early work of Paulo Freire. However, realizing students as knowledge-producers is much more difficult. This article argues that typically it is the critical educator who "troubles" students' ideological assumptions, often with the aim of culturally reproducing ourselves through what Michael Warner describes as reprosexuality. This places teachers at the center of the power/knowledge nexus and can foreclose the possibility of a dialogic relation with students in which the power of knowledge-making is a shared endeavor. Using a case study of a graduate course focused on feminist rhetorics and pedagogies in which maternal nurturance and safety in the classroom were central issues, this article explores how Judith Butler's politics of recognition and vulnerability can serve to build truly reciprocal student-teacher relations and a renewed vision of the role of safety in the classroom.

Key Words

Queer theory, Safety, Feminism, Reciprocity, Pedagogy

Biography

Catherine O. Fox is an Associate Professor at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She teaches in the undergraduate and graduate programs in Rhetoric and Writing and her work focuses on the intersections of rhetoric, feminism, and queer theory. Her work has appeared in the journals *Feminist Studies, College English, Pedagogy*, *JAC: Journal of Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics,* and *Third-Space*.

Transgressive pedagogies originating from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) communities can be categorized into two general trajectories: one operates from an identity based, inclusion model, the other operates from queer theory and seeks to disrupt normative categories, practices, and ways of knowing and being in the world. Being identified as a queer educator is not synonymous with an LGBT identity, although

certainly being positioned differently in relation to heteronormativity[1] provides a locus of interest in queering the classroom. Instead of focusing on homophobia or heterosexism as the site of violence (whether physical or psychological/emotional), queer studies employs "queer" as "a term defined against 'normal' and generated precisely in the context of terror — [the term] has the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as the site of violence" (Warner 1991, 16). For example, theorizing a performative pedagogy and its relationship to LGBT people, Karen Kopelson (2002) traces scholarship in writing pedagogies that operates from an inclusion model and argues that the arc of this approach generally seeks "to determine what classroom conditions and pedagogical approaches might best facilitate the comfort, safety, and optimal learning situations for lesbian and gay students themselves, so that they might 'come to voice' as writers" (18). Centralizing homophobia, Kopelson contends, leads to "personalizing and pathologizing the fear of homosexuality, rather than uncovering homophobia's implication in — its wholesale dependence upon—pervasive systemic heterosexism and heteronormativity" (20). Such pathologizing discourses, according to Kopelson, operate "only from the point of view *of the one who fears,* thus ultimately validating the fear itself, and recuperating (a doubting and squeamish) heterosexuality as norm" (20). Queer pedagogy has typically been considered more "transgressive" than identity based pedagogies insofar as it focuses on the root of social inequities and oppressions (fields of normalization) with the hope of complicating the ways we think, operate, and relate in and with the world that surrounds us rather than seeking to expand existing social relations and practices to be more inclusive.

Since the beginning of my career nearly fifteen years ago I have sought to "queer" two primary assumptions that circulate in conversations about radical pedagogies, particularly feminist pedagogies: that female professors espouse a collaborative, caring, maternal relation to students and that part of this "maternal care" entails creating the conditions for safe interchange in the classroom (Noddings 1984). Within conversations about feminist pedagogy the assumption that women are naturally inclined towards caring, collaborative, nurturing relationships has been a centerpiece to conversations about what distinguishes a feminist pedagogy from other pedagogical approaches. Beyond the fact that such a normalized role essentializes female professors and ignores how some women (for example, black women in the context of the United States) have been expected to care for those in the dominant class in ways that recuperate privilege and power along lines of race and class, there have been several other lines of critique that problematize these assumptions. Andrea Greenbaum (2002) examines how female

[1] Heteronormativity refers to the interconnecting system of norms used to create social order. It places people into two distinct genders that are linked to biology (men are masculine and women are feminine) and holds heterosexuality as normal, natural, and inevitable, which effectively marginalizes and stigmatizes other forms of sexuality and gender.

professors who resist taking on a maternal role in the classroom often are evaluated poorly in student evaluations as well in annual professional review documents and promotion and tenure processes. Women are granted a certain degree of authority in the classroom to the extent that we espouse "legitimate" roles; those who challenge the norm are left bearing the negative consequences, leaving many female teachers in a double-bind that makes it questionable whether such a role should be considered a defining characteristic of feminist pedagogies. In arguing for conflict as central to a feminist pedagogical approach, Susan Jarratt (2003) interrogates the ways in which the assumption that feminist teachers take on a maternal role represents an essentializing tendency that reproduces both the exploitation and devaluation of women's labor and ignores the complexity of subject positions women (and men) occupy. This perpetuates the norm of the self-sacrificing woman and can undermine the agency of female teachers to assert authority in non-normative ways. Finally, furthering a critique of how an ethic of maternal care reproduces dominant social relations, Bernice Fisher (2001) argues that

> The mothering model…valorizes asymmetric social relations…What the ethic of care takes to be reciprocity (the baby's smile, the student's moment of understanding) is not true reciprocity. In contrast to egalitarian relationships such as friendship, 'caring' interactions do not include the carer's needs in the picture. They do not require the cared-for to see the person who is attending to her from the latter's point of view (125).

Maternal nurturance is wrought with complications and there are no guarantees that it will lead to transformative relations; yet, neither is it transgressive to simply *not* care and foster students' development. Furthermore, students will "read and write" us with the available scripts no matter how we might believe we are challenging normative roles and relations. Thus it is a complex role and expectation that must be negotiated as we manage the meanings is has for our students as well as ourselves.[2]

The notion that female teachers take on nurturing, caring, maternal relations to their students has worked in tandem with assumptions that classrooms should be

[2] In a recent conversation about this article with a graduate student who has been in several of my classes, including the Feminist Rhetorics and Pedagogies course, and who finds a similar limitation in role of being a female coach: either you are a bitch or a mother, we were discussing student perceptions of my teaching style and limitations in metaphors used to describe women in leadership positions. She suggested that students perceive me as "scary, but approachable" and what marks my style of interaction with students is the fact that I do not attempt to be-friend students nor act like a maternal figure, instead, she said, "We see you as this person that you *want* to work really hard for because it benefits us to be challenged." What I found most interesting is how devoid our language is of positive metaphors for assertive women in leadership. Without a language we are terribly limited in how we imagine ourselves and others.

configured as safe spaces. This idea has been particularly dominant in research and teaching about LGBT students since the advent of the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Safe Space program in the 1990s. Through on-site trainings and the display of "safe zone" stickers on faculty and classroom doors, this program seeks to create visibility and educational programs on college campuses for LGBT students as a way of countering the violence of homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia. LGBT students tend to have higher rates of depression, substance abuse, social isolation and failure in school or work (Brown and Happold 2002; Rankin 2004) and much positive work has been accomplished in raising awareness and addressing the physical and emotional violence that has affected LGBT peoples' sense of self-esteem and success in institutions of higher education. Certainly we do not have to dig very deep into the news to find increased reports of violence in schools in the form of bullying those who fail to conform to gender and (hetero) sexuality norms.[3]

While laudable in its efforts to educate both teachers and students about the violent effects of various isms that impact LGBT people, I have always found myself at odds with the very notion that the classroom can or should be a safe place. In my early years of teaching I recall conversations with colleagues who identified as allies and spoke of the ways in which they establish their classrooms as "safe spaces": places LGBT students could expect to be free from anti-gay bias and homophobia. I was always taken aback by these conversations, in part because I espouse Stuart Hall's (1996) sense that there are "no guarantees" in either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic struggles for power, and in part because such an approach suggests that the teacher can single-handedly mold the fluid, dynamic nature of a classroom into a safe space for those who might be identified as queer or identified as marginalized in other ways. Heteronormativity is partially constructed through a dichotomous logic, where heterosexuality is considered normal, natural, and inevitable and homosexuality is constructed as its binary opposite: abnormal and perverse. Elsewhere, I have argued that discourses of safe spaces for LGBT students too often reproduce this dichotomy through an inclusion model that focuses on homophobia (Fox 2007). Suggesting that allies give, provide, offer, and secure safe space for LGBT people reinforces the normative authority and power of an ally to be the agent configuring what these spaces might be. While the inclusion model has been an important part of development towards queer studies over the last thirty years, it tends to focus on visibility and countering homophobia and often revolves around how to help LGBT people feel comfortable within existing frameworks rather than disrupting them. The display of safe space signs, however well-intentioned, often operates through a

[3] It seems particularly noteworthy that ten teenagers in the United States chose to take their lives after persistent bullying from peers (Billy Lucas, from Indiana, Tyler Clementi from New Jersey, Cody Barker from Wisconsin, Asher Brown from Texas, Seth Walsh from Indiana, Harrison Chase Brown from Colorado, Alec Henrikson from Indiana, Raymond Chase from Rhode Island, Felix Sacco from Massachusetts, and Caleb Nolt from Indiana).

transactional rather than transformative logic that serves protect the social safety (or comfort) of allies, thereby occluding genuine reflection, dialogue, and struggle about what might constitute safety for marginalized peoples.

Another problem in discourses of LGBT safe spaces is the conflation of safety with comfort within LGBT campus communities. The conflation of safety and comfort also reproduces relations of power and privilege by failing to address the normalization of maleness and whiteness in the context of what constitutes an LGBT safe space (Fox 2010). Again, at work in the reproduction of these gender and racial norms is the maintenance of social safety, or comfort, for centered subjects in which they can exist in a place of ignorance.

Power dynamics in classrooms (and other social contexts) are fluid rather than fixed and neatly correlated to particular identities. For example, within queer cultures there is the phenomenon of "guilt by association," which takes on a unique valence in the classroom when the teacher is out or otherwise visible as queer such that LGBT students might feel more "unsafe" for fear of being identified as queer through some sort of affinity with the professor or through being "outed" by the professor. Thus, as a queer educator I understand that my choice to be out in the classroom can oftentimes render that space *more* rather than less safe for similarly identified students. Ultimately, the assumption that one can create "safe spaces" for those who are "othered" within various fields of normalization is born of a kind of willful ignorance and re-instantiates relations of power and privilege. [4]

"Troubling" Maternal Nurturance and Safety

Every two or three years I have the privilege of teaching a graduate course on the topic of feminist rhetorics and pedagogies through our Rhetoric and Writing Master's program. Typically the course draws graduate teaching assistants who are teaching First-Year Composition as well as secondary school teachers seeking advanced educational credits. Invariably the topics of maternal nurturance and safety arise around the content of the course as well as my style of teaching. One particular strand of our conversations tends to be organized around Sally Miller Gearhart's (1979) argument that persuasion, insofar as it is embedded in a desire to change people, is an act of control and domination. Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin (1995) take up Gearhart's original argument and forward the concept of invitational rhetoric, which suggests that feminist discourse should be organized around respectful "offering" rather than agnostic competition and devaluing the perspectives and opinions of others. Graduate students are very drawn to

[4] Mumbi Mwangi and Kyoko Kishimoto (2009) have also problematized the role of safety in feminist classrooms where faculty of color teaching a largely white student population are consistently faced with a hostile academic climate.

invitational rhetoric, in no small part, I believe, because graduate school can be a painful and humiliating experience as they negotiate the very real tensions of power and knowledge in the context of an advanced professional degree, but also because many of the graduate students I teach are teaching or tutoring writing for the first time and are attuned to power dynamics in their own classrooms as a result of their dual position as both instructors and students. We also read pieces by bell hooks (1994), Susan Jarratt, (2000; 2003) and Andrea Greenbaum (2002), all of whom articulate the place and value of conflict in a feminist pedagogy; very seldom are students drawn to these ideas as they are to the concept of invitational rhetoric. Time and again, they insist classrooms should be safe places in which students feel nurtured and cared for.

Attempting to "trouble"[5] these assumptions, I encourage students to examine how naturalizing female teachers as maternal creators of safety serves to reproduce normalized social relations that does little to create transformation. Presenting my argument about safety—that it is often equated with comfort, particularly maintaining the social comfort of those in privileged positions and the idea that classrooms can never be entirely safe (nor should they be because I believe we learn best in edgy, risky situations)—unsettles students' basic assumptions about transformative pedagogies. More often than not, safety in the classroom is understood through a binary logic: if we are not creating safe places, then we are necessarily creating dangerous places. This fixed notion of safety occludes how safety is a process that we engage in daily rather than a product that we produce de facto by making broad declarations about classroom climate or prohibited language (such as homophobic, racist, or sexist comments). A process approach requires that we surrender ourselves to the ineffable: embracing that we cannot know in advance the complexity of subjectivities and histories that collide and combine in any particular pedagogical situation. This unknowingness does not mean we abandon efforts to create safety, but it does require that we complicate our thinking about what safety is and how it can be developed in such a way that disrupts normative, reproductive relations.

Not surprisingly, students are initially jolted by my stance in relation to safety and maternal nurturance, and although I push students to "queer" normative roles and relations, there is a certain degree of playfulness in expanding our imaginations and exploring alternatives. Indeed, over the course presenting these ideas to several different

[5] The term trouble refers to Butler's book, *Gender Trouble* (1999), and her argument that understanding gender as a construct does not undermine feminist politics; instead, creating "gender trouble" can be a way of interrupting normalizing tendencies that link sex, gender and desire in ways that are limiting and oppressive. Butler explains, "To make trouble was, within the reigning discourse of my childhood, something one should never do precisely because that would get one *in* trouble. The rebellion and its reprimand seemed to be caught up in the same terms, a phenomenon that gave rise to my first critical insight into the subtle ruse of power: the prevailing law threatened one with trouble, even put one in trouble, all to keep one out of trouble. Hence, I concluded that trouble is inevitable and the task, how best to make it, what best way to be in it" (xxvii).

groups of students in my Feminist Rhetorics and Pedagogies course I have found that this topic proves to create lively and engaging conversations that extend well beyond the frame of any given semester. For example, one student took on the topic of mothering and safety for her thesis project and searched for alternative metaphors for the role of female teachers. Several students grappled with what it might mean for male students to "mother" their students and how this might queer student-teacher relations. Another student came upon a metaphor borrowed from the heavy metal band, Iron Maiden. After graduating she sent me a t-shirt with the band's logo that still hangs on my office wall. Being somewhat illiterate about pop culture, I cannot speak to contradictions in correlating this band to feminist pedagogy, but the t-shirt reminds me of how students genuinely reached for new ideas about maternal metaphors even as they held fast to assumptions about safety (which indicated to me the "normative" status of the concept). Following Andrea Greenbaum's work on "bitch pedagogy," another student suggested that instead of thinking about either being a bitch or a mother in the classroom, they could think of new roles, such as one he playfully ascribed to me: "the mother of all bitches." This particular reading of my teaching style (which I believe can extend to other female professors who do not identify as "mothers" in the classroom) has always intrigued me because it points to how few positive metaphors are available for representing strong, assertive females in leadership positions.[6]

Whose Trouble?

I have held fast to the belief that classrooms can never be totally safe and I admit that I take some pleasure in troubling my students' normative assumptions. And although I make space for my students' perceptions in classroom conversations, by in large I thought they were simply naïve. However, it is *they* who have the last laugh, as it were. "How can you say you do not believe safety is possible in the classroom, Catherine," they demand, "when we feel nurtured and safe in your classroom?" The first time students told me this I wondered, with irony and humor of course, what am I doing wrong that my students feel safe in my classroom? Having spent a good portion of my professional career critiquing notions of safety, I was "troubled" to be presented with a reading of my teaching style and personality at odds with both my published arguments as well as my self-perception.

Reflecting on how adamantly I clung to my beliefs I began to wonder to what extent reprosexuality was at work in my teaching, which Michael Warner (1991) describes as "the interweaving of heterosexuality, biological reproduction, cultural

[6] Some students have suggested using the metaphor of an "aunt" or "extended family member," yet this strikes me as operating within a heteronormative framework in which biological kin are thought to constitute our most meaningful relations.

reproduction… Reprosexuality involves more than reproducing, more even than compulsory heterosexuality; it involves a relation to self that finds its proper temporality and fulfillment in generational transmission" (9). Reprosexuality, like heteronormativity, is grounded in the notion that heterosexual family and kinship structures connote our most meaningful interaction and lived experiences. This is a particularly useful concept to use in thinking about graduate education in which a parent-child relationship becomes a vehicle through which we culturally reproduce ourselves and our program identities in students, thus attempting to ensure generational succession. Like most professors who teach about and embody a transgressive pedagogy, I have tended to conceive of myself as one who resists the kind of reprosexuality organized around cultural reproduction and generational transmission that Warner describes; however, through years of interactions with graduate students I have begun to question to what extent I have sought to pass on my beliefs or culturally reproduce myself in my unyielding arguments about safety and maternal nurturance and my unwillingness to seriously consider their perceptions of safety.

Indeed, creating "trouble" is productive only insofar as the lines of critique about our assumptions and beliefs lead us to imagine new possibilities. Unfortunately, as transgressive educators we often think of ourselves as creating trouble for our students rather than them troubling us.[7] In the tradition of Paulo Freire (1970), it seems that for a pedagogy to be truly transgressive it must be founded in reciprocity: teachers teach students, students teach teachers, and students teach students. This is a radical concept, one that seems to get at the roots of inequity in teaching and learning relationships.[8]

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[7] This is, of course, is an issue of power. I am not suggesting that students do not wield power in the classroom. I use "trouble" in the tradition of queer theory which implies a critique of normativity rather than a reproduction of normativity along lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Scholars such as Roxana Ng (1993), Himani Bannerji (1995), and Mumbi Mwangi and Kyoko Kishimoto (2009) have articulated the need to account for the location and subjective positions of faculty of color teaching in predominantly white institutions who often face hostility in the classroom through explicit verbal attacks or less explicit forms of hostility, such as persistent demands to justify and defend their knowledge and teaching practices. As an out lesbian who does not conform to a normative feminine gender performance I have also experienced the exertion of power from students who relentlessly disrupt the classroom in efforts to reassert privilege and power from a normative position. One student went so far as to stalk me with threatening emails over a course of many years. And, parallel to the experience of faculty of color in predominantly white institutions, the administrative response has typically ignored acts of hostility towards me and questioned what I do in the classroom that leads to "conflict" with students. My supposed "inability to manage classroom conflict" and the advice to "acquire a senior teaching mentor" who instruct me in more "productive teaching techniques" was documented and filed in my personnel file for years preceding tenure and promotion. As Roxana Ng points out in parallel administrative responses to complaints from students, it had "less to do with my competence as a teacher that with who I am" (190).

[8] Incidentally, I do not believe there is anything terribly transgressive if this reciprocity is reduced to questions about how students can teach us to better "deliver" the content of our courses. This does little to

Of course, reciprocity is based on Freire's work with adult students and a sense of mutual respect between both parties. Oftentimes this sort of reciprocity seems more achievable in the context of either graduate education where students are older and more mature or in the context of teaching non-traditionally aged undergraduate students because of maturity levels and lived experience. Mutuality in pedagogical situations also brings to the fore issues of power and authority and the ways in which our social positioning in larger structures of race, class, gender, and sexuality (among others) affects the degree to which we are authorized or de-authorized as professionals. As Roxana Ng so eloquently illustrates in her examination of an incident involving a white male student complaint and an administrator, the institutional response "produced and reinforced [her] position as a gendered and racialized subject in the university" (191), which effectively de-authorized her and re-instantiated power relations and inequities organized around race and gender. Ng contends, "We must develop a critical awareness…of the fact that people participate in institutions as unequal subjects" (199). Indeed, mutuality between teacher and students is neither possible nor desirable in all pedagogical situations precisely because power relations both precede and exceed the microcosm of classrooms.

However, where reciprocity and mutuality in the teaching and learning process is desirable and achievable, it often seems to be embraced as an abstraction rather than a realized practice. Judith Butler's (2004) concept of transformation offers a tool for attuning ourselves to reciprocity in the classroom, or rather, moments where reciprocity has shut down:

> To intervene in the name of transformation means precisely to disrupt what has become settled knowledge and knowable reality, and to use, as it were, one's unreality to make an otherwise impossible or illegible claim…. when the unreal lays claim to reality, or enters into its domain, something other than a simple assimilation into prevailing norms can and does take place. The norms themselves can become rattled, display their instability, and become open to resignification (27-28).

While I am not convinced that students' insistence that the classroom be a safe place is exactly the kind of "impossible or illegible claim" that Butler references (because it slides so easily into normative expectations), it certainly rattles my own sense of "settled knowledge." As radical educators we too often become so wedded to our ideas because of a self-perception that *we* are the ones on the margins of normative discourses; we forget to turn inward and engage in the kind of self-reflexivity that is foundational to

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shift normative relations where the flow of power/knowledge moves uni-directionally from the knowledge-holding teacher to students.

accountability and social transformation. As mentioned above, I held fast to my belief that teaching and learning can never be completely safe for several years, chalking students' perceptions to inexperience. But the conversations continued—from one year to another they flowed from classroom, to the hallways, to my office. The persistent trouble students presented to my settled knowledge about safety served as a call to pause and consider alternatives.

The Politics of Recognition and Risk

Butler's work on the paradox of power and what makes for a livable life provides an entry point for understanding my students' sense of safety in the classroom. Exploring questions of who counts as human and whose lives count as grievable lives in the face of increasing violence against those who challenge existing forms of gender driven by transphobia and heteronormativity as well as the increase in anti-Islam violence driven by nationalism and Islamphobia since the events of September 11, Butler (2004; 2005) turns our attention to the limits of autonomy and the politics of vulnerability and recognition. Drawing on her earlier work (1997) on subjectivation and power in which she explores how we are dependent on external power in order to have a sense of self even as this external power becomes a threat to our autonomy, Butler insists that, as social beings, we are never fully autonomous; from the start we are "laid bare," fundamentally dependent on others:

> We come into the world unknowing and dependent, and, to a certain degree, we remain that way. We can try, from the point of view of autonomy, to argue with this situation, but we are perhaps foolish, if not dangerous, when we do. Of course, we can say that for some this primary scene is extraordinary, loving, receptive, a warm tissue of relations that support and nurture life in its infancy. For others, this is, however, a scene of abandonment or violence or starvation… No matter what the valence of that scene is, however, the fact remains that infancy constitutes a necessary dependency, one that we never fully leave behind (2004, 23-24).

Following the work of Hegel and Spinoza, Butler argues that, as social beings, this dependency continues throughout our lives through our desire for recognition, which comes primarily through norms. Not insignificantly, Butler insists that not everyone is intelligible as human: "to be called unreal and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against whom (or against which) the human is made" (2004, 30). Thus, our political endeavors must not only involve a struggle for rights that are attached to personhood, they must also involve a

struggle over the very concept of who is conceived of as "human" in the first place because this is both produced and de-produced through norms of recognition. "If there are no norms of recognition by which we are recognizable," Butler contends, "then it is not possible to persist in one's own being, and we are not possible beings, we have been foreclosed from possibility" (2004, 31). Of course there is a tension here because we are both enabled and constricted by norms. For example, normative conceptions of personhood that bifurcate gender and articulate gender to fixed notions of sex and desire undermine the ability for many people to persist meaningfully.[9] Complicating her earlier work, Butler's more recent work gets to the heart of why it is not enough to simply create gender "trouble" through disruption of norms: whether we like it or not, we are deeply enmeshed with one another, and this interconnection renders us necessarily vulnerable to others.

Butler's exploration of the politics of recognition and our dependency on others resonates with my *critiques* of safety in educational contexts as well as my students' *calls* for safe spaces. If we are fundamentally vulnerable through our need for recognition, then it makes sense to both name the world as potentially dangerous even as we make efforts to create the conditions through which we can ameliorate the annihilating effects of being rendered "unrecognizable."

Navigating the Briar Patch: The Only Way Out is Through

Despite the small opening that Butler's theory provides, I still found myself grasping to my original arguments. Interestingly, the handful of LGBT graduate students with whom I have worked have shared my sense that teaching and learning are necessarily unsafe. Barclay Barrios's (2004) metaphor of the briar patch is instructive here in thinking about a queer relationship to safety, which Barrios offers as a tool to help all students queerly navigate the world:

> The briar patch, like the world, is a dangerous place—it is, after all, filled with brambles and that's just what keeps Brer Fox out. What makes it a refuge for Brer Rabbit is not something inherent in its nature but the fact that it's where he was

[9] This is particularly true for transgendered people, whose biology does not normatively align to their expression of gender. It is also true for people identified as gender-queer, for example a masculine woman who desires men. Herein lies the usefulness of naming the problem as heteronormativity rather than just heterosexism. Heterosexism suggests that heterosexual relationships are privileged over others. Heteronormativity points to an entire system of linkages (for example, the expectation that we cohabitate with a spouse, we share a surname, we exist in sexual dyads, we have a desire to reproduce, our desire arcs towards an object (man or woman) and particular body parts associated with those objects, our biology determines our gender and our desire, etc.) that serves to control and order expressions of self and desire across all sexualities.

> raised. And having been raised there means that he knows how to move through the briar, how to use the thorns to his advantage, how to find his way through the thickets, how to, in short, negotiate its dangers successfully (344).

Barrios' words resonate at the very core of my being: Yes, yes, the world *is* dangerous, someone else is saying it too—and it is no coincidence that this person is a queer person of color. Violence is not directly evenly at everyone nor is the world equally dangerous to all. How we are multiply-positioned in relation to normative structures of power and privilege influence the our vulnerability to both physical and psychological violence, and thus the degree to which we experience the world as a "briar patch."

As a marginalized community, there is something unique about the experiences of LGBT people who not only find ourselves under attack as a result of restrictive norms around sex/gender/desire from strangers, but quite frequently from those upon whom we are dependent from infancy. Threats of violence and rejection come early in many LGBT peoples' lives, often from our families of origin and our most intimate friends (before we make steps towards a "family of choice"). So many queer people are not formed within a "warm tissue of relations that support and nurture life" (Butler 2004, 23-24) and we learn to protect ourselves from a very early age by disconnecting from some of our most intimate and foundational relationships. Placing this in conversation with Butler's work on our fundamental vulnerability and need for recognition underscores why safety is a terribly complex and complicated issue and clarifies why some LGBT people have centered safety as a core political issue even as others insist that no site or relationship can ever be finally or totally safe.

Of course, it is possible that the conflicting views on safety constitute an impasse caused by social positioning—perhaps those further positioned on the margins are simply oriented to the world differently in ways that those closer to the center cannot understand.[10] But self-reflexivity calls me to consider how this might be one more way to solidify my established beliefs, to close down the dialogue and rest in my "settled knowledge." I want *more* from a transgressive pedagogy. It is not enough to simply find confirmation of my ideas in the work of other scholars, like Barrios, and use it to further convince students of the correctness of my position. I want a different relationship to knowledge and teaching, a more expansive, less "reprosexual" relationship with my students that offers new possibilities for imagining how we might relate to one another.

When we are called to consider how our social positioning informs our teaching and research we also engage in a sifting exercise: some parts of our sense of self and history find their way to the page or the classroom conversation and other parts, while likely influential, remain buried between the lines. I have written a line, edited it, deleted

[10] Certainly there have been many useful social analyses using standpoint theory (Harding 2004) that offer attention to how social location influences epistemology.

it, written it again, and deleted it again a half a dozen times. It is a missing piece of this puzzle about safety, one that has complicated my thinking and opened me to the possibility of relating to students differently. Butler's words resonate here: we are "laid bare" in our vulnerability to others as we seek recognition. Rationally and intuitively, I know it belongs here on the page, but it is incredibly difficult to lay down the words and not delete them. So I will just write it. Abuse. Control through acts and threats of violence and abandonment from my mother from such an early age that I cannot remember a time before fear. Then, total rejection from her at nineteen when I came out as a lesbian, who also severed all connection my younger siblings because she feared I would "convert" them. Butler's concepts of dependency, vulnerability, and the need for recognition converge with Barrios's metaphor of being raised in the briar patch. I learned early to guard myself in a dangerous world. This is why I have held fast to my belief that safety can never truly be achieved; this is why Barrios' words resonate at the very core of my being. It has as much to do with being positioned as queer in a predominantly straight world as it does with the ways in growing up in an unsafe home and being severed from one's kin literally writes itself on the consciousness.

The research of Bessel van der Kolk et al. (1996) in the neuroscience of trauma offers a more scientific explanation. Trauma, as a form of memory gets "laid down" on the brain and produces a set of neural firing patterns that activate our cognitive alarm system: danger, danger. When presented with similar situations, neural firing patterns travel along familiar pathways that were created earlier in life. Over time these firing patterns become more and more fixed, creating what is commonly understood as a "well-worn groove" in the mind. Thus, abuse, as a form of trauma, from our primary care-givers literally encodes itself on our consciousness: human connection equals danger, dependency is a threat to self-preservation. Those who are traumatized in these ways often move through the world like a closed fist, guarded and on guard in most interpersonal relations. I see this in many queer communities, the hardened exterior, shielding our vulnerability even as it is that very vulnerability that calls us to seek recognition and identification. Because we are necessarily interconnected as social creatures, being cut off, severed, walking through the world like a closed fist, no matter how "safe" it may feel as a result of how trauma "writes" itself on the neural pathways, is actually unsafe insofar as it keeps us disconnected from others—reproducing the original injury over and over again.

This is what my students were trying teach me. They were not equating safety with social comfort nor as an absence of risk or edginess in the classroom. Their sense of feeling safe in my classroom was about interconnection and recognition: feeling connected to others as well as to the course content and activities. The course in Feminist Rhetorics and Pedagogies that spawned these conversations and my self-reflection lends itself well to a sense of interconnectivity because this course is one in which I tend to take

more risks.[11] Many of my students are not only unfamiliar with feminism, but wary of the identification: envisioning the stereotypical bra-burning, "male-bashing," angry (lesbian) woman. It has become routine for me to begin the semester explaining my own relationship to feminism: quite simply, I tell them, feminism saved me. As a teenager I was taken under the wing of several teachers who introduced me to feminist ideas and took me to independent feminist bookstores. Feminism matters to me very much, I explain, because it gave me a language to name and define the dynamics of power and control that I intuitively knew were oppressive as a young person, but had no language to name and understand. While I do not get into details, I do explain that I come from a history of abuse. My purpose in disclosing this to my students is to present feminism differently: not as "women who are against men," as some of my students may assume, and certainly not simply about sexism. Feminism is a framework for understanding the overlap of oppressions and privileges and the ways in which power and control are complex and fluid rather than fixed to particular identities or social positions. Bringing my genuine passion and experience as well as my vulnerability to the class rather than just disembodied theories lays a foundation for connection, to both me and the topic of feminism.[12] Disclosing this personal history to my students takes courage because it "lays me bare" in Butler's words (and certainly, for me, it is infinitely easier to come out as a lesbian than to come out as a survivor of abuse). However, rendering myself vulnerable at the start allows for a shared recognition that is less about a common identity and more about what Butler describes as part of a shared human condition: insofar as we never fully autonomous we are all vulnerable, always dependent on others as social beings in need of recognition.[13] I have come to believe that it is a shared condition of vulnerability that allows students to find points of connection to me, to other students, and to the topic of feminism and fosters the kind of reciprocity necessary for transforming student-teacher relations. Additionally, part of the work that I encourage students to do over the course of the semester involves challenging logocentric standards of what counts as "good" academic writing and normative standards of "effective" composition instruction (which often emphasize efficient, grammatically correct depersonalized writing instruction

[11] As a white tenured professor the option of taking risks in my professional work are made available to me with a degree of security because systemic and institutionalized forms of privilege authorize me via my racial positioning and professional status.

[12] There are some students who comment in course evaluations that the class seemed to get "too personal," but for the most part students indicate that this class was unique because of the community and connection it fostered. Of course, being wary of pedagogies that are ego-driven and take on a cult-like dimension with students "worshipping" the professor, I find that a degree of humility in classroom dialogues and student-teacher interchanges serves to balance reciprocity and de-center teacher authority when the tone of conversations moves toward uncritical praise.

[13] Importantly, while we all might share a basic vulnerability as social beings, the degree and valence of our vulnerabilities vary based on our social position in relation to power and privilege and is clearly intensified for some more than others within particular socio-political contexts.

centered on audience-analysis rather than how writing might be used as a tool to transform both writer and reader). The safety students articulate as necessary to transformative pedagogies is not only having a sense of connection to people in the course, but also connection to themselves through the opportunity to experiment with alternatives that enable them to fashion more individualized rhetorical and pedagogical styles.[14]

My analytical critiques of safety as well as those of other queer scholars, such as Barrios, are born of a very real sense of the world as dangerous, but absent in these critiques is the other end of the spectrum of vulnerability that Butler (2004) references in exploring what it means to be human: "we are, from the start, given over to the other… this makes us vulnerable to violence, but also to another range of touch, a range that includes the eradication of our being at the one end, and the physical support for our lives, at the other" (23). Interconnection is a birthright, and while the experience of connection is necessarily vulnerable and risky because it challenges the illusion of full autonomy, it does not have to be scripted as dangerous or unsafe.

Queer Pedagogy and Forging a Livable Life

We rarely talk about our vulnerability in academic contexts and certainly laying this on the page and admitting the degree to which my own vulnerability has influenced my work transgresses normative expectations of de-personalized scholarly writing based in logocentrism and distanced objectivity.[15] But it seems to me that if we are to be genuinely transgressive, both on the page and in classrooms, we must find ways to acknowledge that which Butler (2004) insists makes life precarious: we are "laid bare from the start" and we never fully escape this (23), even as we search for ways of defining ourselves as autonomous. Although we would do well to recognize different degrees of vulnerability based on socio-historical locations and political contexts, I believe the metaphor of moving through the world like a closed fist is useful for thinking about how so many of us operate in academic contexts such as conferences, department meetings, as well as the classroom. Emphases on critique, interrogation, questioning have often been framed as *necessary* for staying politically viable and "edgy," but I wonder to what extent

[14] This course typically focuses on transformative efforts in the context of traditional classrooms because I work largely with teachers. My hope is that the sense of connection I arc towards in taking greater risks extends beyond both my classroom and their classrooms and translates into students finding their own relationship to feminism that fosters lived relations that begin to interrupt practices of power and domination.

[15] Logocentrism refers to the way in which reason (or logos) has been privileged in Western discourse. French theorist, Hélène Cixous has expanded the term to phallogocentrism in her work on écriture féminine to describe writing that privileges a singular focus, objectivity, linear and hierarchical organizational structures, and rationality.

this insulates us from others. I am reminded of a conversation with a leading Composition and Rhetoric scholar in graduate school after I delivered a paper on the importance of being out in the classroom as a form of self-actualization. She suggested that my "identity" as a lesbian is a construct and it would be more liberating to "queer" my identity in the classroom rather than attempting to secure it via given homo/hetero categories. The point of queer theory, she explained, is to maintain our position on the margins; attempts, such as mine, to feel secure in the context of teaching would diminish our ability to interrogate normativity and truly transform pedagogy. At the time I was shocked, and of course angry, not only for being publically shamed for claiming an "identity" that did not exist, but for saying something risky, vulnerable and having summarily it dismissed.

That interchange has been crucial in the development of my own thinking about what constitutes the transgressive and the place of risk, safety, and comfort in teaching and learning contexts. Fifteen years later (and more confident in my own theoretical stance), I am not convinced that there is anything particularly transgressive or "queer" about telling a young professional that self-actualization does not matter because it is at odds with current trends in theory.[16] Rather than engaging in genuine dialogue with me, theory was used divisively to elevate real knowledge over lore, new theory (post-structural theory at the time) over old theory (identity politics). There is nothing transgressive about alienating people, about furthering divisions and disconnections—creating a hierarchy between those who do "queer" work and those who do "identity politics." Critiques of identity-based politics have certainly been useful and productive in opening us to new perspectives, but to the extent that they became a way of policing the borders of queer studies, they lose much of their transformative luster. So much of queer theory has resided in the realm of critique, of dismantling, of undoing. And all of this has tremendous value in world in need of challenge and change, but shouting from the margins is not the only way to maintain an "edginess" that keeps us curious and questioning. Without a counterpart to critique, without hope and possibility, transformation can only go so far.

How do we challenge without completely alienating? This is a question educators must return to again and again, for to become too wedded to the solidity of our knowledge reproduces power structures in pedagogical interactions. I maintain a passion for critiquing over-simplistic notions of safety and maternal metaphors for female teachers, particularly those which reproduce the "comfort" or safety of those already in privileged positions; however, I am not so tied to my belief system that I have lost my

[16] David Halerpin (2003) offers an eloquent discussion of the normalization of queer theory as it has become institutionalized and the disconnection between the theory and the quotidian lives of lesbians and gay men. David Eng, Judith Halberstam and José Esteban Muñoz (2005) also examine how queer theory tends to reproduce white, male normativity through lack of intersectional analyses that address the complexity of sexuality in relation to other social positions.

ability to be self-reflexive. Teaching and writing about pedagogy are not mere intellectual exercises. They are, for many of us, a microcosm of life, of living in relation to others in the context of power, privilege, and hope for change. A truly transgressive pedagogy creates the conditions in which people can begin to pursue more meaningful directions of what makes a life a livable life, and central to that "livability" is acknowledging interconnection.

There is another way to maintain an "edginess" that keeps us arcing towards the transgressive rather than assimilation into the normative. Placing our dependency, our vulnerability more squarely at the center of teaching and research is incredibly edgy because we are forced into the unknown.[17] It is a shaky kind of place to be in, and of course we do not often like this as intellectuals who have been trained to appreciate the firmness of the known.[18] Given the right conditions and the right moment, there is a promise that something more meaningful, some different or deeper form of connection can be forged when we let go of certainties that keep us locked in and away from a whole realm of perspectives that simply are not possible when moving through the world as closed fists: self-certain and disconnected from others.

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[17] I do not advocate this in all teaching contexts nor for all teachers because we are not all positioned as equals. Questions of authority, risk, and vulnerability must take into account the ways in which we each occupy multiple positions in relation to power and privilege which necessarily affects the degree to which we are rendered more or less vulnerable before we ever enter the classroom or other sites within educational institutions. Equally important, I want to emphasize again that power does not simply reside in the hands of the teacher. In the face of hostility and aggression from students (and, in many cases unsupportive and/or hostile administrators), it is important to recognize danger as danger and maintain distance that allows for protection and self-preservation.

[18] Freire (Shor and Freire 1987) argues for a similar approach to the unknown in arguing for the necessity of humility: "Humility does not flourish in people's insecurities but in the insecure security of the more aware, and thus this insecure security is one of the expressions of humility, as is uncertain certainty, unlike certainty, which is excessively sure of itself" (40). Importantly, Feire's vision of humility is not akin to meekness or docility; these are characteristics that have been too often expected of marginalized peoples and would not be transgressive of normative subjectivities imposed on "others." Always cognizant of the locations from which we teach and speak, the degree to which we invoke humility or attempt to stand on "shaky ground" is contingent on the extent to which our positions already carry privilege and power.

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Article

SEEDS OF RESISTANCE: TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY CRITICAL ECOPEDAGOGY[1]

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Abstract

The death throes of mother earth are imminent unless we decelerate the planetary ecological crisis. Critical educators, who have addressed with firm commitment topics of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other social justice issues are casting their eyes to the antagonism between capitalism and nature to ask themselves how we can rationally regulate the human metabolic relation with nature. As the global power complex reduces human life and mother earth to mere production and consumption, critical revolutionary ecopedagogy is developing new, unalienated forms of selfpresence. Ecopedagogy is inspired by and inspires a new social arc, rooted in practices of ecological struggles by the working classes and the poor – an unabashedly utopian dreaming of a post-capitalist future.

Keywords

Capitalism, ecocide, ecopedagogy, imperialism, revolution

Our mother earth is convulsing, choking on the filth, the dye, the pesticides, the toxins, the effulgent splendour of chemicals and the dread unleashed by the furnaces of human greed. Her death throes are imminent unless we decelerate the planetary ecological crisis. Critical educators, who have addressed with firm commitment topics of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other social justice issues are casting their eyes to the antagonism between capitalism and nature to ask themselves how we can rationally regulate the human metabolic relation with nature. As the global power complex reduces human life and mother earth to mere production and consumption, critical revolutionary ecopedagogy is developing new, unalienated forms of selfpresence. Ecopedagogy is inspired by and inspires a new social arc, rooted in practices of ecological struggles by the working classes and the poor – an unabashedly utopian dreaming of a post-capitalist future.

Geographies of Ecocide

The crises of global capitalism, including grotesque inequalities and ecocide, are not self-standing – they form an organic unity. In capitalist societies such as ours, self-alienating subjectivity is always already social alienation linked to the social relations of production, to racialized and gendered antagonisms, and to the normative constraints of what Best, Kahn, McLaren and Nocella (2011) refer to as "the global power complex" that reduces everything to production and consumption. It is this alienation that generates the self which remains isolated from its Other, including the natural world. Living within the state of planetary eco-crisis so aptly characterized by Richard Kahn (2010) as constituting 'geographies of genocide, ecocide, and zoöcide'[1] we cannot experience our self-presence except through the anamorphically distorting mirror of capital.

Now that Keynesian stimulus measures no longer suffice to resolve the structural crisis of capitalism, and now that the frontiers of cheap resources are closing down, we are witnessing the dynamic increase in asset-stripping capitalism. Financial channels are used to plunder and pillage, as profit-making is linked to the fastest and largest rates of return inextricably tied to the world of fictitious commodities that dilapidate the sources of past revolutions of productivity. For instance, the agro-food transnationals seek to capture profits through price inflation rather than through advances in productivity. Petty commodity producers saw their profits drop as finance capital subordinated all commodity logic to the competitive logic of global financial markets. In other words, finance capital makes all parts of the world ecology commensurable with one another—reducing the natural world and everything in it to generic income streams, as surplus value that can be extracted in the absence of a revolution in productivity.

Asset Capitalism and Imperialism

Asset capitalism and the juggernaut of imperialism that follows in its wake has the potential to wreak further havoc upon the world in terms of imperialist wars, as well as the ecological destruction of the entire planet. Sociologist William I. Robinson (2008) has discussed the development of a new transnational model of accumulation in which transnational fractions of capital have become dominant. New mechanisms of accumulation, leading to the dramatic expansion of capital, as Robinson notes, include a cheapening of labour and the growth of flexible, deregulated and de-unionized labour, where women experience super-exploitation in relation to men; the creation of a global

[1] To this list, we might add epistemecide, the wholesale 'disappearance' of indigenous knowledges and practices by the guardians of Eurocentric knowledge production, which Kahn subsumes under the term zoöcide.

and regulatory structure to facilitate the emerging global circuits of accumulation; and neo-liberal structural adjustment programs which seek to create the conditions for unfettered operations of emerging transnational capital across borders and between countries.

Financial oligarchies like the corporate elite, and their allies in the corridors of United States political power, benefit from the consolidation of numerous matrices of power, whose generation of surplus value potential is transnational in reach, and whose multifarious and decentralized institutional arrangements are organized around the industrial, bureaucratic and commodity models associated with the military industrial complex. All of these 'power complexes' have intersecting social, cultural and political spheres that can be managed ideologically by means of powerful, all-encompassing corporate media apparatuses and the culture industry in general, including both popular and more traditional forms of religious dogma and practice. Assuming a position of major importance today is the religious industrial complex that provides the moral alibi for acts of war and military incursions throughout the world, so necessary for imperialist expansion.

We are witnessing the profound dismantling of national economies and the reorganization and reconstitution of national economies as component elements or segments of a larger global production and financial system. As Robinson observes, there is a decentralization and fragmentation of the actual national production process all over the globe while the control of these processes, these endless chains of accumulation, is concentrated and centralized at a global level by a transnationalist capitalist class. All of these power complexes overlap and interpenetrate each other at the level of capital accumulation and value production. At the same time, the sovereign ideologies of the capitalist state are reinforced through both new and old media technologies, resulting in an imperfect but nontetheless over-determined ideological climate that enables major 'class' conflicts to be avoided.

Grosfoguel (2007, 2007a, 2008, 2008a) reminds us that this power complex has an ignominious history. The rise to power of Reagan and Thatcher is often traduced for being the midwife to neoliberal capitalism, but the horror of accumulation by dispossession was well established long before their violent attacks on miners and air traffic controllers. In 1492, it was not just economic colonization that visited las Americas, but multiple antagonisms. This included a global class formation where a diversity of forms of labour coexisted, including slavery, semi-serfdom, wage labour, petty-commodity production, and so on. These diverse forms of labour, organized by capital, became a source of production of surplus value through the selling of commodities for a profit in the world market. Simultaneously, an international division of labour between core and periphery emerged, where capital organized labour in the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms. At the same time, an interstate system of politico-military organizations controlled by European males and institutionalized in

colonial administrations supported a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileged European people over non-European people. This was organically intertwined with a global gender hierarchy that privileged males over females and the system of European patriarchy over other forms of gender relations, alongside a sexual hierarchy that privileged heterosexuals over gays and lesbians. A spiritual hierarchy privileged Christians over non-Christian/non-Western spiritualities, institutionalized in the globalization of institutionalized Christianity, while an epistemic hierarchy upheld Western cosmology and systems of intelligibility over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, institutionalized in the global university system, complemented by linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileged Eurocentric knowledge as true communication and rational knowledge/theoretical production yet denigrated indigenous knowledges as 'merely' folkloric or cultural and not worthy of being called theoretical.

The consequences of the simultaneous emergence of a transnational forms of capitalism based on the exploitation of human labour and the endemic crisis of capitalism – based on the political, class conflicts taking place given exploitative relations of productions – is also the origins of the current ecological crisis. In the same ways that the exploitation of human labour sustains the conditions of possibility of all other antagonisms, including profound, globalized racial hatreds, which is not to reduce them all to class, transnational forms of capitalism today and their historical precedents are preconditions for ecocide.

Capitalist Ideology and Capitalist Discipline

The preconditions for exploitation, alienation and ecocide are not only material, although of course there are also that, but ideological. The global power complexes tacitly and manifestly teach values, and produce ideational schemata that serve as interpretive templates or systems of intelligibility through which the popular majorities make sense of everyday life via the language of technification, corporatization, bureaucratic administration, and commodification knitted together (in the United States) by ideological imperatives of religious ideology, American exceptionalism, and the coloniality of power. The ecological devastation of the planet must be understood as partly a product of the ideologies and discipline of capitalist imperialism.

Insinuating itself into our daily life as an ideology as much as a set of accumulation practices and processes of production, neoliberal capitalism pretends moreover to the throne of democracy-building but in reality it has hastened its demise. Capitalism wears a coquettish and self-effacing sheen of timelessness, inviolate consistency, and seamless immutability, but that sheen is not any more permanent than the lipstick worn by a cloak room attendant in a men's club. What makes capitalism seem

indelible yet imitable is the fact that it makes certain people very very rich, and these paragons of the capitalist class are those that the state and corporate media apparatuses parade in its garish media outlets — the movie stars, the corporate moguls, the trend-setters, the celebrities and the culture brokers. Not only do they control the culture industry, they are lionized for it. While news of celebrity cellulite in the gossip columns of Hollywood barons shakes us awake with amphetamine alertness, we remain emotionally drowsy to the pain and suffering of people who struggle and strain against falling household wealth, unemployment and lack of food and medical care. We are inured to the catastrophic suffering of mother earth.

In the meantime, capitalist discipline, "that which people do to prepare themselves for exchange on the money economy" (Fassbinder 2008), binds the self to a lifetime of alienated, capitalist labor. The social relations of production, then divide people into a class of owners who control the money economy by manipulating exchange for the sake of capital accumulation, and a class of people-commodities whose lives are dedicated to preparing themselves to sell their labour-power to capital. Everyone outside of the owning class is at least a potential member of this second class -- see e.g. Marx (1967: I) on the "industrial reserve army," which, as Marx said, "belongs to capital just as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost" (Marx 1967: I, p. 784). Under capitalism we of the working class must continually (re)commodify ourselves in order to survive regardless of the odds of actual survival. Needless to say, this commodification of the self is simultaneously an alienation from the Other and from the natural world.

From Pedagogy to Ecopedagogy

Despite the long-standing threat of capitalism to planetary survival and the more recent intensification of that threat through transnational forms of asset capitalism, environmental questions were largely undiscussed in recent decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, as a result of the unrelenting onslaught of consumer culture and progressive education's overweening emphasis on identity politics as a solution to creating a more vibrant and critical public sphere, issues of environmental sustainablity maintained but a lifeless presence, including within critical pedagogy. Now, in the early 2000s, motivated by the sustainability crisis and emboldened by the courageous activities of various planetary social movements, ecopedagogues have arrived on the scene and not only developed a powerful argument about how to respond to the crises of sustainability, but also offer a very timely and important contribution to critical pedagogy and community action at a time of resource shortages, climate change, economic instability and ecological breakdown.

Richard Kahn (2010) emphasizes that pedagogy has evolved consciously to become ecopedagogy as a planetary universal state of community-based emancipatory

education. Critical educators are joining a politically reinvigorated youth, who are beginning to refuse the cult of individualism as an antidote to their loss of a sense of self. They no longer accept being situated as impersonal agents in a rationalized society that is highly competitive and achievement and psychotherapeutically-oriented. And while they are taught to concentrate on their personal status and well-being, they know that they and their loved ones are not assured of protection from misery and oblivion.

The 2011 student mobilization in Chile, the activism of Nigerian youth at the Niger Delta crude oil flow station, the clench-fist protests against the ruling establishments of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the resistance to the austerity measures by the youth in Portugal, Spain, and especially Greece, the South African public students who struggle to secure basic teaching amenities, such as libraries, in their schools, the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States –- all of these are part of a growing culture of contestation. Of course, 'Occupy' means something else to indigenous peoples who have long fought imperial occupation. Nonetheless, the Occupy movement was courageous insofar as it put questions of inequality and ecologically sustainability on the map for European/settler populations.

Many of these movements self-consciously resist capitalism's transnational reach, while insisting that concerns with capitalism and ecology are all of one piece, entangled. For instance, youth in these movements examine how their food is produced in terms of sustainable water and land use, critique the harsh treatment of small-scale farmers, raise the alarm around climate change while outlining the negative implications of global warming for food production and sound the charge against the exploitation of women and immigrant workers in food production and agricultural distribution. Capitalism, as Jason Moore (2011) has articulated, is understood increasingly a a "world-ecology" that connects the accumulation of capital to the exploitation of nature and working class peoples, in a toxic and unholy alliance. New social movements, led by the world's youth, are increasingly insisting upon this connection.

Towards Revolutionary Critical Ecopedagogy

I am using the term revolutionary critical ecopedagogy in a special sense as a reconfiguring force of socialism. I specify this because the term "revolution"has become domesticated in consumer culture and I don't want to replicate the hegemonic, if ludicrous, conception of this insurgent process in such a away that confuses it with some new 'revolutionary' version of a laundry detergent. Some would argue that ecopedagogy is already revolutionary and critical and should simply be denoted as "ecopedagogy." But the term revolutionary critical pedagogy draws attention to my conception of ecopedagogy as denoting a transformation of capitalism to a democratic socialist alternative, that is, a tranformation of institutions of power on behalf of social justice. In

this view, any state that fails to provide food, home, education, shelter and medical assistance to its populace is considered "unnatural" and should not be left to die out but should be overturned and a new regime replanted in the soil of the old. At the same time, this socialist challenge is at once an ecological challenge. In the words of John Bellamy Foster (2009, p. 34):

> The socialist goal of transcending the alienation of humanity is impossible to achieve to any considerable extent unless it coexists with the goal of transcending the alienation of nature. Likewise, the ecological goal of transcending natural alienation is impossible to attain without addressing social alienation. Socialism is ecological, ecologism is socialist or neither can truly exist.

With contributions from authors and activists such as Richard Kahn, Tina Evans, David Greenwood, Samuel Fassbinder, Antonia Darder, Sandy Grande and Donna Houston (to name just a few) the field of critical, revolutionary ecopedagogy is now on a potent trajectory. Bringing their contributions into conversation with the efforts of Vandana Shiva, Joan Martinez-Alier, Joel Kovel, Jason W. Moore and John Bellamy Foster has cultivated a landscape of important transnational planetary ecopedagogy rooted in worldwide activism. We are now witnessing a profound demonstration of an efficient integration of the social, educational and ecological justice movements. In opposition to capitalist discipline, as it contributes to the ongoing crisis, ecopedagogic practices can be organized into a sort of "ecological discipline" (Fassbinder 2008), binding people to the defense of diversities both ecosystemic and social against capital's manipulation of them as people-commodities.

In this sense, recent books such as *Critical Pedagogy, Ecoliteracy, and Planetary Crisis: The Ecopedagogy Movement* (Kahn 2010), *Occupy Education* (Evans 2012) and *Greening the Academy* (Fassbinder, Nocella and Kahn 2012) very much constitute a critical revolutionary pedagogy of convergence and integration bound together by ecological discipline. The work of European sustainability scholars and activists is brought into dialogue with powerful emergent voices from las Americas. These approaches interrogate the rust-splotched and steampunk metropolises and tumbleweed hinterlands of neo-liberal capitalism and work towards a vision of what a world outside of the menacing disciplines of neo-liberal capitalism might look like.

For instance, Tina Evans' (2012) work is built upon in-depth theories about the nature and purposes of sustainability. Yet, Evans is acutely aware that the politics of sustainability is not a pitch-perfect love story and can easily be co-opted by the guardians of the state. These guardians make empty promises to manage the crisis in the interests of the so-called public good, but really in the interests of private greed. Thus, discourses of sustainability can be hijacked by the very interests that Evans is out to unmask. As Josee

Johnston points out, for example, in "Who Cares About The Commons?", "sustainability has come to imply sustainable profits as much as 'saving the earth'" (p. 1). Indeed, as Kahn (2012) argues in his introduction to *Greening the Academy*, the academy itself is managing sustainability for private greed in exactly this way – and this despite the fact that its own knowledge workers document the catastrophic conditions ecological conditions that we have created and that we now face.

Understanding how such hijacking takes place and how the imperial instinct remains alive and well even among some progressive educators is a major task. Evans answer is to anchor 'sustainability' in place-based theory and action, rooted in multiple contexts of practical lived experience – experience that has been inestimably impacted by neo-liberal capitalist globalization and sustained opposition to it. In this context, the starting point for a meaningful understanding of sustainablity is the sufferings of the planetary oppressed.

In developing this theory and practice, the decolonial school may be of brilliant assistance. Decolonial scholars have charted out the conflictual terrain known as the 'coloniality of power' (patrón de poder colonial), and 'the Eurocentric pattern of colonial/capitalist power' (el eurocentramiento del patrón colonial/capitalista de poder). Ramón Grosfoguel, Anibal Quijano, Linda Smith, Enrique Dussel, Sandy Grande and others call for what Kahn refers to as a 'revitalized ecology of body/mind/spirit', alongside an emphasis on 'planetarity' in the praxis of ecopedagogical struggles, struggles which seek to achieve specific, cumulative goals. Thus, for instance, Grosfoguel, Quijano, Dussel, and other 'decolonial' thinkers emphasize the 'global ecology' of capitalism, as a series of dependent hierarchies implicating specific forms of spirituality, epistemology, juriprudence and governance, patriarchy and imperialism. As Richard Kahn (2012) argues, this affinity betweeen Evans' work and the decolonial school suggests possibilities for the development of a 'counterhegemonic bloc of ideological alliance' among environmental educators, indigenous scholars, non-academic knowledge workers, and political activists of various and sundry stripe – or what Kahn in his own path-breaking work has called 'the ecopedagogy movement'.

Ecopedagogy in Dialogue with Marx

My own approach to revolutionary critical pedagogy and revolutionary critical eco-pedagogy is not so much theoretically multiperspectival as it is dialectical, emerging from the Marxist humanist tradition and beginning with the works of Marx himself. Marxist educators need to include an ecological dimension in their work: in the discourse of 'asset' or predatory capitalism, is not the exploitation of human labour and endless consumption a logical corollary of the extermination of indigenous peoples? More importantly, "labour" is itself a category within "nature" which, as Marx recognizes, exists

from capital's perspective as a "free gift." Also Moore (2011), fingers capital as the owner of this perspective. Moore argues not only that "capital externalizes nature through the appropriation of extra-human nature as 'free gift' (Marx 1967 III:745), but also asserts that nature's free gifts are not "limited to minerals, soil, and so forth: they also include human labour power (re)produced outside the circuit of capital (Marx 1967:377)." Thus capital exploits both society and nature in the way ascribed to its exploitation of nature as such. Moore (2011m p. 109) is worth quoting in full on this point:

> In privileging labour productivity over land productivity, capital reconfigures the relations between humans and the rest of nature (Marx 1967). Value, Marx argues, internalizes nature through the alienated elevation of human labour power to primacy. Labour power, as abstract social labour (which might be thought of as the average labour time inscribed in the average commodity), becomes the decisive metric of wealth in capitalism. At the same time, capital externalizes nature through the appropriation of extra-human nature as "free gift" (Marx 1967 III:745). Nor are nature"s free gifts limited to minerals, soil, and so forth: they also include human labour power (re)produced outside the circuit of capital (Marx 1976:377-378).

At the same time, environmental activists need to follow Moore's lead (and that of Joel Kovel and John Bellamy Foster) and engage directly with the writings of Marx. No longer can environmentalists continue to rely upon capitalism for solutions to the problems which were caused by the capitalist system: thus Marx's critique of political economy, which helped guide his devastating critique of capitalism, is appropriate to proactive responses to today's environmental crisis. But not only can Marx's work reveal to the educational left how attempts to harmonize revolution and reform not only serve to diminish both, but his work can also be used to find some helpful markers for charting out what a post-capitalist future might look like.

Curry Malott (2013) offers a succinct summary of Marx's work that I believe must be foregrounded in the ecopedagogy debate in so far as that debate is limited, too often, to altering existing capitalist social relations to make way for ecological progress:

> In other words, altering exchange-relations, that is, redistributing wealth to workers directly through wage increases, or indirectly through taxation and social programs…(which of course would be a huge victory for labour), leaves production relations intact, and thus the substance of value, abstract labour, unacknowledged and thus unchallenged. In other words…. it is not issues of distribution (i.e. poverty and inequality) that so offends Marx regarding capitalism, partly because they are but mere

> consequences of the alienating nature of the social relations of production within capitalism. In other words, Marx objects to the alienation or self-estrangement of capitalism (i.e. abstract labour, the substance of value) because it excludes the possibility of the full, healthy, normal, cultural-social development of the human being. Because abstract value represents the substance of capitalism, the only way to transcend the alienation of capitalism is to transcend capitalism itself. Even if markets and private property were abolished and wages were equalized, as suggested above, alienation and dehumanization would continue if the social relations of capitalist production represented by the existence of socially necessary labour time, or the generalized standard separating thinking from doing, persisted. Working toward a post-capitalist society that is humanized might include a critical education against capitalism focused on imagining a world without abstract labour. This is the foundation needed for a world of inclusion, or a world inclusive of humanization and against dehumanization.

As Peter Hudis (2012) formulates it in his path-breaking book, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*, when labour is determined by necessity and external expediency ends – that is, when we exist outside the social universe of value production and are no longer defined by material production, and our tribulations as human beings seeking to survive the world of vampire capitalism are no longer measured by labour time – then, and only then, are we able to take the first real steps towards freedom. This is because production and consumption will be based, according to Hudis, 'on the totality of the individual's needs and capacities'. Drawing our attention to Marx's storied phrase, 'From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs', Hudis corrects those who might interpret this phrase as some kind of a quid pro quo.

Here, we need to understand that Marx is not saying that needs are met only to the extent that they correspond to the expression of a given set of abilities. This is the case because it would mean that human relations are still governed by material production. But the true realm of freedom lies beyond material production. Even when we move from socially necessary labour time to actual labour time, we still are outside of the realm of freedom – entering the realm of freedom only occurs when actual labour time also ceases to serve as a standard measure, and labour serves as an end in itself, as part of an individual's self-activity and self-development. As Hudis makes clear, free development for Marx could not be possible when human activity and products acquire an autonomous power and limits are externally imposed on the range by which individuals can express their natural and acquired talents and abilities. Marx went so far as to stress the elimination of the basis of both modern capitalism and statist 'socialist' alternatives to value production.

From the point of view of ecopedagogy, the re-centering on needs suggests an important reining in of unsustainable extractive practices. In the shift from consumption to the expression of natural and acquired talents, lies the promise of better ecological stewardship. More specifically, a world-society whose members subscribed to some form of ecological discipline, as taught by ecopedagogy, would shift from value production to sustainable participation in ecosystems. Joel Kovel (2007) calls this activity "ecocentric production" (pp. 234-241).

And Hudis gives us something else to consider. He writes that the subjective development of the individual is, for Marx, a crucial precondition of a truly new society; in fact for Marx it was as significant as such objective factors as the development of the forces of production. Here, he took the position that human subjective activity should never be constrained by the forces of its own making. He went so far as to argue that it is not the means of production that create the new type of man, but rather it is the new human being that will create the means of production. Marx understood that there was no way that progressive political forces could just 'will' a new society into being by a force of the imagination or by interlocking fingers with the capitalists in a toast to avoid the eco-sins of the father. Any new society would have to come into existence imminently from the womb of the old society, with its specific conditions of capitalist production and reproduction and the forces in play that challenge such conditions.

One of the promises of indigenous struggles within the current context, without romanticizing them, is the possibility that indigenous ways of being and knowing can be reimagined for a post-capitalist world. That is, from the existing struggles will come a new society, one that is both ecologically viable partly because human needs are the focus and not endless consumption for an insatiable market.

Why, one might ask, did Marx not specify more about the time frame that societies could use as a reference for when they could expect to achieve certain steps in the progress towards freedom? According to Hudis, Marx 'was cautious about getting ahead of what individuals could or could not achieve in the course of their practical history, precisely because he is wary of imposing any conceptions upon individuals that are independent of their own self-activity'. Marx understood that changes would arise from the nature of new forms of production in a post-capitalist society and, as such, he did not feel the need to advocate new forms of distribution. Marx clearly supported the idea of a non-statist and freely associated form of self-governance that emerged from the Paris Commune. But this was a mediatory stage, in which capitalist social relations had not become fully overcome. He advocated the rule of the proletariat – democratic, inclusive and participatory communities of association – as such rule could work progressively to eliminate the social dominance of capital. While I do not claim the proletariat as the sole subject-agent of revolutionary truth, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, as articulated by Marx, has much value for us today. In addition, decolonial thinkers such as Grande, Martinez, Shiva and others, suggest to us the

possibilities for radical self-organization and democratic governance that gets away both from the domination of the state and of capitalist world markets, a direction that Kahn calls "the new science of the multitude."

Marx stressed the development of the forces of production (in part, because he did not live to witness the most destructive power in the forces of production), whereas, as Hudis notes, we are witnessing today the need to limit the destructive power of many of these forces before they overtaken us completely. Time is running out on the effort to save the planet from capital's vicious self-expansionary nature, and this is where the works by new ecopedagogy activists can provide us with a crucial intervention. Their work suggests links to existing work by southern/indigenous thinkers, insofar as it emphasizes a new world view grounded in a recognition of human beings as part of the land and natural world.

Linking Ecopedagogy to Praxis

The ecopedagogues are able to accomplish so skillfully the charting out of a comprehensive critical pedagogy of sustainability. The characteristic virtues and underlying tenets of such a pedagogy include trenchancy, a commitment to social and economic justice, a challenge to those who are engrossing disproportionate amounts of surplus value that are immiserating the world's peasants and a rage against those liberals who in their blinkered thinking remain at best dodgily critical of capital. To this list I would only add the thought that in order to have a critical pedagogy of any kind, we first need to develop a philosophy of praxis, which requires that we recognize that all philosophy is determined by its dialectical relationship to praxis. And I would emphasize that this relationship between philosophy and praxis is imminently ethical in that it is manifested in a preferential option and thematic priority to be given to the oppressed to present their counter-stories and testimonies of resistance. It is also imminently pedagogical in that it recognizes that the languages and discourses of the oppressed have been domesticated, if not destroyed, by the pedagogical practices of the state (in its role as a client to the owning class) and that new languages of resistance are often coded in the interstices of popular struggles. It is imminently transformative in that it adopts a class position in solidarity with the oppressed and remains united in popular, ideological, racial, gender and cultural struggles.

In other words, eco-pedagogy must join up with existing decolonial struggles, of all kinds, as natural allies in the battles against an unsustainable world capitalism. In this regard we might consider Vandana Shiva's advocacy of the Chipko movement (Mies & Shiva, 1993) as an ecosocialist struggle for the rights of forest use as well as her advocacy of farmers' rights to seed and land through the organization "Navdanya" (Navdanya Trust). Shiva's general principle of "earth democracy" (2005) is congruent with the idea

that the foundations of the means of production in land, seed, water (and so on) need to be kept in perpetuity by an arranged social commons (Shiva, 2005, pp. 2-4).

In general, we can regard struggles for a post-capitalist world of ecological discipline as being guided by what Joan Martinez-Alier (2002) called the "environmentalism of the poor," the defense of ecosystems by those who live in and among them. He identifies three distinct types of environmentalism, which I have summarized from Fassbinder (2008, p. 97):

> 1) The "cult of wilderness," preservationism which "arises from the love of beautiful landscapes and from deeply held values, not from material interests" (p. 2). In this thread Martinez-Alier includes the "deep ecology" movement and the organization "Friends of the Earth."
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> 2) The "gospel of eco-efficiency," connected both to the "sustainable development" and "ecological modernization" movements and to the notion of the "wise use" of resources. Martinez-Alier tells us that "ecological modernization walks on two legs: one economic, eco-taxes and markets in emission permits; two, technological, support for materials and energy-saving changes" (p. 6). This, then, is a reformist movement attaching itself to industrialism, and for it, ecology becomes a managerial science mopping up the ecological degradation after industrialization" (p. 6). It promotes "eco-efficiency," which "describes a research programme of worldwide relevance on the energy and material throughput in the economy, and on the possibilities of 'delinking' economic growth from its material base" (p. 6).
>
> And most importantly –
>
> 3) the "environmentalism of the poor," which has as its main interest "not a sacred reverence for Nature but a material interest in the environment as a source and a requirement for livelihood; not so much a concern with the rights of other species and of future generations of humans as a concern for today's poor humans." This is the "environmental justice" movement, and it is centered around what Martinez-Alier calls "ecological distribution conflicts" (p. 12). Its protagonists are locals whose livelihoods are threatened by environmental impacts.

One problem with the Martinez-Alier position is that it makes it seem as though green ecology or animal liberation are bourgeois movements solely and only. Of course, they can be and have been and quite clearly are dialectically related to that history. But

total liberation pedagogy and politics is not about bourgeois formulations but about the utopian struggle to overcome the domination of nature in every form of its matrix. That is why, for instance, Kahn and others cannot approve of a speciesist environmental justice struggle as ecopedagogy, nor can they approve of environmental justice being turned into a secular struggle about distribution of resources.

The Arc of Social Dreaming

As a philosophy of praxis, revolutionary critical pedagogy in the service of eco-sustainability will need to remain critical, self-reflexive, ethical and practical. Such a praxis is self-relating, it is immanent, it is an inscription into the order of being, a pulsion towards alterity, and it is also connected to the larger language of multiplicity and the historical traditions that can help guide it. It is an arc of social dreaming, a curvature of the space of the self as it is inscribed in our quotidian being. I emphasize this feature of revolutionary critical methodology, or a set of instructions for effective practice.

We generate truth by searching for it and the search itself becomes part of this truth. We don't select the circumstances in which we live; the conditions that impact our choices have arisen from the past and comprise the objective conditions in which we live and act. But as Zizek notes, we also make our history through our actions that actively create the propositions of our activity — we posit, in other words, the very necessity that determines us (2012, p. 466). This means we are obligated to political mobilization. And it is here that the work of eco-pedagogy and indigenous struggles, the most radical of which consistently empphasize protection of the earth and oceans, serve as an important guide.

On a recent trip to the small mountain town of Cheran, one of the eleven Municipios that are officially devoted to the Purépecha nation, I accompanied some educational activists from Morelia to observe attempts by the townspeople to break away from the Mexican state and function as an autonomous community. One aim of the autonomous movement was to form its own citizen militia to protect the surrounding forests from illegal loggers armed with automatic weapons and who are protected by the feared drug cartels. Here one could see the casualty of capital's awkward brutality and unprecedented repression as not simply a relationship for export but rather a home ground violence that permeates the unequal societies of the earth, sprouting in the soil of value production. At the same time, the struggle of the townspeople speaks to ongoing efforts to defend ecological rights (see Martinez-Alier 2002) from capitalist exploitation linked with the worst forms of terror and violence. This is a lesson for eco-pedagogues, in the form of praxis, of everyday struggle. This is the arc of social dreaming, whether or not it is informed by explicitly revolutionary rhetoric.

In Cherán, Michoacán, where el pueblo Purépecha en rebeldía are in a life-and-death struggle, I could see the spirit of Paulo Freire at work in the attempts of the people

to become a self-governing community. Here, Freire's entire pedagogical crasis stands for the God of the Poor against both the exgregiousness and good intentions of the God of the Rich (the God of Violence or the God of Unlimited Progress). The fragrance wafting from Freire's axiological thurible is not cassia or sandlewood, or frankincense and myrrh; rather, it is the sacred sage of the indigenous peoples of Las Americas, signifying unwithholding love and salvific grace. Here Freire's face is hidden behind a signature Zapatista handerchief, his pedagogy of liberation bent on creating the necessary albeit insufficient conditions for a world where the boulevards of the lonely and the despised will no longer be drenched with tears from poor mothers carrying pictures of their daughters, sons, and husbands.

In such moments of struggle, we act not from some divine fiat, but from our own compassion, from our love for our brothers and sisters and non-human animals, from our thirst for justice and from our desire to end such needless suffering in the world. Yet the struggle will not be easy. On this path we are threatened by our own human frailty, by those who would betray us and the principles of revolutionary comunalidad, by those who would use us for their own ends, and by the faux revolutionaries who wish to be part of the struggle without sacrificing their own positions of power and privilege. It is these individuals who will take us down the path of working in 'collabourative partnerships' with statist institutions all to eager to co-opt limited environmental resources, using what Kahn (forthcoming) calls 'public relations alchemy'.

But at the same time, there is another kind of imagining that is crucial to critical pedagogy. Eco-pedagogy carries with it the implicit but powerful lesson that we need to talk about the future and to ignore those who tell us that normative considerations and utopian thinking are inappropriate for revolutionary critical pedagogues. This would be, in Marx's view, a self-refuting statement as 'what will be' is always inscribed within the 'what is'. Marx tells us that all transformation must begin in the crumbling edifices of the old society, cobbled together by the smoldering debris left by the laws of motion of capitalist social relations – or, if you prefer something more messianic, by Benjamin's Angel of History. To talk about different futures is desirable as long as such reflection is grounded in reality. Normative statements about the future are inescapable for any revolutionary. The elements of the future are contained within the very structure of the present. But we need to have more than a vision of the future – we need to be committed to a vision that arcs towards the justice that eludes us under the ironclad thrall of capitalism.

Our return to our humanity requires that we posit a new world outside of the well-worn path of American custodianship, and this is a retroactive process in which our presuppositions occur after the event. There is no metaphysical springboard from which to propel ourselves into the future; rather, we propel ourselves from where we are, from being energized by the truth effect of our own commitment to a praxis of liberation – what we may consider a concrete universal – and our full fidelity to such a praxis (Žižek

& Milbank, 2009). While we have no original source from which to act (we act from a position of exteriority beyond the totality of social relations) and from which to accept the entreaty of the oppressed, that should not stop us from participating in the struggle to build the world anew. This struggle at once practical and imaginative must be one for a world beyond class but also a world in harmony with the natural world and all life, human and non-human, on it.

Ecopedagogy at a Time of Capitalist Cholera

The biosphere is disappearing into itself, and it is no coincidence that those of us living in regions of the geopolitical center, in the very locations where the forces of exploitation are most acutely developed, will be able to resist (with the help of the arms race and the war economy) this collapse for a longer duration than those labouring in the peripheral countries.

In this ominous moment of capitalist cholera, I do not know if critical pedagogy will be the outcome and expression of historical necessity, or will it be a contingent force that will be erased by the sands of empty, unproductive time – that is, it is unclear whether critical pedagogy will be the result of the constitution of a deeper historical praxis needed at a future historical moment or is merely the contingent construction of such a praxis. And we must live with this realization, as difficult as it might be, that we cannot know the outcomes of our actions and teaching, whether they will be futile or whethr they will be part of the struggles that bring into being a new world out of the current world of suffering, exploitation and greed. We have no choice but to live with this uncertainty. Moreover, given the stakes of a dying earth, we have no choice but to engage in revolutionary struggle.

Standing polemically against and serving as a crucial antipode to the narcissistic individualism of the consumer citizen — to a society founded on the commodity form — is revolutionary critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy seeks those spaces where production is not wholly capitalist, and where new subjectivities can be given birth, subjects unsparingly reflective enough to remain at odds with the consumer subject. The consumer subject, skulking behind the facade of representative democracy, remains bereft of how self-knowledge is tied to the fetishism of the commodity, of how life becomes lumbered with subjectivities that are monomaniacal, ungrateful, intellectually insecure, which are given to Trump-style fantasist ravings, which are at sea in judging the competitive worth of others, which never stint at distributing faults, and which are most comfortable in accepting the patronage of overly corrupt corporate leaders. In Cheran, there is a thirst for revolutionary subjectivity. There is no dismal hunger for orthodoxy, nor lofty gestures for revolution. While there is an atmosphere fraught with foreboding, there are increasing occasions for multiple points of dialogue where the inhabitants

huddle together in discussions of new vistas of revolutionary consciousness and organization.

We cannot have market freedom, hierarchical harmony or authentic democracy within the social universe of capital – this monstrosity of monopolistic imperialist capitalism – that is unable to distribute overproduction and unable to function even minimally without the extraction of surplus value. We must not be deceived. We must reject liberal pluralism and methodological individualism, as it only serves to bolster neo-liberalism and the capitalist state. Our job on the left is to cobble together strategies and tactics from the debris of human suffering that surrounds us and that can unite us in a common cause. An eco-pedagogical approach that understands the ways that human suffering is part of ecocide is a necessary part of this left strategy.

Critically, however, this will not be a socialist strategy that denies the different ontological and epistemological realities of the world's peoples, particularly subordinated classes. We must recognize that we live in 'un mundo donde muchos mundos coexistan' ('a world where many worlds coexist') and this means that we have an opportunity to resignify the notion of critical agency from the position of subaltern exteriority – that is, from the subaltern side of colonial difference in the spirit of the Zapatista dicho ('saying') of mandar obedeciendo ('to rule by following') and andar preguntando or preguntando caminamos ('walking we ask questions'), which means we make our road of liberation by walking (i.e. as we go along). This horizontal approach to organization (emphasizing interclass unity) contrasts with andar predicando or predicando caminamos ('walking I tell you'), which is a vertical form of organization where one group tells another which way to go (often described as a form of Leninist vanguardism and supraclass harmony). Of course, this is organizing from a base of affection, or what has been called política afectiva ('affective politics') or horizontalidad ('horizontalism'), where one organizes at one's own pace: 'caminamos, no corremos, porque vamos muy lejos' ('we walk, not run, because we are going very far').

My own preference is the term, '¡Que se vayan todos!' ('Out with them all!'), as I think that life against and beyond capital requires more than local struggles for self-sustainability, direct democracy and participatory democracy, as important as these struggles are. We need to figure out how to organize the totality of everyday life and, for that to occur, we must first articulate the revolutionary subject. And our struggle must not only be local, to cease creating capitalism as much as resisting capitalism; rather, it must be massively universal – stronger, in fact, than the corporations that have hijacked the state. Resistance must be as global as the worldwide threats that capitalism poses to the complexity of global ecosystems, but also as global as the transnational suffering caused by capitaist exploitation.

As more and more people now exist outside the control of the state, in vast slums and favelas throughout the world, the struggle to bring down capitalism and replace it

with a more democratic and sustainable alternative must have a viable vision of what a social universe outside of capitalist value production will look like.

Tellingly, guerrilla fighters in Latin America, like indigenous groups worldwide, have often identified their struggle with the permanence and sanctity of nature. In Nicaragua, the vicious Reagan-backed counterrevolutionaires known as the Contras deliberately terrorized the rural communities, especially teachers, as a tactic for destroying the morale of the Sandanistas. David Craven reports that "the U.S.-backed Contras executed, got example, as many as 189 Nicaraguan school teachers in an effort to terrorize psychologically the populace of rural areas" (2002, p. 154). Craven writes of the Nicaraguan guerrillas' "belief during the insurrection that mountains had a 'mythical force' as 'our indestructibility, our guarantee of the future'" (2002, p. 148). He summarizes Carlos Fuentes's opinion that "Sandino and the Sandanistas were victorious against imperialism because their adversaries could not defeat nature, no matter how formidable the Western-backed technological edge was in military terms" (2002, p. 148).

Craven describes the significance of the volcano, Momotombo, which signified in revolutionary Nicaragua technological progress because it became the site of a geothermic electric plant which used volcanic steam to generate over 12 percent of Nicaragua's energy needs. Craven (2002, p. 149) notes: "Mountains thus came to signify national self-sufficiency in an entirely new sense…. a traditional respect for nature was combined with a modern mastery of energy sources that left the ecosystem unharmed" (a fact enirely at odds with the ecological devastation endemic to capitalist industrialization under Somoza).

Tragically, we do not share such a perspective. It has brought us a bloated Behemoth with a rictus of poisoned fangs, and fracking fluid coursing through its veins. We live in the Golgotha of the planet, in which the global coloniality between Europeans/Euro-Americans and non-Europeans is increasingly organized in a hierarchical division of labour that is nothing less than a massive form of global apartheid. Not only do we need a pedagogy that does not avert attention from contemplating problems of social, political and cultural domination, and does not obfuscate its own complicity with the coloniality of power, we need a mass struggle determined by our collective engagement with the world economy as it participates in the natural world. This will surely require new forms of radical subjectivity and agency. It is to the task of building those new forms of political and pedagogical agency that revolutionary critical eco-pedagogy must dedicate itself. Noam Chomsky (2013) pitches the challenge as follows:

> In future, historians (if there are any) will look back on this curious spectacle taking shape in the early 21st century. For the first time in human history, humans are facing the significant prospect of severe calamity as a result of their actions - actions that are battering our

> prospects of decent survival. Those historians will observe that the richest and most powerful country in history, which enjoys incomparable advantages, is leading the effort to intensify the likely disaster. Leading the effort to preserve conditions in which our immediate descendants might have a decent life are the so-called "primitive" societies: First Nations, tribal, indigenous, aboriginal. The countries with large and influential indigenous populations are well in the lead in seeking to preserve the planet. The countries that have driven indigenous populations to extinction or extreme marginalization are racing toward destruction. Thus Ecuador, with its large indigenous population, is seeking aid from the rich countries to allow it to keep its substantial oil reserves underground, where they should be. Meanwhile the U.S. and Canada are seeking to burn fossil fuels, including the extremely dangerous Canadian tar sands, and to do so as quickly and fully as possible, while they hail the wonders of a century of (largely meaningless) energy independence without a side glance at what the world might look like after this extravagant commitment to self-destruction. This observation generalizes: Throughout the world, indigenous societies are struggling to protect what they sometimes call "the rights of nature," while the civilized and sophisticated scoff at this silliness.

Moving from an abstract universalism to a pluriversalism (see the work of Ramon Grosfoguel), from modernity to transmodernity (completing the unfinished project of decolonialism), from a vanguardismo to a retoguardismo, from an abstract utopia to a concrete utopia, from 'andar predicando' to 'andar preguntando', from a post-colonial critique to decolonial pedagogy and an appreciation for the communalidad of first nations peoples and pueblos originarlos, and from environmental education to ecopedagogy and the politics of sustainability, revolutionary critical pedagogy is positioning itself for a transnational struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalist value production. In this age where we work within an asset economy that makes profits from fictional investment markets imbued with the stench of greed while much of the world's population suffers, revolutionary critical pedagogy is poised to form transnational alliances with social movements that are working towards a vision of a social universe where labour processes are organized autonomously by the direct producers, where direct and participatory democratic administrative arrangements flourish, and where there exists a strong emphasis on social relations and human development that focus on service to others and the common good. This vision must include recognition of plural worlds, of indigenous worldviews and ways of being, as well as a shared commitment to the stewardship of the natural envirnoment.

The questions that remain point to an urgent challenge for the left: how extensive should be the uprooting of existing society and what should be the new social relations

and new forms of social consciousness that replace current relations of exploitation and alienation?

Towards a Planetary Communalidad

Given the dire ecological situation, but also the reality that the very wealthy are insulated by their wealth and arms from immediate effects of such devastation, how can a new transformative understanding of the human place in the natural world be forged and practiced? While there is no effective indemnity against failure, we have no choice today than to move forward as concrete utopians workers who refuse to conceal our partisanship for a radically different future. We may not choose to call this future socialist. We might instead call for a form of planetary communalidad. But whatever we choose to call the future, it will require a simultaneous revolution in our relations with nature and in our social relations of production.

Mad troubadour poet and cloth-maker, Francesco di Bernardone, more commonly known as St. Francis and considered to be the patron saint of ecology, is often held in high regard by environmentalists. Yet, you don't have to be seen weeping, howling, screeching, and writing canticles to Brother Sun, dancing in your undergarments and exhorting sinners to give up their possessions to engage in ecological praxis. Nevertheless, you are required to make a pedagogical commitment to unpacking the strong metabolic relationship between human beings and society and in so doing recognize that ecological degradation and the destruction of biodiversity that is currently engulfing the planet is not only tied to economic crises but is built into the very way human beings relate to ecosystems in their wish to dominate or master them.

If St. Francis, who loved the poor and the downtrodden and who was anything but anthropocentric, could be considered the Angel of the sixth seal in Revelation (7:2-3) "ascending from the east….saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees," as some Catholics claim, then Hugo Chavez is John the Baptist, who fulminated against imperialist nations and called on them to mend their ways, while himself advocating the principle of "buen vivir," to live well. But this term, which has indigenous roots, is very different from the North American term, "the good life." Buen Vivir requires that individuals in their various communities are in actual possession of their rights and are able to exercise their responsibilities in the context of a respect for diversity and in accordance with the rights of ecosystems. It's about social wealth—not material wealth. In 2001, Chavez' congress, overseeing one of the world's most bio-diverse countries, required millions of acres of untilled land where plantation owners squatted to be sold to the landless. Missions 'Zamora', 'Arbol' and 'Agro', were set up to protect the environment, native peoples and campesinos (agricultural workers). Environmental benefits have accrued from de-urbanizing the population and reducing food

miles. Chavez also ushered in improved land-ownership structures that resulted in improved environmental stewardship and associated gains in biodiversity and efficiency.

But we do not need to be saints to enter the struggle, to develop a communal metabolism to fight the class-based accumulation of capitalism. We can start now by engaging in acts of prefiguration, that is, by living and thinking as if we were in the future right now by promoting the idea of living well. Perhaps it is Evo Morales (2008) who says it best:

> As long as we do not change the capitalist system for a system based in complementarity, solidarity and harmony between the people and nature, the measures that we adopt will be palliatives that will limited and precarious in character. For us, what has failed is the model of "living better", of unlimited development, industrialisation without frontiers, of modernity that deprecates history, of increasing accumulation of goods at the expense of others and nature. For that reason we promote the idea of Living Well, in harmony with other human beings and with our Mother Earth.

We don't have to wait until we have a perfect society, we can begin to create the alternative worlds we wish to create right at this very moment, as what we have at hand contains the lineaments of what could be. A movement towards the future exists in every breath that we take. All the acts that we take in the here and now have a prefigurative potential. What we call for is a prefigurative praxis. There are always cracks in historical time, where the light shines through. The battle for that future will be illuminated by this light. And it will be fought with fierceness. So if we must be burdened by nostalgia, let it be nostalgia for the future.

Note

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Article

TREATIES, TRUTHS, AND TRANSGRESSIVE PEDAGOGIES: RE-IMAGINING INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

MARGARET KOVACH

Abstract

This essay contemplates the context of treaty and the values it offers as a way to imagine anew a *just* relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the particular context of education. It begins with a theoretical meandering of sorts, a 'thinking it through piece', and asks, 'What does the treaty relationship, as envisioned by Indigenous peoples, teach us about critical and respectful pedagogy? What are the tensions and contradictions involved in teaching *from* and *through* treaty. The essay then explores the implications of a treaty lens within formal schooling through including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives. Situating treaty within identity, relationship, and a sacred dialogue, the focus is less on treaty or treaties themselves and but rather explores the spirit and possibility of 'treaty', as imagined by Indigenous peoples, in thinking about transgressive pedagogies and practicing transformative dialogue.

Keywords

Treaty, Indigenous, formal schooling, transgressive, pedagogy, dialogue

Biographical note

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Truths, Treaties, and Transgressive Pedagogies (Part I)

"Why does being from Treaty Four matter to you?" This was a question asked of me as a result of a recent article submitted for peer review of which I was a co-author.

The article's focus was on the significance of locating one's self in Indigenous methodological research approaches. In line with the article, I introduced myself and identified as being a member of Treaty Four, a post-confederation treaty (which are numbered one through to eleven), signed by Indian nations and the Crown. The land of which Treaty Four encompasses includes the majority of southern Saskatchewan and small portions of southeastern Alberta and western Manitoba.[1] Chief Pis-qua, in 1874, was the signatory on behalf of Pasqua First Nation of which I am a member. While the numbered treaties emerged post-contact and in this sense may be perceived by some as a colonial tool -- although this is debatable given the use of treaty pre-contact --, the treaty relationship is predominately viewed as sacred by my Saulteaux and Cree kith, kin, and community.

In reflecting on the above mentioned reviewer's question, and knowing the intended journal was international in scope, I eventually assessed that the reviewer was likely asking for more descriptive information about Treaty Four to clarify for the readership. However, my initial, and arguably a bit baffled, reaction to the question was, "What do you mean why does 'being Treaty Four' matter?" "Because it just does, it always has." Raised cross racially in an adoptive home in a small rural white Saskatchewan community, I always knew I was of First Nations heritage. In the area of Saskatchewan were I was raised, First Nations (or the more common term of the time – 'Indian') meant Treaty, and the two terms were used interchangeably. From the start, 'being treaty' has been a paradoxically imbued identity positioning for me. Once I started school I was readily informed that this was not a privileged positioning rather it was an identity term often accompanied by myriad derogations that laid shame upon a culture of people. Being of this culture, I internalized many of these fallacious assumptions at a young age. Yet, I remained conflicted for the word 'treaty' equally evoked in me impressions of respect, history, endurance and belonging. This knowing was counter to the deficit storying of which I had been exposed in my schooling. It took time, relationships, and study to the reveal that this deficit storying levied upon Indigenous peoples was largely socially constructed by a society fully prepared to dismiss my culture. Such revelations clarified a rampant injustice against Indigenous people that, for me, continues to be as personal as it is political.

As a starting place, the personal associations that treaty induces for many suggest that it is intrinsically multifaceted as it is not simply an accord or event, for many of us it is bound in identity. Thus this paper explores 'treaty' as a complex concept. It is about 'identity', however, to consider treaties as solely a categorical demarcation of identity demonstrates a limited understanding of Indigenous culture and philosophy. Treaty marks an on-going relationship with, and including expectations and obligations from,

[1] Saskatchewan is covered by the numbered treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10.

the Crown and the original newcomers. It is not the piece of paper that was signed at the time but that the parties did smoke the pipe that lends this treaty its force of weight and thus is relationally sacred. Situating treaty within identity, relationship, and a sacred dialogue, this writing focuses less on treaty or treaties themselves as historic documents but rather explores the spirit and possibility of treaty, as imagined by Indigenous peoples, in thinking about transgressive pedagogies.

This essay has two parts. The first section integrates my contemplation on the context of treaty and the values it offers as a way to imagine anew a *just* relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This section is a theoretical meandering of sorts, 'a thinking it through piece', and asks, 'What is a treaty?' What does the treaty relationship, as envisioned by Indigenous peoples, teach us about critical and respectful pedagogy? What are the tensions and contradictions involved in teaching *from* and *through* treaty. The second part of this essay considers the meaning of treaty broadly and within a formal schooling context. Treaty is considered in the light of conversations with non-Indigenous education faculty members through a small research project inquiring into their perspectives on integrating Indigenous perspectives into their course instruction. The study emphasized Indigenous knowledges however more often than not veered toward Indigenous-settler relations within a social justice pedagogical context. Stated explicitly or not, it is here that a treaty perspective has particular relevancy in the contemporary classroom given its Indigenous traditional role in the maintenance of peaceful relations. More precisely, re-thinking treaty within classrooms in a manner that serves a *just* peace is critical to a social justice pedagogy given that Indigenous-settler relations have been often been characterized by domination that passes for peace from the perspective of (too) many in the settler population.

"Treaty Is Not A Thing"

The term 'treaty' within Indigenous-settler context is meant to represent a contemporary relational covenant grounded in a historic agreement. It envisions treaty with regard and with polychromatic potential as opposed to the disparaging, monochromatic manner in which the Canadian government has approached existing treaty relationships. Treaty is conceptualized in the manner in which Indigenous nations may have historically used treaty – as a living, mutually agreed upon protocol used to create and regulate respectful citizenry relationships. In a CBC interview with Jennifer Clibbon (May 22, 2012), Taiaiakie Alfred offers this perspective:

> Treaties were made between European settlers and the original people of this land; promises of peace and friendship and co-operation that allowed white people to settle in North America and survive and prosper with the

> help of the original people of this land. The Crown guaranteed those promises would be kept. Canada inherited all of the obligations, and then broke all of the promises once it became its own country. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 and treaties still matter because they are records and evidence of the true relationship that should exist between Canada and indigenous peoples.

The treaties, signed between Indigenous nations and the Crown of territory now known as Canada, signify a nation-to-nation relationship. John Borrows (2005, p. 3) states treaty relationships pre-date settlement and were used, as with feasting, trade and intermarriages, as a means of maintaining peaceful relationships. Post-settlement, treaties continued to be a familiar method to clarify relationships most particularly about the land and its bounty. As Borrows (2005) says, "Aboriginal peoples have a pre-occupation. It is *of* land." Post-settlement and amid a long cold season of dispossession he goes on to say: "This dispossession has led to another Aboriginal pre-occupation. It is *with* the land" (p. 3). Alongside land, Alfred asserts, treaties "still matter" (Clibbon, 2012) to Indigenous peoples as value imbued protocols that identify how people ought to relate with each other on and with the land. Dale Turner (2006) states that, "The treaty position, in its various forms, takes the political stance that the treaties represent not only binding political agreements but also *sacred* agreements..." (p. 26). He goes on to say that to violate such agreements is a moral encroachment.

Thus, it is worth insisting on this truth: treaty is not a 'thing'. It is a word that describes an active relational process that includes seeking continuous counsel and dialogue on matters that have bearing on the parties it involves. Without societal counsel and dialogue we become a robotic culture void of a richness of being and move increasingly toward a 'thing' like state. "The product of this anti-dialogical culture of domination is the culture of silence, characterized by hopelessness, passivity, self-doubt, where to be is to be under" (Lloyd, 1972, p. 7). There would be no worse irony than for treaty discourse in educational sites to transform the potentially subversive idea of treaty, with its emphasis on ongoing dialogue among peoples, into a dead document of history – one item among many in a curriculum that seeks to ready students for a job market and not for life as citizens in a still-colonized land.

"It is not necessary, they argue, that crows be eagles"

The intersection of a treaty philosophy that is cognizant of a present, imagining the future, but ever mindful of the not quite lost bounty of the past is the contribution, and often currency, of transgressive Indigenous pedagogy. The point is not a nostalgic revalorization of the past for its own sake. Rather the aim is to embody and prefigure a

vital Indigenous presence that draws its strength in part from the knowledges and struggles of the past, while building the relations now that are necessary for a just and peaceful present and future. Remembering the past is not 'at the expense of' but critical to the present and future of peaceful co-relationships.

Acknowledging, without dismissing the past, shows respect for the history from which our current individual and collective narrative has evolved. This does not always happen in contemporary classrooms. For example, the numbered treaties in Saskatchewan have been in place since the 1870s, with Treaty Two signed in 1871. If my math serves me, that would be 142 years ago. It's been awhile. Still when I walk into my classroom, I will be greeted by terminology confusion between treaty, status, and non-status, Aboriginal. 142 years and these basics are still widely unknown. And of course, this is not just confusion about terminology (although this cannot be understated). These terms are freighted with different political meanings and entitlements and also with the heavy emotional weight of questions of Indigenous belonging and identity. The lack of understanding within majority culture is indicative of an educational system that has responded to Indigenous experience with: a) active suppression or b) chronic apathy. Were treaty a historical event of the past inconsequential to contemporary relations it would not evoke a response indicative of an active relational status.

This suppression of Indigenous values and experience within sites of dominant discourses as formal educational institutions in Canada has given way to an Indigenous counter narrative within education (Archibald, 1995; Battiste, 2002; Cajete, 1999; Hampton, 1995, Williams and Tanaka, 2007). From this counter-perspective, a philosophy has re-emerged which presupposes human relations that are dialogic and consultative and although affective and holistic such relations are not anti-intellectual. It is a treaty philosophy that shows evidence of a mutual respect and infers a symbiosis of self and other. It reflects, as Vine Deloria (1983) writes, a "true humanism" of an Indigenous cultural belief system. Of tribal peoples, he says,

> They revere and recognize the growing process. They establish with some degree of clarity the difference which gender creates in human perspectives. They admit that family considerations play a critical role in the distribution of goods and the application of justice. They recognize law but they also see the fullness of the moment and ask legal and political solutions to be just as well as lawful. They reject a universal concept of brotherhood in favor of respectful treatment of human being with whom they have contact. It is not necessary, they argue, that crows be eagles. (p. 136)

Such a philosophy underscores a treaty relationship (or ought). It offers, for example, an alternative to sweeping educational policy that privileges policies on standardized

curriculum and testing in formal learning. Overwhelmingly institutions of formal education define success as transforming all crows into eagles! Indigenous perspectives offer an alternate counter perspective, a different way of being and learning in the world. Yet, in asserting culturally grounded philosophical positioning within contemporary contexts, Indigenous peoples experience the added tension of a colonial accounting of both individual and collective identity. This is imbued with multi-layered assumptions, both by dominant culture and those internally colonized, about Indigenous peoples whereby much time is spent explicating who we are in contrast to a frozen-in-time identity. Romanticized notions of how Indigenous people live their lives do not help to further Indigenous (treaty) philosophy as viable and contemporary. Such notions contribute to notions of treaty as an historic artifact and Indigenous culture as dead. Rather, it is in contemporary interpretations based upon ancestral teachings that assure the vitality of the cultures.

Teaching Treaty or Treaty Teachings?

Given the complexities, teaching *from* and *through* an Indigenous and treaty perspective implies the tension of teaching from differing worldviews and temporal states of past, present, and future. Leroy Little Bear (2000) outlines the tensions that inhabit contemporary Indigenous consciousness.

> No one has a pure worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric; rather, everyone has an integrated mind, a fluxing, and ambidextrous consciousness, a precolonized consciousness that flows into a colonized consciousness and back again. It is this clash of worldviews that is at the heart of many current difficulties with effective means of social control in postcolonial North America. It is also this clash that suppresses diversity in choices and denies Aboriginal people harmony in their daily lives (p. 85)

Negotiating the 'ambidextrous consciousness' is experienced as a split, *and* suggests a capacity, for those destined to move back and forth between the dominant Eurocentric paradigm and an Indigenous consciousness. For many Indigenous educators, there is an emotional and psychic cost to constantly negotiating these dual, often contradictory awarenesses and ways of doing and being. A treaty philosophy does not argue against the contradictions that define the tensions of freedom. Indeed, as Franz Fanon proposes it is the tensions of freedom which create the possibility for "…the ideal conditions of existence for a human world" (1967, p. 231). However, the desire to find ground amid

tensions and contradictions, the ability to problematize and disrupt normative practices, is often hard won in local educational environments.

My context is Saskatchewan and I am writing with this locale in mind partly because it is my place and partly because the demographic, at this point in time, offers an increasingly possible numerical equality if not social equity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Saskatchewanians. A study of the Canadian Plains Research Centre projects that the Aboriginal population will be 33% of the total Saskatchewan population by 2045 (Anderson, 2007). The numbers alone are causing some shifts within public policy and discourse not least of which within education. The latest message heard by sectors of the Saskatchewan population is that *we are all treaty people*, a statement that is partly a response to the undeniable and growing demographic weight of the Indigenous population in the province. Some know the statement from scholastic writings as the 2008 book *We are all treaty people: Prairie essays,* authored by Roger Epp. Epp argues that both Indigenous peoples and settlers in Canada inherit the treaty relationship with many difficulties and tensions but also possibilities rooted in respectful dialogue. Some associate it with educational policy arising from the 2008 commitment that the Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commission (OTC), Ministry of Education, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) would be moving forward with mandatory treaty education in the province (Government of Saskatchewan). And some are peripherally aware of this statement as part of a broader cultural sentiment that is for the most part unthreatening in its abstraction.

We are all treaty people suggests that treaty involves all Saskatchewanians and since 2008 the public school system requires mandatory treaty education throughout K-12. Essential treaty teachings,[2] as developed by the OTC, Ministry of Education and FSIN, are part of the required provincial curriculum "for all students, in all grades, and in all subject areas" (Tupper, 2011, "Disrupting Ignorance," para. 2). Treaty education within formal western schooling cannot help but trouble the critically conscious mind. Henry Giroux (2011) offers a critique of formal schooling that is factory-like in its desire to meet its goals. In this example, Giroux comments upon the allegiance of formal education to the job market but this critique can be equally applied to 'treaty education' delievery. Giroux states: "Few of even the so-called educators ask the question: What matters beyond the reading, writing, and numeracy that are presumably taught in the elementary and secondary grades? These unasked questions are symptoms of a new regime of educational expectations that privileges job readiness above any other educational value" (p. 4). In this context, there is a very real risk of dialogic opportunities being skirted thus leaving 'treaty education' in the classroom void of meaning. As Jennifer Tupper and Michael Capello (2008) state, "…when students do not understand the ongoing

[2] For more information about Treaty Kits please see Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commissioner at http://www.otc.ca/Treaty_Kit_K12/

significance of treaty relationships, it matters little the number of times the word *treaty* appears in curriculum documents" (p. 576). While "teaching treaty" accompanied by an ambiguous, *we are all treaty people*, slogan discourse warrants skepticism I am optimistic that if held to Indigenous principles accompanying historic treaties, there is potential for critical citizenry schooling here. However, much depends upon an educator's ability to facilitate and contribute toward this dialogue in a manner that takes treaty relations seriously, that moves beyond teaching treaty as an historical artifact to that of a living protocol for how to exist in a world that is honourable, just, and caring of each other.

There are options in teaching treaty. Educators can stay safe by limiting themselves to re-inscribing a colonial cultural standard account. Or we, as educators, can make a choice. In considering critical pedagogy Peter McLaren (2008) reminds us that, "Freire has helped us to fathom the complex and variegated dimensions of our everyday life as educators. He has helped us, in other words, not to believe everything we think!" (p. 476). In teaching treaty there is a possibility that "…would enable the creation of an (un) usual narrative" (Tupper and Cappello, 2008, p. 570). Shake things up, expose racism inherent in the standard accounting, offer to tell another side of the story. What if instead teaching treaty was more about teaching through a particular relational lens. What would that look like? I start to think about myself as part of a community of educators. What if, as McLaren (2008) reminds, in "the complex and variegated dimensions of our everyday life" we taught as if treaty mattered?

The next, and second section, of this paper is reflective of an "ambidextrous" shift whereby non-Indigenous voices are introduced. The first section of this paper highlights treaty, as envisioned by Indigenous peoples, as a relational protocol between Indigenous and settler peoples for purposes of peaceful co-habitation. A treaty pedagogy, at its most powerful, integrates dialogic respectful truth telling to meet this end. The first part of this paper has largely been truth telling by Indigenous peoples on treaty (focused within an education context). The second part of this essay includes the voices of non-Indigenous post-secondary educators and their experience with Indigenous perspectives in their classroom. The voices are from a qualitative study I recently completed where individuals were asked about the experience of including Indigenous knowledges into their teaching. They were not specifically asked about teaching treaty but the conversations inevitably spoke to the core Indigenous philosophy inherent in a treaty perspective and the significance of anti-colonial work. Interestingly, as treaty teaches us, the conversations were largely *relationally* situated within the dialogue illuminating the push/pull dynamics of human relationships where hesitancies and uncertainties were present.

Truths, Treaties, and Transgressive Pedagogies (Part II)

"…I think it's maybe less that I include Aboriginal or Indigenous content as that I

try to make space for it" (B3). "…in my head I conceptualize that [Indigenous Knowledge] as some body of knowledge that there is to know and I don't know that… but the social justice piece… that's all comfortable for me" (C3).

Certainly unpacking power and privilege as it applies (or does not) to Indigenous peoples and knowledges is a denotative function of transgressive pedagogies. "Teachers need to be aware of and able to interrupt the repetitive neoliberal discourses that cut off students and their families through notions of individualism, power, and mistrust." (Sandford, Williams, Hopper, McCregor, 2012, Indigenous principles, para 2). Transgressive pedagogies secure space for non-western approaches, including but not only Indigenous perspectives, that contest a corporatism, and the values thereof, increasingly found within institutions of higher learning. The possibilities, for example, to crack open "repetitive neoliberal discourse" (Sandford et al, 2012) in authentic treaty dialogue are numerous.

Yet in casting a critically reflective gaze on the increased interest of Indigenous knowledges within education (and given mandatory treaty education in Saskatchewan) one cannot but help but speculate on the extent to which an Indigenous belief system itself is comprehended within post-secondary sites. In my conversations, educators were consciously striving to resist a white solipsism rendering European culture as normative and were cognizant of the limits of an "add and stir" approach to Indigenous perspective and experience. And although there was an understanding of complexities of the inquiry topic, one did not have to 'drill' too far down into the data to find a residual sub-text swirling around Indigenous knowledge systems in the classroom and lingering questions. Can one show deference to a knowledge system imbued with manifestations of its culture, but evade attention to those same manifestations for fear of not being respectful or perceived as such? If one is to acknowledge Indigenous peoples what theoretical perspective will assist in summoning respectful engagement – critical, structural, postmodern, postcolonial, Indigenous relational? What is respectful? What is helpful? Do we know?

As a transgressive stance against white appropriation and in support of identity standpoint voice some would argue that non-Indigenous instructors leave the Indigenous pedagogy to Indigenous people. However, with only 2% (Eisenkraft, 2010) of current post-secondary faculty members in Canada being of Indigenous heritage this poses some pragmatic difficulties. From a teacher preparation perspective – leaving it to the Indigenous faculty – is somewhat problematic when we are expecting less learned teacher candidates to teach to Indigenous perspectives in their K-12 classrooms. It begs the question as to whether we are asking teacher candidates to do as I say not as I do? Further as Canadian citizens (certainly academics) should we not be prepared to lead informed discussions on aspects of Indigenous experience, treaties being a particularly good example, from both a western and Indigenous perspectives? Where do we, as educators, begin to interrogate our choices that shape our responses? Likely it is close to

home.

Truths, Tensions, Hesitancies

> We're doing a not terrible job about providing our undergraduates with some knowledge of the history, their role in it and on one level that's understood. You're doing a lot of that work, but then you've got the critical ability to take a look at that and really question your own identity and role within it, that's hard work (D1).

As the above quote suggests, the relation of non-Indigenous educators to Indigenous pedagogy is complicated, even among those basically sympathetic and seeking to act in solidarity with Indigenous colleagues. This engagement may require painful and even intellectually difficult to grasp introspection and reflexivity, as the first speaker suggests. It may mean distancing yourself from your own history as a settler and it may raise questions about 'compensation' across generations that have no straightforward answers as articulated in this reflection, "… I can never compensate for the actions of my ancestors. I don't even want them to be my ancestors, always wanting to compensate, but how can you do that?" (C3). Non-Indigenous educators may so fear being offensive that avoidance of Indigenous questions becomes the 'moral' way of avoiding addressing the Indigenous-settler relationship, "…you get paralyzed because you're afraid you'll do the wrong thing and so then you don't do anything or you skirt it…" (C2).

The intrapersonal aspects of transgressive pedagogies are ever evident, powerfully sensed and felt, if not always spoken. There are some theoretical supports for the difficult task of reflexivity, among settler educators. Notably, a theoretical focus on anti-oppressive education as in Kumashiro's work (2000) has given rise to an entire sub-section on whiteness studies to explore this phenomenon for white educators. (Aveling, 2004; Adair, 2008; Nicoll, 2004; Preston, 2007; Schick, 2002). Jennifer Adair (2008) states critical race scholars "…have been pushing teacher educators to look closely at the reproduction of White privilege…" (p. 190). In deconstructing the maintenance of racial privilege within sites of education, transgressive pedagogies like anti-racism offer a portal for critical reflection on Whiteness (Preston, 2007; Schick, 2002). Anti-racist pedagogy, concerning itself with structural inequities, have interrogated the marginalization of racial minorities (O'Brien, 2009; Dei, 1996). Within the literature that has decolonizing foci, the colonial relational dynamic of identities that allow the denigration of Indigenous peoples is a pivotal point of analysis (Battiste, 1998; St. Denis, 2007). Educators, in literature and in primary voice, speak of interrogating their own sense of complicity and guilt of being players in the oppression of Indigenous peoples. To move through the critically reflective affective dimension is part of the process and because it has been heard before it does not

mean it is finished work. As Elder knowledge tells us when it comes to the heart we talk until the talking is done. Transgressive pedagogies, which at their core are relational pedagogies, move nowhere without this work.

On a more practice level, individuals equally reflected upon integrating an Indigenous philosophy into their teaching often articulating it as a holistic approach. While there was seemingly less resistance to the challenges for a holistic orientation it, too, pushes against the strong current of an outcome-orientated approach – the primacy of methods curricular approach – found within western educational institutions. While there is support here there is also caution. Scholars as George Sefi Dei (2002) argue for a hybridity of knowledges in learning sites but cautions that the integration of Indigenous knowledges into "…curricular, instructional and pedagogical practices of Western academies cannot be an unquestioned exercise" (p. 17). He goes on to say that hierarchical social relations must be considered as to how they are "…used to validate different knowledges to serve particular interests" (p. 17). Theoretically most post-secondary educators (or at least the allies) understand the contradictions and tensions – or at least say they do. Possibly many appreciate the potential of a rich exploration of, and immersion in, Indigenous education does not currently exist in formal education without potential vulnerability to pedagogical distortions antithetical to treaty. "Teach about the treaties right? You can have a kit and the problem with that entire thing is you do the kit and then you forget it for the rest of the year" (D1).

Given the reflexive, critical perspectives referenced, change remains slow and the experience in contemporary classrooms, by educators, continues to reflect Little Bear's insights on an 'ambidextrous consciousness' as stated here: "I've tried that kind of thing [holistic pedagogy] with non-Aboriginal students and it doesn't work very well. It's just the whole way of being is so different that here is a space where emotions need to be kept in check…" (A1). In other words, the 'ambidextrous consciousness' is not easily deployed, perhaps especially by non-Indigenous educators who are already uncomfortable about their limited exposure to Indigenous ways of educating. These educators confront resistance to Indigenous ways of thinking by non-Indigenous students, who may have an 'emotional' reaction: this might be a coded way of acknowledging the difficulties non-Indigenous students have in recognizing their own complicity in colonial ways of thinking. To avoid 'painful' recognition of the colonial relationship, and maybe even the limits of dominant Western ways of knowing, it may be easier just to ignore holistic Indigenous approaches that – given this resistance by non-Indigenous students – 'don't work very well'. I consider my own complexities as an Indigenous educator, my own contradictions. Within current landscape of inequities that limits authentic reconciliation, the risk of cultural appropriation, the politics of representation, discourses on complicity, and post-binary hesitancies, respectful inclusion is complex and no small task.

Amid the challenges voices from this research also expressed the possibilities

inherent in a relational approach. "…It's about respect …and bringing someone else along from behind. I think that also fits with Indigenous perspectives about caring and being ready" (C1).

Here, the issue is about relationships, acceptance, respect, about caring and being ready – and open to dialogue, "…I really think it is about building relationships and accepting people for being, for thinking and being, different then you are" (A3). Thus we return to personal choices and what it means in a relational sense linked with the idea of ongoing respectful, caring, accepting dialogue. It is about being, at least, prepared to meet and talk with the 'other' if complicated by the fact that relations are not equal, but riven with power, and that trust and respect in such unequal power relations is very difficult to establish.

"To engage in dialogue…"

David Jefferess (as cited in Regan, 2010) suggests efforts that transformative relationships are those that dissolve the persisting binaries that maintain a colonizer-colonized identity and "…constitutes an interrelated process of material and cultural transformation and not just interpersonal reconciliation…" (p. 214). It is the material and cultural transformation aspect of this analysis that is the antidote against a post-binary neoliberalism. Alfred (2010) advises that true respectful co-existence can only exist when those that benefit from colonial empiricism emotionally disengage from their countries and re-imagine themselves "…as human beings in equal and respectful relation to other human beings and the natural environment" (p. 6).

The literature and my own experiential knowledge suggest that inquiring into Indigenous education through a treaty lens means recognizing a relational dynamic involving power, people, structures, and the ability to trust (or proceed in its absence). Willie Ermine (2007) proposes that, "…ethical space, at the field of convergence for disparate systems, can become a refuge of possibility…" (p. 203). As Dei (2002) tells it welcoming a hybridity of knowledges in the academy matters given that our "…interconnected world is ever more critical in this information era" (p. 4). However, there is no magical formula or theoretical wizardry that will move us there within institutional five-year plans. Dei (2002) further asserts Indigenous knowledge is resistance knowledge within the academy and that resistance is about "…using received knowledges to ask critical questions about the nature of the social order. Resistance also means seeing 'small acts' as cumulative and significant for social change" (p. 17). It demands dialogic associations, and if treaty teaches us anything, it teaches us about relationships, particularly about relationships of power.

Whether in the autobiographical, theoretical, or qualitative realm walking this road has not been an unencumbered relational journey with politics of representation

intersecting with the psychology and sociology of insider/outside status. This is set within the differing perspectives of whether to centre the settler through anti-colonial discourse, uphold Indigeneity through honoring culture, or to do both within the prickly place of co-existence. Increasingly fewer openly dispute Battiste's (as cited Brayboy & Maughan, 2009) analysis that, "Indigenous Knowledge is systemic and systematic and has an eternal consistency" (p. 4). However, this remains set within a critical discourse on "…contradictions and paradoxes of cultural revitalization…" (St. Denis, 2007, p. 1075) as the totemic curricular treatment of Indigenous content and the overall problematic of meshing relational based knowledge systems into outcome-based curricular models void of an anti-racist perspective. A useful strategy will include, then expand upon, the transformative capacities of anti-colonial analysis toward a co-existence that pragmatically and theoretically challenges binaries that, as Jefferess (as cited in Regan, 2010) indicates, entrench the colonizer-colonized identity. bell hooks tells us such possibilities begin with dialogue, "To engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences." (hooks, 1994, p.130). Treaty at its core is dialogic and talking *with* is powerful. As a society and as educators, we ought to at least respect that.

Concluding Reflections

The intersection of treaty and teachings cannot be concluded without mention of *Idle no more* and the conscientization of community. Four women[3] from Saskatchewan initiated this movement in response to Bill C-45. Bill C-45, a 400 page plus omnibus budget bill, includes a number of sections having direct impact on First Nations[4]. Along with the sections pertaining specifically to First Nations, Bill C-45 allows for substantial changes to the *Navigational Waters Protection Act* that limits environmental stewardship regulation. This last change alone would limit inherent Indigenous stewardship over the land. The promise to be 'Idle no more' given flagrant disregard for treaties as a relationship by the Canadian Conservative government, sparked and spread through social media, generated a participatory citizenry response to Bill C-45. *Idle no more* is an

[3] *Idle no more* was initiated by four Saskatchewan women, Jessica Gordon, Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdams and Nina Wilsonfeld.

[4] Section of C-45 includes: Bill C-27 First Nations Financial Transparency Act; Bill S-2 Family Homes on Reserve and Matrimonial Interests or Right Act; Bill S-6 First Nations Elections Act; Bill S-8 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations; Bill C-428 Indian Act Amendment and Replacement Act; Bill S-207 An Act to amend the Interpretation Act; Bill S-212 First Nations Self-Government Recognition Bill and the "First Nations" Private Ownership Act. These different Bills collective attack and seek to unilaterally alter Indigenous rights in a wide range of domains, from financing to band elections to property rights.

expression of growing frustration by Canadians who feel increasingly feeling unheard and marginalized; Indigenous resistance is a, maybe *the*, critical element of this response, an insistence on the fact of the Indigenous-settler relationship, a relationship that can only go forward through meaningful dialogue among all peoples. Through round dances, flash mobs, and teach-ins, *Idle no more* is about creating awareness of the role of treaty in stewardship of the earth and how this matters to all not just Indigenous peoples.

The *Idle no more* movement is not about any one issue but about many related concerns. *Idle no more* reflects a specific perspective on environmental activism which some have referenced as "Indigenous environmentalism" (Wherry, 2012, December 18, para 1), which is concerned with the protection of sacred sites and the land, water and air. To many this response to Bill C-45 is about treaty, the insistence on respectful dialogue among Indigenous and settler peoples and the infringement by the Canadian state on treaty relations inherent in Bill C-45, in particular the lack of adequate consultation on matters impacting treaty lands. Yet, the movement has resonance beyond the Canadian context. *Idle no more* has been a portal for global voice with expressions of solidarity from Palestinians in Nazareth, Maori in New Zealand and Indigenous peoples in the United States, among others (Hahn, 2013, January 4). January 11, 2013 was a global day of action, solidarity and resurgence. The wide-ranging and global scope of the *Idle no more* movement, which has sometimes been criticized for its supposed lack of focus, is indicative of the range of issues that are bound up with grappling with relations among Indigenous peoples and settlers.

The Indigenous role in the *Idle no more* movement is as complex and contradictory as the many Indigenous peoples in what is now Canada. Nonetheless, part of the movement can be understood from the perspective of the meaning of treaties for Indigenous peoples. "For the First Nations of this province, the Treaties did not signify cession or surrender to Canadian authority but rather the establishment of a nation-to-nation relationship" (Pitawanakwat, 2007). Because treaty signifies a nation-to-nation relationship and not land cessation there is an obligation felt on behalf of many First Nations to continue to protect the land and its resources. Through its focus on treaty rights *Idle no more* gives voice to a stewardship that predates the likes of greenhouse gas emissions, contamination of water bodies, and the generally consistent horrific (and stupefying) violations of mother earth. Indigenous environmentalism is a contemporary term for longstanding Indigenous stewardship of the land of which treaty represents. For First Nations people, the response to Bill C-45 and the *Idle no more* movement is an example of what Borrows (2005) describes as a pre-occupation *of* and *with* the land. *Idle no more* is one example of necessary dialogue in, or outside, the formal classroom.

This is the kind of dialogue that makes up critically reflective educational environments, environments in which we can all consider who we are (and what we believe) as a local, regional, national, and global citizenry. The classroom (either inside or

outside of formal schooling) is a potential site where this kind of education can take place, a kind of education that will, as Giroux states (2011), tackle the question of "what a kid needs to become an informed 'citizen' capable of participating in the large public decision that affect the larger world…" (p. 4). A treaty education, for Canadians, holds the potentiality for conversations that investigate a multiplicity of worldviews, contrasting political process, environmental stewardship, and differing economies. A genuine treaty education would bring the debates opened up dramatically by the *Idle No More* movement into the classroom, as well as taking place outside of it.

Concluding this paper, I return to the pragmatics of the classroom. Transgressive pedagogies in anti-colonial, post-binary learning environments can not start and end on whether there ought to be a medicine wheel on a classroom wall or as Tupper and Cappello (2008) state, "…the number of times the word *treaty* appears in curriculum documents." (p. 576). We have to move beyond a dialectic on the totemic to consider what each of the above could possibly summon. Could it not be a relational invitation to gain a deeper sensibility of the people, values, context, experience, and particularities associated with the representation? This invitation to critical reflection ought to be extended within a pedagogy attuned to the colonialist enterprise that Indigenous peoples have endured as well as serve as a pathway toward creating a mutually beneficial co-existence. What if the teaching treaty was less symbolic of the past and more a representational insignia of a new approach to schooling. What if?

In my undergraduate teaching, I include an opportunity for student's to work with Indigenous knowledges and methods. This is scheduled after consideration of anti-colonial perspectives. I cannot deny there have been times when I have seriously questioned whether allowing space for largely young white students to take up Indigenous approaches is doing anyone any favors. Still, I have largely been overwhelmed by the respectfulness and desire by my students to do better then what they have been taught, to see themselves as teachers with an Indigenous sensibility. The challenge is not, has never been, solely about *teaching treaty* rather it has always been about *teaching through treaty* with all the respect and understanding with which the treaties have the potential to afford us all.

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Article

ACTIVIST RESEARCH PRACTICE: EXPLORING RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION FOR SOCIAL ACTION[i]

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Abstract

Research is a major aspect and fundamental component of many social struggles and movements for change. Understanding social movement networks as significant sites of knowledge production, this article situates and discusses processes and practice of activist research produced outside of academia in these milieus in the broader context of the 'knowledge-practice' of social movements. In dialogue with scholarly literature on activist research, it draws from the author's work as an activist researcher, and a current study of small activist research non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with examples from movement research on transnational corporate power and resistance to capitalist globalization.. It explicates research processes arising from, and embedded in, relationships and dialogue with other activists and organizations that develop through collaboration in formal and informal networks; it contends that building relationships is central to effective activist research practice. In addition to examining how activist researchers practice, understand and validate their research, this paper also shows how this knowledge is constructed, disseminated and mobilized as a tool for effective social action/organizing.

Keywords

Activist research, social movements, methodology, activism, global justice movement, knowledge production

Introduction

Research is a major undertaking of many social movements, activist groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a fundamental component of social struggles at local, national and transnational levels. Yet the intellectual work and politics of knowledge production in the course of social activism is still often overlooked. Much academic literature has been produced on "activist research" and "activist scholarship", but relatively few studies consider the actual research practices of activist researchers

operating outside of universities and independently of formal partnerships or collaboration with academic researchers. This article draws from my experience as an activist researcher in global justice activist/movement milieus, and, since entering academe, my current research on small activist research non-governmental organizations (NGOs). After a discussion of knowledge production and research in NGO/social movement milieus, drawing from Marxist understandings of knowledge and consciousness, I consider how this knowledge is constructed, disseminated and mobilized as a tool for effective social action by and for social movements. This article aims to deepen understandings of the politics of constructing knowledge through activist research. It considers theoretical, methodological, action and dissemination aspects of research for social change by addressing the following questions: How do activist NGO researchers outside of the academy understand, practice and validate their research and processes of knowledge production? What are the sources of such knowledge? How is this knowledge produced? How do social movement activists/NGOs disseminate and use knowledge produced through such research in processes of knowledge mobilization and social action/organizing?

Scholarly discussion about activist research occurs in critical strands of anthropology (Lyon-Callo and Hyatt, (2003); Casas-Cortés, Osterweil and Powell, (2008), Speed (2006), Zamarrón (2009)), social geography (Chouinard, 1994, Fuller and Kitchin, 2004; Maxey, 1999, Pain, 2003), critical adult education (Hall, (1979); Jordan, (2003); Ng, (2006); Kapoor, (2009); Choudry and Kapoor (2010)) and sociology (Burawoy, (2000); Neis, (2000); Carroll, (2004); Kinsman, (2006); Hussey, (2012)), among other fields. Feminist scholar-activists from various disciplines and theoretical approaches have made particularly important contributions to this debate (e.g. D. Smith, (1987); Cancian, (1993), (1996); Fine, (1989), (1992), Naples, (1998); Weis and Fine, (2004); Ng, (2006), Fine and Ruglis, 2009). Often informed by Marxist, feminist and/or postcolonial insights into social relations, epistemologies and the politics of research for social change, claims are sometimes made for particular methodologies and approaches to qualitative research to be inherently oriented towards social justice. These include institutional ethnography/political activist ethnography (D. Smith, (1987); Frampton, et al. (2006); G. Smith, (2006)), participatory action research (Fals-Borda, (1969), (1979); (Weis and Fine), 2004; Kapoor, (2009)), community-based action research (Hall, (1979)), and Burawoy's (2000) extended case method and reflexive global ethnography. Meanwhile, some scholars (Jordan, (2003); Naples, (1998); Frampton, et al, (2006)) have questioned implicit claims of participatory research to be emancipatory, and highlight the power relations embedded in the research process. Speed (2004) contends that, in activist research, tensions exist "between political–ethical commitment and critical analysis" (74), those of universalism, relativism or particularism, power relations between researcher and researched, and of short-term pragmatics and longer-term implications, yet that these are also present in all research. She states that, "The benefit of explicitly activist

research is precisely that it draws a focus on those tensions and maintains them as central to the work" (ibid). Naples (1998) writes that, "the questions we ask and the purpose to which we put the analysis are much greater indicators of what constitutes activist research than our specific methodologies" (p. 7).

While claims are made about implicit connections between social justice, activism and certain methodological approaches, a frequent assumption in scholarship on activist research, research for social change, and community-based research is that university researchers with professionalized, specialist academic training must conduct the research. This literature tends to focus on university faculty or graduate students researching in collaboration or partnership with communities, community organizations or activist groups. It is, therefore, more concerned with implications of such work on individuals' university careers and academic disciplines, and its scholarly credibility, than on the considerable research and intellectual work generated from within activist/community organizations on which many movements rely for independent analysis of concerns relevant to them (Cancian, (1993); Naples, (1998); Routledge, (1996); Hale, (2008)).

Despite considerable academic focus on involvement of scholars in forms of popular/community education, activist research, academic activism, engaged scholarship and research partnerships relatively little work documents, explicates or theorizes *actual* research practices of activist researchers in concrete locations outside of the academy in activist groups, NGOs or social movements. Intellectual work, knowledge production, and forms of investigation/research undertaken within activism are sometimes overlooked or unrecognized but nonetheless inextricably linked to action in many mobilizations. Bevington and Dixon (2005) argue that "[d]irect engagement [of researchers] is about putting the thoughts and concerns of the movement participants at the center of the research agenda and showing a commitment to producing accurate and potentially useful information about the issues that are important to these activists" (200). Naples (1998) argues that, "analysis …can be deepened by making visible one's own activist experiences and standpoint" (7).

Knowledge Production and Consciousness in Social Movements

In *Theses on Feuerbach,* Marx (1968) reminds us that all social life is essentially practical: "All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice" (VIII). Kinsman (2006) warns that sometimes "when we talk about research and activism in the academic world we replicate distinctions around notions of consciousness and activity that are detrimental to our objectives. We can fall back on research as being an analysis, or a particular form of consciousness, and activism as about doing things 'out there,' which leads to a divorce between consciousness and practice" (153). Freire (1972) tried to overcome the

dichotomy of theory/practice by empowering people to engage in productive and reflective activities of learning through action and facilitating the creation of consciousness through struggle. Allman (2001) affirms that,

> Our action in and on the material world is the mediation or link between our consciousness and objective reality. Our consciousness develops from our active engagement with other people, nature, and the objects or processes we produce. In other words, it develops from the sensuous experiencing of reality from within the social relations in which we exist (Marx and Engels, 1846) (165).

Sears (2005) suggests that deeper theoretical work is crucial, but "is not simply the property of specialized theorists with lots of formal education" (151).

In affirming the concept of activist knowledge production, theorizing, research and other forms of intellectual work in struggle, we can look to Gramsci's (1971) notion of grassroots leaders and "organic intellectuals" who articulate a "philosophy of praxis" that develops in the course of political struggle, the "concrete historicisation of philosophy and its identification with history" (62). Gramsci saw two primary groups of intellectuals, firstly, the 'traditional' intellectuals, the scholars, and scientists who although seemingly detached from class positions, are produced by specific historical class formations. Secondly, there are the 'organic' intellectuals, the thinking and organizing persons in any class. Yet often organizers and "permanent persuaders" emerging from the grassroots/working-class are not seen as intellectuals capable of creating knowledge. This is echoed in an article on "movement-relevant theory" in which Bevington and Dixon (2005) suggest that much of the theory produced by participants in social movements may not be recognizable to conventional social movement studies, noting that "[t]his kind of theory both ranges and traverses through multiple levels of abstraction, from everyday organizing to broad analysis" (195). Lynd (2011) reminds us that

> of the principal luminaries of …Marxism, no one- not Marx, not Engels, not Plekhanov, not Lenin, not Trotsky, not Bukharin, not Rosa Luxemburg (who has a particular contempt for professors), not Antonio Gramsci, not Mao-Tse Tung–put bread on the table by university teaching… without exception the most significant contributions to Marxist thought have come from men and women who were not academics, who passed through the university but did not remain there" (144)

Among many critical scholars on the left, and in broader society, there remains a tendency to make assumptions about the relative value and significance of the

institutional contexts for knowledge production, elevating academic research above analysis and theorizing from within everyday social action settings. Such hierarchical conceptions help to account for which processes of knowledge production are recognized and what "counts" as knowledge, theory or research. Utilizing the term 'knowledge-practices' to "escape from the abstract connotations usually associated with knowledge, arguing for its concrete, embodied, lived, and situated character"(20), Casas-Cortés, Osterweil and Powell (2008) write that theoretical and methodological inclinations of even the most critical academic work on social movements can prevent scholars from

> seeing or making sense of various knowledge-practices and their implications. This is significant …because the inability to recognize knowledge-practices as some of the central work that movements do, has made it difficult for social movement theorists to grasp the actual political effects of many movements. … these effects include not only immediate strategic objectives for social or political change, but the very rethinking of democracy; the generation of expertise and new paradigms of being, as well as different modes of analyses of relevant political and social conjunctures (20).

Cox and Nilsen (2007) discussion the unequal relationship between activist and academic forms of movement theorizing, charging that academic social movements literature "may *exploit* activist theorising (while claiming the credit for itself), *suppress* it (when it challenges the definition of the 'field' that the literature ultimately seeks to assert), or *stigmatise* it as 'ideology' (rather than analysis grounded in practical experience)" (430). One might even add that such scholarship may overlook or deny its existence altogether. Casas-Cortés, Osterweil and Powell (2008) suggest that the place-based nature of movement knowledges offers a counterpoint to conventional academic and scientific modes of knowledge production:

> The latter tend to be predicated on an authority that often lies precisely in being unattached, removed from 'place,' in order to gain the necessary status of generalizability; whereas the knowledges produced by movements are enriched by their spatial and temporal proximity and accountability to the places which they affect, and from which they come (43).

In his work on Latin American NGOs which combine *basismo* (grassroots democracy) work with research, publication and knowledge generation activities, Lehmann (1990) conceptualizes such a process of knowledge production as 'informal universities.' This not only broadens the types of public sphere but also places both academic and social movement knowledge within those public spheres.

None of this discussion is aimed at advancing a romanticized view of learning, knowledge production or theorizing in activism. Indeed Foley (1999) highlights the complicated and contradictory nature of learning in social movements. It can both reproduce status quo, dominant positions and ideas, but this same experience can also produce "recognitions which enable people to critique and challenge the existing order" (4). Such learning, he suggests, can be "difficult, ambiguous and contested" (143). Barker and Cox (2002) contend that activist theorizing is always to some extent knowledge-in-struggle and thus that,

> its survival and development is always contested and in process of formation. Its frequently partial, unsystematic and provisional character does not make it any the less worth our attention, though it may go some way towards explaining why academic social movements theory is too often content with taking the 'cream off the top', and disregarding - or failing to notice - everything that has to happen before institutionalized social movement theorizing appears in forms that can be easily appropriated ("Movement theorizing").

Research for What – and by Whom?

Maori educationalist Linda Smith (1999) notes that researchers located outside of universities are often referred to as project workers, community activists or consultants, "anything but 'researchers'. They search and record, they select and interpret, they organize and re-present, they make claims on the basis of what they assemble. This is research" (17). For Kinsman (2006), research and theorizing is an everyday/everynight part of the life of social movements whether explicitly recognized or not:

> Activists are thinking, talking about, researching and theorizing about what is going on, what they are going to do next and how to analyze the situations they face, whether in relation to attending a demonstration, a meeting, a confrontation with institutional forces or planning the next action or campaign (134).

Eschle and Maiguashca (2010) highlight the importance of knowledge production, research and documentation by feminist antiglobalization activists, "Knowledge production is not only an important practice among feminist antiglobalization activists in its own right, it also plays an essential role in sustaining other practices, including advocacy" (138). Here, knowledge production involves three processes:

> (a) developing critical studies of existing data as well as undertaking original research; (b) gathering, classifying, and housing primary and secondary sources in the form of documentation centers and libraries; and (c) disseminating this knowledge through the publication of regular newsletters and journals and through public awareness campaigns (138).

But this sketch describes only one form and process of research in activist milieus. Rahila Gupta (2004), of British women's rights organization Southall Black Sisters, notes the importance – and challenges for activists documenting and reflecting on practice: "It is not easy for activists to sit down and record their work, but in this age of information overload you need to record in order almost to prove that you exist" (3). Indeed, documentation is an important aspect of activist research. Bazán et al (2008) concur but make the case for specialized research NGOs (in Central America and Mexico). They contend that

> [T]o become a counter-discourse with teeth,… everyday knowledge [of social movement actors] needs to be synthesized, systematized and given coherence. It also has to be linked with analytical knowledge of the contexts within which everyday practices occur – contexts which, while they impinge on people's life, are in many cases analytically inaccessible to them (191).

As these examples demonstrate, there are a range of ways and forms in which movement research occurs, which includes the establishment and maintenance of specialized research and education institutions by social struggles to support social movements. Another notable example of this is the IBON Foundation in the Philippines, a veritable powerhouse of knowledge production and critical research, which has informed domestic and international movements contesting social and economic injustice (http://www.ibon.org). For example, IBON supplied much of the data and analysis for mass movement campaigns against the deregulation of the oil industry and oil price hikes that increased profits for transnational corporations at the expense of ordinary people (IBON Research Department, 2003). In turn, IBON has been a major player in developing and supporting the Asia-Pacific Research Network, a growing network of research NGOs and institutional research arms of social movements in the Asia-Pacific region, many of which are deeply implicated in movement struggles.[1] This has also strengthened opportunities for activist researchers to work together transnationally to build analysis and research tools that serve the needs and aspirations of

[1] See Asia-Pacific Research Network, http://www.aprnet.org.

struggles against corporate power, domestic and transnational capital, neoliberal economic and trade agreements, and climate change.

Learning From Activist Research Practice

Research/activism against free trade and investment

In order to explore actual activist research practice, in this section, I discuss examples from my own engagement in research/activism opposing the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Aotearoa/New Zealand and international collaborations against bilateral free trade and investment agreements. During the 1990s, I was an organizer, educator, and researcher for the Aotearoa New Zealand-based activist groups GATT Watchdog and the Aotearoa/New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group. These worked to educate and build opposition to free trade and investment agreements at domestic and regional (Asia-Pacific) levels. These groups' activism was informed by an anti-colonial analysis which understood capitalist globalization – and the New Zealand economic reforms – as being embedded in colonization, and worked closely with Maori sovereignty activists in research, education and action work.. A major focus was the APEC process that included twenty-one governments in the region, with a goal to advance trade and investment liberalization. APEC's highest profile annual event the Leaders' summit, annually rotated among member countries each year, became a target for mobilizations against neoliberal globalization. Regionally, much anti-APEC activism sought to delegitimize the APEC forum and to expose APEC governments' claims of "civil society" involvement as a sham. Analysis of official texts was a key aspect of practice that informed strategy for the opposition to the hosting of APEC 1999 in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Since 1984, successive New Zealand governments imposed neoliberal policies to an extent hitherto unseen in any OECD country The reforms mirrored key elements of structural adjustment programmes. For example, between 1988-1993, New Zealand led the world in the sale of state-owned assets, often at bargain prices, mostly to transnational corporations. By the time that the government was preparing to host the APEC Summit, most of the country's productive, financial, energy, retail, transport, media and communications sectors were in the hands of transnational corporations that drained huge profits out of the country. The pursuit of free trade agreements made explicit the legal responsibility of the state to serve corporate interests. The goverrnment's cynical use of 'civil society' consultations and NGOs themselves (for service delivery, for example) is in keeping with neoliberal styles of governance. On the other hand, at the time,, many 'civil society' players, including many NGOs and trade unions were frequently uncritical

of being co-opted into meetings and exercises in manufacturing consent and constraining dissent.

In 1998, before the start of New Zealand's chairing of APEC the following year, GATT Watchdog obtained a New Zealand Cabinet Strategy Committee paper "APEC 1999—Engagement With NGOs" under New Zealand's Official Information Act. From this document, it became evident that government intentions were to co-opt NGOs and harness them to promote APEC domestically, while aiming to project to international audiences an image of a democratic government that valued differing opinions. Redactions clearly refer to managing the risks (militant opposition to APEC), since there are several references to risk management and preparedness for "a protest element," but lacking specific details to what this entailed, corresponding to sections that were withheld. What remains in the document is instructive:

> On the positive side, the Government has a real opportunity to develop a wider sense of ownership and participation. Ensuring constructive participation by NGOs in the APEC process will be a critical part of the overall strategy of communicating the what, why and how of APEC to the New Zealand community. It would serve to demonstrate to the international community New Zealand's ability, as a participatory democracy, to accommodate debate and dissent among a variety of NGOs... On the other hand, as the experience of CHOGM [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting] and the MAI [Multilateral Agreement on Investment] indicated, there is significant risk of disruption and protest at APEC events. In particular we are likely to see a protest element around the Leaders' Meeting in Auckland in September.

The document (New Zealand Government, 1998) also advised that, "New Zealand's chairing of APEC should reflect the values of an open and participatory democracy where NGOs have an opportunity freely to express their views" (3). "We propose a dual strategy of *constructive engagement*: [next paragraph redacted]" and then:

> The target audience in this strategy is not just NGOs per se, but also the wider group of "middle" New Zealand who will want to see NGO voices given a fair hearing. [Redaction] This will require engaging effectively with *responsive groups* and helping to meet, as far as possible, their own objectives of *being seen to influence outcomes*…the requirement for cost-effectiveness suggests there will be limits to the extent of outreach that may be possible. It will be important to avoid getting bogged down in long, resource-intensive consultations. (4).

The strategy, "involves building broad support for APEC and actively *managing the risk of disruption*" (my emphasis) (1).

The New Zealand government's NGO engagement strategy paper outlines a plan to contain dissent and manage the government's image. By its use of the term "responsive groups," the government assumed the right to determine who was in and who was out in New Zealand "civil society." It also clearly sought to divide and rule NGOs and community orgamizations into supposedly constructive and disruptive elements.

In a context where many community organizations and NGOs viewed New Zealand state practices rather uncritically, and largely framed their criticism within parameters imposed by the state, GATT Watchdog and Aotearoa/New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group activists interpreted the document informed by an anti-colonial analysis of capitalist globalization and domestic neoliberalization (see Choudry, 2010, on neoliberalism-as-colonialism/decolonization analysis) and our own struggle experiences: our confrontation with the government over APEC, our being targeted by New Zealand state security forces (the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service and NZ Police, see Choudry, 2005) for lawful dissent against APEC in 1996, our involvement in previous years' anti-APEC mobilizations in several countries, and our interactions with police at demonstrations and increased surveillance during 1999. Thus, our group was motivated to seek out this information, because we knew that the state was likely to try and 'contain' APEC's critics, and possibly attempt to criminalize elements of it. By bringing the document to light, we could forewarn other organizations and the broader public of the kinds of state tactics they were likely to encounter.

Experiential knowledge and analysis was important, but collecting, analyzing and disseminating these documents was key to building an effective strategy to counter the government's promotion of APEC to NGO networks and community organizations Drawing from these documents, a key part of the groups' anti-APEC strategy was to denounce the New Zealand Government's APEC Taskforce communications strategy, and to politicize attempts to co-opt or silence critics through "dialogue" in a similar fashion to that revealed in Canadian official documents relating to the 1997 Vancouver APEC summit. This included a picket of the first dialogue on APEC 1999 with NGOs and trade unions outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Wellington in January 1999 and a rejection of approaches from the official APEC NGO Liaison officer (hired by the New Zealand Government's APEC Taskforce) to discuss APEC. Through media work and dissemination through NGO and community group mailings and meetings, we publicly revealed the government strategy of containment and propaganda through limited dialogue and state surveillance and harassment of the more radical critics. Our strategy involved politicizing the disjuncture between stated intentions for dialogue with 'civil society', the calculated actual rationale expressed by the official documents obtained, and past actual experience of state practice of criminalization of lawful dissenters. After

we circulated the Cabinet papers to a wide range of NGOs, community organizations and trade unions, the government's plan to co-opt NGOs and harness them to do their work of selling APEC to "middle" New Zealand failed dismally-- few attended the government's NGO consultation sessions. Further, the operation of the Official Information Act, and broader questions of transparency, state power and claims of democracy became politicized in this research activism work when ministries either refused to divulge or release information, or insisted on imposing expensive processing fees. This was publicized through mainstream and independent media, revealing some journalists to be sympathetic on this issue and willing to write critical, investigative articles on the matter. This case illustrates some ways in which activist research can challenge strategies of state cooptation, build links with other organizations, and inform organizing.

My other, related, research activist engagement includes work to support social movements against bilateral free trade and investment agreements (FTAs). Given the challenges for people's movements organizing cross-nationally on FTAs, particularly to break their isolation, a major concern has been to facilitate sharing of research, analysis and experience with others. It should be emphasized here than this initiative did not come from alternative policy thinktanks and large advocacy NGOs but rather social movements and smaller NGOs which work closely with them. In September 2004, several organizations initiated a collaborative website to support peoples' struggles against bilateral free trade and investment agreements: http://www.bilaterals.org.[2] The website was established out of the concern that among many global justice networks of NGOs, trade unions and social movements, amidst the celebration of the stalling of World Trade Organization negotiations, there was little focus on bilateral FTAs *actually* being signed. bilaterals.org is an open-publishing site where people fighting FTAs exchange information and analysis and build cooperation. The website has been particularly useful for those people campaigning against bilateral deals who have found it difficult to make links with others around the world, to share analysis and develop broader and complementary strategies. By early 2008, the site was attracting around 200,000 hits a month. It has been used in many ways, one of which is to leak negotiating texts that have otherwise not been made public, such as a draft intellectual property rights chapter of the stalled US-Thailand FTA. Thai media covered this leak, reaching a broader audience. The website is a forum for activists to alert others about developments in their struggles, not least during intense periods of mobilization and state repression; it is a research tool, developed by and for activists.

The Thai anti-FTA movement was proactive in linking up with others fighting such agreements and sharing their analysis so that activists can learn from each other's

[2] Initiators included the Asia-Pacific Research Network, GATT Watchdog, Global Justice Ecology Project, GRAIN, IBON Foundation and XminY Solidariteitsfonds.

struggles. For example, FTA Watch, a Thai activist coalition, invited bilaterals.org and GRAIN to co-organize a global strategy meeting of anti-FTA movements and held the three-day workshop "Fighting FTAs" in Bangkok, July 2006,. This brought together some sixty social movement activists from Africa, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region, including many who engage in some aspect of research and knowledge productionto share experiences in grassroots struggles against FTAs and build national and international strategies and cooperation. It was the first time that many participants had been able to meet with other movement activists fighting FTAs and discuss analysis, strategy and experiences. In February 2008, GRAIN, bilaterals.org and BIOTHAI (Biodiversity Action Thailand) produced a collaborative publication and multimedia website, including audio and film resources, called "Fighting FTAs" providing a global overview of the spread of FTAs and mapping the growing resistance and learnings from people's experiences of fighting FTAs. This resource was merged into a relaunched and redesigned bilaterals.org website in 2009.

Thus, knowledge, research, strategy and action in these struggles was documented and disseminated through efforts to access state strategies through freedom of information channels, through websites and through more traditional face-to-face meetings made possible partly because of connections made among anti-FTA organizations and movements by sharing information on the internet, as well as long-standing alliances/commitments with movement networks such as La Via Campesina.. This example demonstrates how connections between struggles were enhanced and also how dialogue amongst engaged activist researchers, as well as research itself, occurs both within formal coalitions and campaigns, and also in informal webs or networks of various kinds. This illustrates some of the ways in which research work on transnational corporations or an FTA, conducted among activist networks in different locations can approach these institutions and processes through specifically local/national entry points (government trade ministries, academic or business thinktanks dedicated to economic and trade liberalization, or local offices of a corporation) and combine their insights through dialogue and collaboration with other activist researchers who are similarly located, yet in different settings.

GRAIN's research

The other research activist context in this article concerns GRAIN. Founded in 1990, with a decentralized structure (offices/staff in Europe, the Americas, and Africa) GRAIN[3] is a small, international organization working to support small farmers and social movements in struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems (http://www.grain.org). Broadly, its research examines connections between

[3] GRAIN received the 2011 Right Livelihood Award for its work.

agribusiness and the current global food crisis, food sovereignty, and the role of the industrial food system in creating climate change and landgrabbing. With over twenty years of organizational history and a small team connected to a range of social movements, GRAIN has a strong research focus[4]. In its work, it tries to bring people together, catalyzing analysis and action, and is engaged in the much less visible, but important, work of sharing information and analysis to a wide range of movement networks, media and broader publics.

In interviews, GRAIN researchers emphasized the collaborative, dialogical nature of their research through interactions with movement activists, farmers, and others, They also underline its forms of validation, through checking, testing and sharing material within the organization and in networks throughout the research process, including what can be best described as a peer review process. One GRAIN staffer used the analogy of infection to describe dissemination of analysis and the critical framework which the organization shares. A central question is "how do people take what we write and how does that help them in the battles that they are fighting, the issues that they are dealing with at the local level?" (interview, GRAIN). The relationship between research and change is an important question. As Haluza-Delay puts it, there is often an assumption "that knowledge uncovers the oppressive structures and confronts power. However, it is not the "knowledge" alone that does this, but the process by which the knowledge is taken up and used in the community, altering "common-sense" (86). That means how it informs organizing: Bevington and Dixon (2005) argue that a test of the quality of activist research is whether it is taken up by activists in struggles.

Significantly, GRAIN's focus is primarily on producing analysis to inform and support people's struggles, and also to frame issues from a critical perspective for media, rather than to influence policymakers or politicians: "We don't look necessarily on how many citations we had. We are more interested in how is it getting circulated? What kind of message are people gleaning from it? How is it shaping the discussion and debate in these circles of social movements?" (interview, GRAIN). Listening to people on the ground – farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and others is a vital component of GRAIN's research practice, built on a critical political, economic, social and ecological analysis which has been developed over years of this work. A GRAIN staffer explained, it is

> important to listen to people because part of research is just learning…. So when you talk to people you have to listen them and you have to integrate what they say… that's really crucial to not do this kind of out there pie in the sky kind of stuff so for me listening to people is really important. It is the same thing as reading but it is just a different practice" (interview, GRAIN).

This echoes Casas-Cortés, Osterweil and Powell (2008) who also highlight the valuing of receptivity and listening "to the explanations and arguments posed by movements, which may, in turn, entail various forms of engagement with, or participation in, the movements' own knowledge-practices, locating them in relation to more conventional, "expert" theories (26).

GRAIN's research practice involves analysis of information both from industry and official sources, much of which is available online. Interviews are also important to how they build their research:

> The validation is [that] we test it and we share it with people, always. In GRAIN we never had [individual GRAIN researchers'] names in our publications, it is always collective material. It is an ideological thing but it also reflects that there is a lot of bouncing back and [constant] checking . There is a lot of that kind of circulation of material. Within GRAIN and also with friends and [other] groups. So you will call that a peer review I think … because in a way that is exactly how it works …you want to be challenged and you want to get serious feedback. So that's a way of validating. But the real validation lies in what happens when we put it out (interview, GRAIN).

GRAIN's analysis resonates with Cox and Nilsen (2007), who argue that while activist theorizing is not always subject to peer review before publication, it undergoes a form of peer review after publication,

> that brings together a far broader range of empirical experience and points of view than are found in any academic journal. It is also subject to the test of practice: whether it *works* to bring together an action, a campaign or a network – or to win battles, large and small, against its opponents and convince the as yet unmobilised and unradicalised (430).

An example of this is a short document published by GRAIN in 2011 on the role of pension funds in land grabs. GRAIN is at the forefront of critical analysis on the buying up of vast tracts of farmland by banks, investment houses, pension funds and other investors. A GRAIN staffer commented that

> three months later, the pension funds had their own internal codes of conduct on land grabbing. It is clear that the pension funds take this issue seriously.They see also that GRAIN and others are putting out information

> about it so they see the needs to defend themselves. But they wouldn't do this if the pension funds did not see land as important for them, as not an important commodity (interview, GRAIN).

Arguably, this response demonstrates the centrality of landgrabbing in a number of pension funds and attempts to defend this practice to the public after falling under scrutiny.

At the heart of GRAIN's research process are relationships and dialogue. The research process is always ongoing.

> You are always connected with people that you are going to be working on the issue with and in developing the analysis and bringing in whatever information you see as important. The case of dairy and the struggle in Colombia is quite important[5] (see GRAIN, 2012) so it's a matter of, early on, learning from what is happening there and also trying to [highlight] that experience in Colombia for others to use. Of course there is the publication of the research but what is happening all the time throughout that whole process is dialogue with other groups. In this case you might have certain sections you want to check with other people and see if it corresponds with what they say. You might want to ask them to have a box that is part of your publication and you are giving people space for that and then afterwards you are …together trying to figure out what are the processes that we need to be a part of … what can we do next and what is possible, and then that will probably stimulate other research at a certain point because things will be identified (interview, GRAIN).

There are strategic considerations in how the information is pulled together and how it is released that are rarely central to academic research.

> Because [as an international organization] you're presenting your information in so many different contexts you are also trying to think, well okay this made sense maybe at an international level or this made sense when we were thinking more about Latin America but how can we now think of this issue when it comes more specifically to Africa or Asia or North America or Europe? (interview, GRAIN).

[5] GRAIN has researched the acceleration of corporate control over the world's milk supply and the globalization of the dairy industry. In Colombia in 2011, mass mobilization forced the Uribe government to back down on a proposed law which would have prohibited the sale, consumption and transportation of unpasteurized milk on which many small farmers, dairy vendors and millions of Colombians depend, and facilitated increased control by corporations.

In both cases/contexts discussed here decisions about framing research and strategy were framed and influenced by quite explicit political positions, sets of understandings and relationships/exposure to social movements. Those engaged in this work make decisions in dialogue with others as well as they can, based on experiential knowledge and analysis which emerge from active involvement in the struggles on the ground. Bevington and Dixon (2005) suggest that movement-relevant research cannot merely uncritically reiterate the prevailing ideas of a favoured movement:

> If the research is exploring questions that have relevance to a given movement, it is in the interests of that movement to get the best available information, even if those findings don't fit expectations. Indeed, some of the most useful research produces results which defy 'common-sense' assumptions (191-192).

Taking the time to "get the research right" is crucial—whether this entails adequately researching details of a meeting venue in order to mount effective protest action, or in the more formal sense of research on a corporation, policy or practice, which, if done poorly, can be easily, and publicly discredited by better-resourced protagonists and media. This in turn can undermine efforts to build a campaign through reaching a broader base of people. A central aspect of activist research is the relationship of trust and engagement built up with social struggles and movements, and this can be easily damaged.

Conclusion: Reflections on Activist Research

Building relationships is central to every stage of the activist research described in this article. Reflections on doing activist research, as well as research for activism itself, often emerge from collective, collaborative relations, discussions, conversations and exchanges with a wide range of actors.. While some activist research targets policymakers and international institutions, the main goal in the cases considered here has been to support and inform social change through popular organizing. Implicit within this work is an understanding of the importance of building counterpower against domination by the interests of capital and states. Barker and Cox (2002) contend that "Marx's observation that the means of intellectual production are normally in the hands of the ruling class has an important corollary: that social movements from below (as opposed to, say, 'class war from above') often need to conquer or produce their own means of intellectual production." ('Processes of colonization and resistance').

The activist research processes described here are embedded in relations of trust with other activists and organizations that develop through constant effort to work

together in formal and informal networks and collaborations. Such relationships can take years to build. These networks are spaces for constant sharing of information and analysis. They allow for the identification of research that is most relevant to particular struggles, and communication of that research in ways that are meaningful and useful for movement-building. They are invaluable in the production, vetting/"getting the research right," application, strategic considerations and dissemination of the research. This is an ongoing process which informs action and in turn continues to be produced and used strategically, drawing upon new knowledge and challenges that arise in the course of confrontations with, for example, transnational corporations, state or intergovernmental policies, international financial institutions, free trade and investment agreements, or, sometimes, NGOs. It is not a process which ends when research is "written up", and a report published.

Sometimes activist research seems like unraveling a ball of string, full of knots - it can be painstaking and difficult work. The analysis and overarching sets of understandings about how states, capital, and various agencies and institutions function, however, can help to guide the unraveling process, alongside ongoing relationships and discussions within and between social movements. Much of the activist research described here is a continuous process, where information and analysis is shared and processed constantly with others – from beginning to end. A publication may be only one part of this. Some of the most important products of this research may come from email exchanges or workshops that happen before anything is formally written down. This process strengthens the research, as collaboration brings out more information, deepens the analysis and connects the research with others working on the issue. The research process itself is often critical to building networks, long-term relationships and organizing. It is also critical for enabling the research output to have greater impact, as the groups and individuals involved will be more connected to the work and there will be more reason for them to use it in their own work and then to share it with their networks. It informs, and in turn is informed by other forms of incremental learning and knowledge production that take place in social movements.

Within some areas of academic scholarship, there are emerging traditions that seem somewhat congruent with aspects of the examples of activist research discussed here. In his work on political activist ethnography, George Smith (2006) suggests that for activist researchers, a wealth of research material and signposts can be derived from moments of confrontation to explore how power in our world is socially organized. He contends that being interrogated by insiders to a ruling regime, like a crown attorney, brings a researcher into direct contact with the conceptual relevancies and organizing principles of such regimes. As the anti-APEC example illustrates, confrontations with the state can be rich entry points from which to explore the ways that governments, domestic and transnational capital, and other extra-local forces socially organize power. Kinsman (2006) illustrates how political activist ethnography "requires challenging the 'common-

sense' theorizing that can often be ideological in character – uprooted from actual social practices and organization - put forward in movement circles" (135). Idealist theorizing in 'global justice' circles can often take the form of mistakenly assuming or constructing the diverse range of players in social movements and NGOs to all share the same ideals and aspirations. Motives of governments, international financial and economic institutions towards partnership and consultation initiatives with 'civil society' must be analyzed by empirical investigation of these institutions' actual practices, attending to the forms of social organization embedded in texts and discourses which they produce. Concretely this means an analysis that begins with what actually happens and goes beyond the idealist theorizing of many NGOs. Such NGO theorizing, for example, tends to assume that 'civil society' consultation undertaken by governments, as described in the New Zealand example above, is a manifestation of a responsive government or embodies democratic values, as opposed to seeing it as a way of managing dissent while portraying an outward image of participatory democracy. (Perhaps such techniques as dialogue and consultation are subject to more critical scrutiny now, but it was certainly not a given during the years of vibrant opposition to APEC.)

This article has shown several ways in which activists produce knowledge and conduct research. It discusses this alongside more conventional understandings of "academic" activist research, showing some convergences as well as differences. It is crucial therefore in conclusion to recall that "activist research" cannot claim to be inherently progressive or rigorous, any more than "academic" research can claim to be. Indeed Italian activist Antonio Onorati, (GRAIN, 2012) charges that many NGOs are 'self-referential', developing their strategies and priorities in isolation from social movements. Elsewhere (Choudry, 2010), I critique NGO research and advocacy in the context of global justice networks that implicitly accepts the framing and parameters of government/private sector capitalist logic and precludes more critical positions. The politics of the forms of activist research are impacted by challenges related to mobilizing and maintaining support, continuity and accountability among and between activist researchers and broader social struggles. Funding and institutional recognition of movement research is not necessarily proportionate to the utility of such work, especially if disconnected from the task of building and supporting movements, but rather oriented towards outputs intended to influence decision-makers in government, private sectors or international organizations. Indeed, some NGO research is driven by project-centric cycles and/or compartmentalized logics that are disconnected from social struggles, and more reflective of tensions around funding priorities.

In order to further explore the conceptual and theoretical parameters for conducting research for social change, what I have illustrated here are examples of activist research practice which depend on attending to specific contexts, maintaining and developing engaged relationships, dialogue and strategic collaborations, looking for contradictions and tensions that exist in the systems, structures and institutions being

contested, and commitments to long-haul struggles for change (Choudry and Kuyek, 2012). There remains much unexplored scope for rich exchanges between university-based "activist researchers" and movement research activists "in the struggle". Further study of methodologies and theoretical frameworks at use in activist research practice in relation to approaches in academic literature claimed as "activist" methodologies has the potential to develop powerful tools for critique of capitalism - new ways, and new intellectual spaces not only to understand the world - but to change it (Marx 1968). In order to change the world, let us be clear that research is only one aspect of struggle – which requires building counter-power, sustained organizing and social movements.

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Article

PLAYDOUGH CAPITALISM: AN ADVENTURE IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

This paper describes a technique for simulating capitalism within the classroom, using familiar materials and creating a participatory, reflexive learning space. It situates 'Playdough Capitalism' within the theory/practice of experiential education/radical pedagogy and the Marxist analysis/immanent critique of capitalism as a historically-formed system of class exploitation and alienated labour. The paper discusses both the value of simulating capitalism within the classroom and its limits as a transformative pedagogy.

Keywords

Capitalism, experiential education, immanent critique, radical pedagogy, surplus value

Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, I have taught an upper-year undergraduate course on the political economy of corporate capitalism. The readings and themes have evolved over time, but the course has always been a venue for introducing sociology students to Marxist analysis of capitalism. Although with retirements and new appointments the Cold War anti-communism, still prevalent in Sociology at the University of Victoria when I joined the department in the early 1980s, has gradually dissipated, historical materialism remains a fairly marginal perspective in our undergraduate curriculum. The corporate capitalism course attracts students from other programs, such as Political Science and Social Justice Studies, some of whom are grounded in Marxism, but most of the 30-40 students who sign up for the course have little to no acquaintance with Marx's analysis of capitalism as a mode of production. A good proportion of the class have directly experienced various forms of wage labour, and with the incremental withdrawal of student aid and the doubling of tuition in the first years (2001-2004) of British Columbia's hard-right Liberal government, it has been common for students to work part

time, and thus to experience the contradictions of semi-proletarianization. Many of them are hungry for a critical perspective that can take them beyond the horizons of a moralizing condemnation of corporate monopoly power and middle-class 'privilege', and of the alienating experiences of rampant consumerism, 'McDonaldization' (Ritzer 2011) and competitive individualism – all of which I use as entry points in the course.

In creating a small-scale version of capitalism within the classroom, the simulation I describe below offers a 'demonstration' of several ideas at the heart of Marx's critical analysis of capitalism – in particular, the appropriation of surplus value, but also the alienation of wage labour, the fetishism of commodities and the immanent critique of liberal ideology. 'Playdough Capitalism' is an adventure in experiential education, through which students learn through participation in (and reflection upon) practices that reach beyond texts and lectures.

Of course, in taking up Marx's perspective on capitalism, there is no substitute for engagement with relevant literature. This can very well include accessible classics such as Marx's (1898 [1865]) 'Value, Price and Profit', although for some students the academic veneration that is always implicit in resort to such works can itself pose a barrier. 'Why are we reading a dusty text from a century and a half ago to understand today's world?' they ask; 'is there nothing more current? Does Marxism begin and end with Marx?' My own strategy at the undergraduate level is to expose students to more recent social-science texts, such as James O'Connor's (1974) 'The theory of surplus value' and Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho's *Marx's Capital* (2010). Literary works can also be of great help. Wallace Shawn incorporated an illuminating account of commodity fetishism into his one-person play, *The Fever*, which strikes a poetic note and includes a reflection on how difficult it is (without being politically active) to maintain a critical stance on capitalism, as everyday life in market society makes commodity fetishism common sense:

> This coat, this sweater, this cup of coffee: each thing worth some quantity of money, or some number of other things — one coat, worth three sweaters, or so much money — as if that coat, suddenly appearing on the earth, contained somewhere inside itself an amount of value, like an inner soul, as if the coat were a fetish, a physical object that contains a living spirit. But what really determines the value of a coat? The coat's price comes from its history, the history of all the people involved in making it and selling it and all the particular relationships they had. And if we buy the coat, we, too, form relationships with all those people, and yet we hide those relationships from our own awareness by pretending we live in a world where coats have no history but just fall down from heaven with prices marked inside.… For two days I could see the fetishism of commodities everywhere around me. It was a strange feeling. Then on the

> third day I lost it, it was gone, I couldn't see it anymore. (Shawn 1991, unpaginated).

A pedagogical advantage in texts such as Shawn's is that they operate in part at an 'experiential' level, inviting the reader to participate in a first-person narrative. Often it is assumed that deep and complex theoretical ideas must be engaged abstractly – as in the Althusserian notion of a 'theoretical practice' that appropriates as its raw material 'an abstract conceptual representation of the real object', and converts these into theory (Smith 1980, 61). Without denying the need for abstraction, my approach here assumes that 'even some of the most abstract concepts may be illustrated through aptly designed experiences' (Blenkinsop and Beeman 2012, 112). The pedagogical implication is important: 'often students who have no interest in theoretical ideas will entertain them if there is an engaging experience that serves as an entry point for understanding' (ibid).

Experiential Education, Radical Pedagogy and Classroom Simulation

Experiential education can be defined as 'a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values' (Breunig 2005, 108). Breunig notes an important convergence between experiential education and critical pedagogy, both of which 'conceive of teaching, learning, and the project of schooling in ways that focus teaching on the development of a moral project(s) for education as social transformation' (2005, 112). Realizing the promises of both requires educators to turn pedagogical theory into 'purposeful classroom practices' (2005, 111).

Playdough capitalism offers one instance of this theory-practice transference, invoking as its moral project Marx's immanent critique of liberal ideology. In *Capital* Marx shows how the celebrated values of liberalism – freedom and equality – while consistent with the rules of the marketplace, are fundamentally at odds with how capitalism works at a deeper level of production. In Marx's own account, the sphere of commodity circulation comprises

> …a very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labour-power, are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to, is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham,

> because each looks only to himself. The only force that brings them together and puts them in relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interests of each. Each looks to himself only, and no one troubles himself about the rest, and just because they do so, do they all, in accordance with the pre-established harmony of things, or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal and in the interest of all (Marx 1887 [1867], Chapter 6, paragraph 19).

By bringing the rudiments of Marx's analysis to life in the classroom, Playdough Capitalism draws students into an analysis of capitalism that is also an ideology-critique, seeking, as Susan Marks explains, 'to push the world to live up to its own professed standards' (2001: 115). As a moral project, such immanent critique eschews the arrogance of an external standpoint, but also the complicity of ideology's internal self-understanding. Its goal is to show how that self-understanding 'strains at its own limitations', pointing beyond itself. The first step 'is to make more transparent the processes by which social inequalities are masked, naturalized, rationalized and otherwise legitimated' (Marks 2001, 115). This concentrates attention on the reality of inequalities, but also their historicity and contingency, and on the gap between them and the liberal ideals that are supposed to animate our social and political arrangements. The effect is to unsettle the imaginative hold of the arrangements themselves, stimulating reflection on the untapped potential within the ideals of freedom and equality. *Self-reflection* is thus the goal of immanent critique:

> …to engage people in a process of reflecting on their own circumstances. To make us see our own circumstances in a new way is already to change us, already to bring about a kind of emancipation. But ideology critique can also be emancipatory in the further sense that it can motivate us to act on our altered understanding. How so? Because the critique of ideology invites us to consider, on the one hand, the possibility that we make ourselves accomplices to oppression (including that of which we are ourselves the victims). On the other hand, it invites us to consider the possibility that we have at our disposal weapons for resisting oppression, if only we would use them as such (Marks 2001, 115-116).

Critical self-reflection and the transformation of social relations have been core concerns of radical pedagogy, from its inception, and the 'problem-posing' approach that Freire (1970) advocated is evident in Marx's own exposition in *Capital*, which poses and then unravels the paradox of a class society that celebrates freedom and equality as

universals. Where playdough capitalism, and Freire, differ from traditional academic approaches to reading *Capital*, is in the participatory, experiential mode of student engagement with the theory, which subverts and problematizes elements of class that are imported as hidden curriculum into the classroom. 'Problem-posing education counters the hierarchical nature of "banking" education by suggesting that education should be cointentional, involving both teachers and students as subjects. Through dialogue new relationships emerge, that of teacher-student and student-teacher' (Freire 1970, 80).

Among the variety of experiential exercises discussed by Cramer et al (2012, 2), Playdough Capitalism exemplifies the 'experiencing' mode: it gives students 'an opportunity to actually take on a disadvantaged or discriminated role and experience life from the viewpoint of an oppressed population.' It constructs, within the classroom, a miniature capitalism using familiar materials and involving students themselves as proletarian participants. Simultaneously, it complements this 'direct' (though simulated) experience of the proletarian with a demonstration of how the economic surplus is produced, appropriated and accumulated within capitalism as a social form, enabling students to 'see' how capitalism works both from the subjective side of typified proletarian experience and from the objective side of political economy. Playdough capitalism has been an important part of my course on corporate capitalism for more than two decades, but the basic exercise can be found in Robert Tressell's novel, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1965 [1914]) – in the chapter entitled 'The great money-trick'. There, Tressell's protagonist, Owen, creates a simulation of capitalism with his workmates, using knives as instruments of production, slices of bread as raw material and half-pennies as currency. This chapter was included by Bertell Ollman (1978) in his collection, with Theodore Mills, *Studies in Socialist Pedagogy*, as an appendix to his essay 'On teaching Marxism' (Ollman 1978, 215-53), in which he described Tressell's money-trick as 'the most successful teaching device I have ever used' (1978, 226).

Playdough Capitalism in Practice

Playdough Capitalism employs the same basic devices of analytical abstraction as Tressell and Ollman. However, it incorporates into the simulated capitalist micro-world a more realistic representation of industrial capital and commercial capital and of what Marx called the 'metamorphosis of value' within capitalism's circuitry, across productive, commercial and money forms. By including a production process with a division of labour, a store, money and a segmentation of time into that devoted to producing commodities and that devoted to reproducing labour power, the simulation models the actualities of capitalism while keeping the focus on the alienation of labour, the production and realization of surplus value, and the basic relationship between labour and capital. It is a fully *reflexive* exercise, which presents, in advance, both the premises

of capitalism and the logic of simulation as a means of analytical abstraction through which participants can experience the essence of the social system under scrutiny.[1] In this sense, the simulation opens a space not only for substantive analysis and critique but for a methodological discussion of the use of abstraction in social science, developing the key distinction Marx (1973 [1858]) makes in the *Grundrisse* between rational abstractions that penetrate beneath surface appearances of social reality while retaining a sense of historicity, and chaotic conceptions that organize knowledge on the basis of superficial similarities and differences, with little regard for historical specificity.

With this in mind, I devote the first part of the session to making explicit the analytical abstractions according to which capitalism is to be simulated in the classroom. The basic points are provided to students in a double-sided one-page handout, to which I refer in my own orienting remarks (see Appendix 1). Three theoretical distinctions, which also form the premises of capitalism, are made: 1/ between 'free' wage-labour and capital, 2/ among three forms of capital (industrial capital, merchant capital and money-capital) and 3/ between the mode of production and a rudimentary state apparatus. After pointing out that these premises arose historically in what Marx called a process of primitive accumulation, I discuss how the simulation models capitalism as a self-reproducing system. The working class consists of three student volunteers; the course director stands in for the entire capitalist class; the means of production are comprised of playdough, a rolling pin, bread knife and molds, all set out on a table representing a factory owned by the capitalist; money capital consists of a supply of paper clips owned initially by the capitalist, the currency of the economy; merchant capital is centralized into one store (also owned by the capitalist) which sells commodities produced at the factory; the state is represented as a student volunteer hired by the capitalist as police officer to keep order and protect private property from possible incursion (for more details see Appendix 1).

Having walked the students through the component parts of the system, the final step before we set it in motion involves explanation of three further features of capitalism that are incorporated into the simulation. The first of these is the temporal division between work time and leisure time. The working day is set to one minute, after which there is a one-minute leisure period; so two minutes represents 24 hours, with the working day taking 12 hours. The second is the phenomenon of exchange value. Capitalism requires definite ratios at which commodities can be exchanged, with money expressing the exchange value of each commodity. The exchange value of labour power,

[1] In the 1970s and 1980s, postmodernists delivered a critique of essentialism in discourse that is sometimes overgeneralized to rule out any critical analysis of how a historically-specifically social form is constituted and reproduced in practice. By essence, I mean precisely the historically formed social relations that make capitalism what it is, underneath the surface features of freedom in the marketplace and equality in exchange (also aspects of capitalism) that are celebrated within liberal ideology.

capital's all-important commodity – the wage – is set at two paper clips per day, and workers will be entitled to spend their wages in their free time, which from the system's perspective is a time for reproducing labour power so that it can be sold anew. Finally, the simulation models two types of industrially-produced commodities: subsistence goods (represented as playdough stars) and luxury goods (represented as angels, which take longer to produce). The initial price of one star is two paper clips; the initial price of one angel is four paper clips. In this simplified world, I point out, human subsistence requires the consumption of at least one star per day – thus workers receive a subsistence wage that enables them to reproduce their labour power.

These reflexive preliminaries lay out the logic of the simulation (and of capitalism) in advance, so students have the conceptual tools at the front of their consciousness as the simulation plays out. I set up a table, facing the class (who sit in a semi-circle, around it), and place the playdough, rolling pin, molds and butter knife in a row, prefiguring what will be the flow of the labour process. A few steps away, typically on a lectern (or whatever surface is available), I place a little hand-lettered sign that reads: **$tore**, and a small box of paper clips. The table and lectern are the places for production and circulation. Trading on my authority as professor, I assume the role of the 'collective capitalist', recruit three student-proletarians, assign them to their respective places on the production line, and briefly explain the colour of the playdough (for recipe see Appendix 2). Bright green, it symbolizes capital's new-found dedication to ecological sustainability, a play on words that typically elicits giggles and groans. As a final step before beginning the first working day, I 'hire' a student volunteer to serve as police officer (to be paid the same wage as the factory workers).

Volunteers readily take up their assigned roles in the division of labour (roller, molder, trimmer/quality control) and often with great zest. Generally, the police officer has nothing to do (my authority is sufficient to contain things within system norms). Near the end of each working day, I have the workers deliver what they have produced to the store, at which point I pay them in paper clips. In their one minute of 'free time', they must purchase what they need to subsist, and since a star is all they can afford, the consumer choice amounts to a comparison of the nearly identical commodities they produced earlier. As the collective capitalist, I also consume commodities, but in greater quantity and quality (stars and angels). Having established the 'green' credentials of this economy, all of the commodities that are consumed in the leisure period are simply 'recycled' into the mound of playdough, to be worked up into fresh commodities later.

As each working day goes by, the workers develop more efficient ways of molding the playdough into stars and angels, increasing the productivity of their labour. I play the role of facilitator-coach – never getting involved in actual production, but exhorting the workers to 'give it their all' and introducing other clichés that inject humour but also replicate the voice of management within the factory. Yet as output rises while wages

remain stagnant, sometimes the workers organize a resistance – e.g., a slowdown, or even a union to bargain collectively; perhaps a strike. In the fluid circumstances, I, as capitalist class, respond either with the carrot or stick, and typically the latter: I will fire the most militant of the workers and replace her or him with another student-proletarian, recruited from the reserve army of spectators. Or I will dock pay. These dramatic acts may provoke a response 'from below', or not. In either case, they become grist for the mill of post-simulation discussion.

The simulation creates a very dramatic visual effect, at odds with commodity fetishism. Over the course of several working days, the workers produce far more than they consume via their wages: the exchange value of their labour-power being far less than the quantity of new value they create. Even my own more profligate consumption of both stars and angels does not prevent a mass of commodities from piling up. The links between the creative agency of the workers, operating collectively in the factory, the wealth produced by them, the appropriation of that wealth at the end of each working day by the capitalist, and the consequent accumulation of wealth under control of the capitalist class are crystal clear. This clarity issues from the key abstraction on which the simulation depends: *the bracketing of inter-capitalist competition*, and indeed of markets as a panoply of relations of circulation. As collective capitalist, I personify (as Marx would put it) the entire capital under the control of the capitalist class; thus instead of a 'market system' within which individual members of the bourgeoisie compete for shares of the total surplus value and collaterally offer employment to workers, the capital-labour relation is shown to be a mechanism for pumping unpaid surplus-labour out of the direct producers (Marx 1999 [1894], paragraph 10). The appropriateness of such an abstraction is grist for the mill during the extensive post-simulation debrief and discussion. But the simulation itself provides experiential support for Marx's approach, demonstrating how new value issues from human agency in the labour process. After all, in a market system one capitalist might through *virtu* or *fortuna* (or malice) reap a (surplus) profit at the expense of competitors, but the entire surplus claimed by the capitalist class cannot originate in the zero-sum game of inter-capitalist competition.

At this point in the exercise, one can either move into the post-simulation discussion, or (time permitting) introduce some variations into the scenario. On various occasions, I have

1. increased the length of the working day and thus the amount of absolute surplus value appropriated by capital from labour;
2. introduced a wage increase, which reduces surplus value and thus slows down the rate at which capitalist wealth grows;
3. hired a manager, paid double the wage of the industrial workers, to squeeze more labour out of them while relieving me of any involvement in production; and

4. introduced technology that increases relative surplus value by boosting labour productivity (e.g., beginning the simulation without the rolling pin, and introducing it after several working days).

In combination the last three variations take us closer to the post-World War Two regime of technocratic consumer capitalism.

The simulation could be made even more elaborate and concrete, e.g., by introducing multiple sites of production (perhaps 'North' and 'South', with different wage rates), or even inter-capitalist competition. One might also see what happens when the cash nexus (merchant capital, money) is eliminated completely. Instead of receiving wages and buying back some of what they have produced, student-producers might be allowed to keep some of what they produce but obliged to forfeit the rest, say as rent-in-kind (roughly, feudal relations). Alternatively, one could recompose the relations of production so that student-producers give up their entire product to the dominant class, receiving subsistence back directly (roughly, slavery). Playing with these more ambitious scenarios would require more time; perhaps a half-day workshop.

Playdough capitalism is an open-ended adventure, which raises the question of how to bring the simulation to a 'conclusion'. On occasion, I have created an ending by pointing to the over-accumulation of commodities controlled by the capitalist class and declaring that there has been a global crisis of overproduction, requiring me, as the collective capitalist, to fire my workforce, and thus to end the simulation. (This is close to what Tressell does in his original, fictional version.) To date, no episode has ended in socialist revolution, which would require the student-proletarians, presumably with the support of the police, to re-appropriate the wealth they have produced and to place it under public control. To be fair to them, the cards are especially stacked against the proletariat in this simulation. Revolutions take more than a few super-compressed working days to gestate, and the various objects mobilized in the simulation do not lend themselves to the transformations that are part of revolutionary restructuring of a mode of production. Of course, these considerations are also grist for the discussion mill that follows from the simulation.

I have also used this simulation in classes I give within UNI 102, a free, non-credit introduction to the social sciences designed for people who experience barriers to entering university, typically due to poverty. Part of UVic's 'community engagement', UNI 102 attracts a student body that is less instrumental, older, and more engaged and worldly than most undergraduate students I teach. But the simulation is no less successful and relevant; indeed, UNI 102 students are often able to bring a great wealth of practical experience to the session. On one memorable occasion, the student-proletarian whose job was to flatten playdough with a rolling pin responded to my commands to work faster by slamming his tool on the table, breaking it into three pieces. The simulation came to an

abrupt end, and we had much to talk about, including the legacy of the Luddites and, more broadly, the fact that it is living labour that produces capital, as its alienated product. This is, of course, one 'proof' of the labour theory of value: when labour withdraws from production, new value ceases to appear (O'Connor 1974).

Reflective Debriefing and Discussion

A crucial part of this adventure in experiential learning comes in the post-simulation session, when we return to a reflexive voice, now in a more dialogical mode, beginning with participants' observations and reflections – recalling thoughts and feelings that came up during the exercise and reflecting on the implications for how we understand capitalism as a political-economic system. We use these experiential reflections as entry points for revisiting some of the more analytical issues that are framed by such critical concepts as surplus value and exploitation, alienated labour, commodity fetishism and the critique of liberal ideology. Comparisons between Playdough Capitalism and the 'real thing' provide fertile ground for articulating a Marxian analysis of capitalism with a range of important issues, such as liberal-democratic governance, ideologies of consumerism and nationalism, and the gendered reproduction of labour power (see Appendix 1 for details). A key difference between the simulation and the real thing, worth emphasizing in the discussion, is that in capitalism most surplus value is reinvested, which is what makes it capital (self-expanding value), and what causes capitalism to reproduce itself, inexorably, on an extended scale. In the simulation, most of the surplus product is hoarded in commodity form without being realized as surplus value, let alone capitalized. Such hoarding is a practice Marx characterized as 'tomfoolery', within a capitalist order.[2] Although this is another limitation of the simulation, bringing it up enables the class to consider capitalism's dynamic of endless growth, which is so patently at odds with ecosystem vitality today (Kovel 2007). The post-simulation is also furnishes an opportunity to compare hierarchy and authority in the classroom with the workplace, particularly in light of how easily the authority of a professor morphs into that of the capitalist – suggesting that, as Bowles and Gintis (1976) and others have argued, the structural isomorphism between education and the workplace helps prepare the next generation for life within capitalism.

[2] 'Exclusion of money from circulation would also exclude absolutely its self-expansion as capital, while accumulation of a hoard in the shape of commodities would be sheer tomfoolery' (Marx 1887, chapter 24, section 2, paragraph 2).

Conclusion

What Playdough Capitalism does is to create an experiential 'learning space', within the classroom, for action and reflection, feeling and thinking and conversational learning about class and capitalism. As Kolb and Kolb point out, 'the enhancement of experiential learning in higher education can be achieved through the creation of learning spaces that promote growth-producing experiences for learners' (2005, 205). For students the exercise is illuminating, sometimes startlingly so. But 'the connection between insight and action' is not automatic (Kohn 2009, unpaginated). A student's direct or vicarious participation in a simulation of capitalism does not imply a take-up of radical or resistant practice outside the classroom.

Our exercise does not escape the limits of in-class simulation, and of classroom learning more generally. Recalling Wallace Shawn's character in *The Fever*, unless people incorporate a kind of anti-capitalist resistance into their lives, the dull compulsion of economic relations under capitalism tends to induce commodity fetishism, even after one has absorbed the insights of Marxist analysis. As Marx himself observed, 'the advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature' (1887 [1867], Chapter 28, paragraph 11). Given this, radical education needs to go beyond the critique of capitalist production, to help engender an alternative production processes that put *people*, rather than commodities, in motion, that produce *new people*, 'transforming them into people with a new conception of themselves – as subjects capable of altering their world' (Lebowitz 2009, 316). Otherwise workers (the class destination of most of the students we teach) simply play their part in reproducing capitalism's social relations.

A related limit stems from the challenges recent cultural developments pose for the method of immanent critique. Operating within a critical-modernist problematic, the latter 'highlights the tension between norms such as freedom and equality and the actual practices that these norms legitimize' (Kohn 2009, unpaginated). But what if the ethical hold of the liberal ideal has itself weakened? Students who position themselves instrumentally as consumer/investors – purchasers of an educational credential, an investment in human capital – may be largely immune to the critical-modernist strategy of immanent critique They may draw quite different practical lessons from Playdough Capitalism, lessons consistent with what Slavoj Zizek has called 'cynical reason', according to which 'one knows the falsehood very well, one is well aware of a particular interest hidden behind an ideological universality, but still one does not renounce it' (1989, 29). For the cynic, a demonstration that capitalism's celebration of freedom and equality in the market obscures deeper truths of alienation and exploitation might simply provide more strategic ammunition in the struggle for individual advantage.

These limitations point up the need to situate this classroom exercise (and our other teaching initiatives) within a broader ethico-political critique of capitalism and of interlinked forms of domination, and to encourage students to carry the insights they achieve in the classroom into the field of activism.

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Appendix 1: handout to accompany the in-class simulation
Playdough Capitalism

Premises of Capitalism as a System

1. Labour: a class of free wage workers, "free in the double sense"
2. Capital: in three forms
    a. Industrial capital: capitalist control of the means of production
    b. Money capital: a fund of money with which capital can make necessary purchases
    c. Commercial capital: businesses engaged in sales to consumers but not production.

In addition, a rudimentary state (namely a police officer) is required to enforce property rights.

Modeling Capitalism as a System

All simulations involve abstraction from a complex reality. What gets abstracted are the essential features of the system being simulated. We construct a working model, set it in motion, and see what happens. In this simulation, we make various simplifications so that the system can be modeled on the smallest possible scale, in a classroom, and in a short time frame.

- The ***working class*** consists of three student volunteers, although other students should consider themselves available to work — members of a "reserve army of labour."
- The ***capitalist class*** consists of a single person — the course director.
- The ***means of production*** consists of playdough as raw material that is worked up into finished goods, a rolling pin, molds and a bread knife, all within a single factory.
- ***Money capital*** consists initially of a supply of paper clips, the currency of the economy, possessed by the capitalist class as a means of purchase.
- ***Commerce*** is entirely centralized into one store (also owned by the capitalist class) which sells commodities produced at the factory.
- Since the capitalist class takes the form of a single agent controlling industrial, commercial and money capital, this could be thought of as an extreme form of monopoly capitalism, in which ***one capitalist empire dominates the entire economy***.
- Although liberal democracy is typical of capitalism, this simulation is a ***police state***. The capitalist class hires a police officer to keep order and protect private

property from possible incursion.

- The simulation requires us to move through a series of production/consumption periods. To do this we will set the ***working day*** as one minute long and the ***leisure period*** as one minute long; in effect two minutes represents 24 hours, and the working day is 12 hours long.
- Capitalism requires definite, though changing, ratios at which commodities can be exchanged (***prices***), with money as the mediator that expresses the exchange value of each commodity. The price of labour power, capital's all-important commodity, is the ***wage***. For this simulation, wages will be set at two paper clips per day, and workers will be entitled to spend their wages in their free time, which from the system's perspective is a time for reproducing labour power so that it can be sold anew.
- Capitalism generates several kinds of commodities — subsistence goods (for reproducing labour power; e.g., food, shelter, clothing), luxury goods (for consumption by the capitalist class) and capital goods (fresh means of production). In our simulation we will not produce the third category. ***Subsistence goods*** will be represented as stars; ***luxury goods*** will be represented as angels. The initial price of one star is two paper clips; the initial price of one angel is four paper clips. In this simplified world, ***human subsistence requires the consumption of at least one star per day.***

Step 1: Getting the accumulation process underway

We will run several cycles (days), each two minutes long. Workers are directly supervised by the capitalist class, which thus wields direct control over the labour process. Think about the operative elements in the situation, influencing the creation of wealth and its apportionment between the two classes. Also think about class interests — in what ways do they converge and in what ways do they conflict?

Step 2: Some variations

Simulation enables us to explore the impact of the introduction of change to one or another parameter in the system. Some basic parameters in a capitalist system, relevant to this simulation, are the ***price of commodities*** -- particularly the wage rate — and the ***productivity of labour*** (which depends in part on the use of labour-saving technologies). Other factors, such as the extent to which workers are organized vs. atomized and the effectiveness of the state in maintaining social control, could also be made to vary by the actions of participants in the simulation. In this step we observe what happens to the production and distribution of wealth and to the balance of class forces when some of the

parameters change.

Step 3: Analysis

We begin the analysis by hearing from each of the participants. Please reflect on ***how your position in the political-economic structure may have shaped your consciousness and action***. Were there any moments when you experienced an 'Ah-ha', when you saw more clearly than before what lies underneath a capitalist order?

One of the basic illustrative aspects of this simulation has to do with the capitalist appropriation of surplus value — the new wealth that results from workers' agency in production but that is claimed by the capitalist, as profit — a form of alienated labour. Under capitalism, surplus value is produced in two ways: 1/ as ***absolute surplus value***, by sweating more labour out of the workforce or by lowering the wage rate; and 2/ as ***relative surplus value***, by raising labour productivity (usually through new technology, work reorganization and economies of scale) so that the same quantity of living labour produces more commodities. How do these concepts of absolute and relative surplus value figure in the simulation?

Of course, increasing the rate of surplus value (the ratio: [surplus value appropriated]/[wages paid]) is a crucial means of increasing the rate of profit, which is each capitalist's prime motive. This rate is also known as the rate of exploitation. Characteristically, workers defend their conditions of life and resist capitalist attempts to increase the rate of exploitation. This is a basic aspect of class struggle in a capitalist society. How did it play out in the simulation?

Finally, an important issue concerns ***the departures we have made from reality***.

- By *abstracting* from market relations, by aggregating all capitalists into one, we eliminate inter-capitalist competition: the struggle among capitalists for relative shares of the surplus value appropriated from workers. The simulation enables us to see class appropriation of wealth for what it is, and to understand how capitalism generates enormous material inequities — its characteristic pattern of mass poverty and opulent wealth.
- By the same token, by abstracting from the market the simulation subverts a pillar of liberal ideology: the celebration of freedom of choice and equality of exchange in the marketplace. These values are reversed in the sphere of capitalist production, where labour is alienated and exploited.

But what about other simplifying assumptions, including the representation of the state

as a police officer?

- The simulation does not represent any element of liberal-democratic governance, social programs that might effect a 'class compromise', nor ideologies such as consumerism and nationalism.
- It does not represent a key dynamic of capitalism: its logic of endless growth as surplus value is plowed back into new investment – causing capitalism to be reproduced on an ever-extended scale, and in our era, provoking a deepening ecological crisis.
- It does not represent spatialized divisions within capitalism – between states, between the regions such as the global North and South.
- It does not attempt to model the complex practices through which workers' labour power is actually reproduced, particularly within gendered relations.

What are the implications of re-introducing these elements into our analysis? How are capitalism's class contradictions modified or displaced by such complexities? These are big questions we can only begin to address in class, but they are worth pondering.

Appendix 2: Recipe for stovetop playdough

1 c. flour
1/4 c. salt
2 tbsp. cream of tartar
Combine and add:
1 c water
2 tsp. veg. food colouring
1 tbsp. oil
Cook over medium heat and stir (3-5 minutes). When it forms a ball in the centre of the pot, *turn it out and knead*.
Store in a plastic bag.

(Thanks to Janet Laxton for this recipe.)

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Reviewed by Darren Pacione

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"Marxism encloses man within history, so that it is unable to confront man with the external world and thus can only deal with historical, not existential, problems."

-- Milan Prucha[1]

Given the zeitgeist of global protest, Michael Lebowitz's book The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development would seem to be an important touchstone for mapping the wills and wants of occupy protesters from Wall Street to the Brazilian rainforest.[2] Yet, many in the Occupy movement seek not an alternative to capitalism, but a form of capitalism that is more compassionate – capitalism with a human face. For these people, capitalism would create new ethical frameworks from which to work from. The intensification of work and the extraction of surplus labour would still exist only this time it would be done with a "fair" wage and ethical standpoints that are ecologically sensitive to the global scourge of past capitalist practices. Such an idea however is a scandal to say the least, a ruse that mystifies the true social relations under capitalism. To this end, the ideological deficiency of the global Occupy movement is one of its greatest weaknesses. For instance, we live in a moment where many progressives turn to aid agencies, among other things, in an attempt to eradicate poverty despite such aid agencies promoting the goals of empire.[3] As capitalism continues to creep amidst progressive liberal malaise and confusion, ideologically and pragmatically speaking, where do we go from here? To this question, The Socialist Alternative attempts an answer.

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[1] Prucha, `Marxism and the Existential Problem,' 152.

[2] I do not wish to classify all current global protest as being inspired, influenced, or connected to the Occupy Movement. I simply see the Occupy Movement as a sub-stratum of global resistance against capital, resistance that might aptly be seen as part of the "multitude."

[3] Here I define empire as the hierarchical ordering of society, whereas a nation-state features a horizontal ordering of society.

As Lebowitz clearly states in the preface, the purpose of the book is 'to point to an alternative' (p. 7), an alternative that confronts and negates the eco-social distress that the capitalist project has facilitated. Aside from an alternative, The Socialist Alternative is also a reclamation project of sorts, for Lebowitz implicitly is attempting to clarify and recuperate the falsification of Marx's understanding of human development in particular and by extension socialist thought more generally. Put slightly differently, the book serves not only as a vision, a mapping of sorts, but also as a corrective to tendentious readings of Marx and the misuse and application of socialist concepts. According to Lebowitz, the socialist project is incoherently stumbling and staggering into the future. He attempts to renew interest in socialism, as well as redirect it, by distancing it from its historical past and by fleshing out the ambiguity and vagueness that so often revolves around its many lexical constellations. For Lebowitz, the word socialism and the material realities it designates are often weighed down by the substance of an epoch, particularly the trace of the Cold War. To this end, the socialist framework developed in the book is distinct from what Lebowitz calls "real" socialism – that is, the socialist projects of the USSR and Yugoslavia for instance. It is clear that Lebowitz's time in Venezuela, a place he has lived with his partner Martha Harnacker since 2004, has left a strong impression on his understanding and explication of socialism. However, The Socialist Alternative is by no means a book about the Chavez-led Bolivarian Revolution. Lebowitz stresses that socialism much like capitalism must be organic. Socialism must come from 'revolutionary practice', the self-activity of the masses wherever they may be located. Lebowitz does, however, advocate for a rigid system, what he calls 'socialist triangle', but understands that all good things have a basic structure and the nuance and 'particularity comes from the context and to this he emphasizes; that each country must invent its own path' (p. 128).

Socialism's basic structure is triangular. The three sides include: 'the wealth of people,' 'the production of people,' and 'the solidarian society.' To this end, the book is broken into two parts: the socialist triangle and building the socialist triangle. Again, real human development is at the center of Lebowitz's argument. Lebowitz begins to develop his socialist geometry in and around social ownership or 'the wealth of the people.' Social ownership 'implies a profound democracy from below rather than decisions by a state that stands over and above society' (my emphasis p. 41). Emphasis is not placed on the division of labour, that is, workers, bosses, and bureaucrats, but on 'the combination of labour– its character as social labour (p. 33).' It also implies a diachronic approach to understanding past social labour. In fact, the book itself is a product of social labour – part of the social brain of society, the result of past immaterial labour. Socialism reclaims what has been taken; it remedies the theft that started when private ownership of the means of production became de rigueur. It requires that the means of production be in association with past and present forms of social labour and social property, thusly, establishing a genealogical understanding of contemporary forms of sociality and human

interconnectedness. Social ownership, then, is necessary to satisfy the needs of all people, rather than just the needs of private owners. As many of us know, 'In capitalism, human beings are not the end; rather, they are means for the expansion of capital' (p. 44).

The second side of the triangle features 'the production of people.' In other words, social production organized by associated interdependent workers. Under capitalism, production is organized by capital which exploits workers and transmogrifies their creative potentiality. Here Lebowitz argues that:

> The implication is obvious – every aspect of production must be a site for the collective decision making and variety of activity that develops human capacities and builds solidarity among the particular associated producers. When workers act in workplaces and communities in conscious cooperation with others, they produce themselves as people conscious of their interdependence and of their own collective power (p. 60).

In other words, when workers organize production, they develop their human capabilities in solidarity and commune with others, which presupposes the third side of the triangle and is ultimately necessary for socialism.

The third part of the triangle is the elimination of material incentives, worker competition, exchange relations, and the market economy, in order to distribute goods according to communal needs. With communal production 'where the associated producers engage in productive activity for the needs of the community, there is the continuous process of development of the capabilities of producers' (p. 81). According to Lebowitz, in privileging communal needs over self-interest it 'guards against worker-managers viewing their labour power as property and as the basis of an exchange with society, and it checks a tendency to treat social property as group property' (p. 88). Without the goal of producing for communal needs, any attempt at socialism can lead back to capitalism. To this end, socialism means the overcoming of the separateness and antagonism between subject and object. The socialist triangle leads to a society which permits the actualization of the human; Marx's species-being. In other words, socialism is just as much an economic and material project as it is also an existential and ontological project. The relationship between social structure and consciousness is ultimately at the core of the socialist project. Socialism in this instance is not just about fulfilling the basic needs of society, such as food, shelter, and medical care, although these are the bedrock of the system. As Che reminds us:

> It is not a matter of how many kilograms of meat one has to eat, or how many times a year someone can go to beach, or how many pretty things from abroad you might be able to buy with present-day wages. It is a

> matter of making the individual feel more complete, with much more inner wealth and much more responsibility.[4]

It is about people enjoying the kind of freedom that is simply beyond the capability of the capitalist system to deliver. Lebowitz's project in many respects is more about organization and social empowerment than it is economics, that is, the forms of social empowerment and social development necessary for transcending capitalism.

But herein lays the fundamental problem with the book. In his attempt to unsettle the power and fortitude of capital, Lebowitz fails to extend his argument to all people. What about those outside of humanity? What about the supernumerary? In other words, can socialism speak for and represent those not recognized as human – that is the non-human? In many ways the book lays claim to a universal applicability. Lebowitz's assumptive logic is predicated upon the authority of whiteness. In other words, Lebowitz's subject, read human, is 'overrepresented as the generic, ostensibly supracultural human.'[5] As Wilderson has clearly illustrated, the black subject is the scandal within historical materialism: 'the black subject position in America is an antagonism, a demand that cannot be satisfied through a transfer of ownership/organization of existing rubrics.'[6] This illustrates the limitations of Lebowitz's socialist triangle. For instance, how would blacks fair under worker cooperatives? Does a solidarian society, based on worker cooperatives axiomatically become anti-'anti-black'? Does a syndicalist system restore humanity back to the black? The universal (hu)man is still European and western. It is from this commonsensical standpoint that Lebowitz elaborates and maps out the socialist alternative. What is crowded out, due to the perceived universal applicability is black particularity; the singularity of black suffering, not just black exploitation. Again, to quote Wilderson, 'Work is a white category.'[7] We could explain Lebowitz's general neglect of race and how it might confound his socialist triangle as simply 'misrecogniz[ing] the nature of racial slavery: as a brutal regime of labour exploitation.'[8] Lebowitz's only reference to race is featured in a footnote, where he observes that 'other inversions of human development such as patriarchy, caste society, and racism (p. 183)' need to be explicitly dealt with in order for real human development to occur. But to pair racism in its most general banal constitution with patriarchy and caste society again undermines the import of race; it makes such 'inversions of human development' seem similar when in fact they are not. Capitalism splits the body, but paired with white supremacy and antiblackness, the body becomes quartered.

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[4] Guevara, `Che Guevara on Global Justice,' p.43.

[5] Wynters, `Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom,' p. 288.

[6] Wilderson, `Gramsci's Black Marx,' p. 231.

[7] Ibid, p. 238.

[8] Sexton, `Race, Nation, and Empire in a Blackened World,' p. 251.

Might I suggest, as Hardt has,

> to look… outside this alternative. Too often it appears as though our only choices are capitalism or socialism, the rule of private property or that of public property, such that the only cure for the ills of state control is to privatize and for the ills of capital to publicize – that is, to exert state regulation.[9]

The freedom to labour under different conditions, that is, exempt from exploitation is not true freedom, for the violent underside, featuring both terror and horror, still is present. There comes a point when it is no longer about capital exploitation at all, but also general global terror and violence. As Wilderson has observed, there comes a time when one needs to deal with the 'relations of terror as opposed to a relation of hegemony.'[10] This paradigmatic shift is often neglected and/or omitted, intentionally or unintentionally, because many on the Left continue to work within the 'tradition of unraced positionality.'[11] To think of the worker, whether exploited or working for him or herself, as unraced is absurd to say the least, for the 'we' is really a synonym for a canonized whiteness. The Socialist Alternative says nothing about race, particularly blackness as both an identity and structural positionality. As Charles Mills has observed, 'If the white workers have been alienated from their product, then people of color, especially black slaves, have been alienated from their personhood...'[12] If The Socialist Alternative is really about socialism proper, it must deal with anthropological, axiological, ontological and existential problems. It confronts the bourgeois problem, but neglects the racial and colonial problem.

Lebowitz fails to provide what Lewis Gordon has characterized as a 'conjunctive analysis,' that is, an analysis that is critically and not reductively engaged with racism, capitalism, and colonialism.[13] As a result, Lebowitz's suggestions for an alternative can only be stretched so far; they reach a sociogenic and ontogenic limit. Lebowitz is still in Europe. As Fanon observed, 'Let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth.'[14] To recapitulate, Lebowitz's text suffers from a universalist, canonized whiteness approach, thusly subsuming a type of particularity. Any development must be simultaneously particular and universal. To

[9] Hardt, `The Common in Communism,' p. 346.
[10] Wilderson, p. 230.
[11] Ibid, p. 229.
[12] Mills, From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism, p. xviii.
[13] Gordon, Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age.
[14] Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, p. 313.

echo Nahum Chandler, 'the black is a problem for socialist thought.'[15] In relation to Prucha's statement in the epigraph, even if one is enclosed in history, one must confront the existential and ontological, for it is the historical enclosure that sets the stage for existence or non-existence and, thus, inclusion or exclusion from projects for real human development. Lebowitz attempts to reinsert the (hu)man back into an alternative approach to human development. Yet, the main defect of Lebowitz's book is the presupposition that all sentient beings are (hu)man.

Nonetheless, at a time when protest is common, Michael Lebowitz's The Socialist Alternative can serve as a timely intervention for those wondering what to do next, how to envision or map a new future. This book not only provides an important philosophical and ideological framework, but also outlines ways of creating a new (hu)man and by extension new human relationships particularly from the register of political economy. In other words, Lebowitz not only provides a conceptual mapping of socialism to come, but a practical and concrete mapping that can contribute to making socialism a reality. Throughout the book socialism is explicated as a tool, a method, not a tenet weighed down by the dogmatism of yesteryear. Students of struggle should read The Socialist Alternative. However, they should do so with a critical eye, for his 'new human' is fraught with defects as previously mentioned. Put slightly differently, students of struggle should always remain critically maladaptive even to that which is understood to be socialist or socialist-orientated. To this end, socialism is not a panacea, for it often excludes any need to negate the negation of white supremacy and antiblackness, that is, black absences when thinking of possible futures. I am not calling for a complete rejection of Lebowitz's argument, again I am sympathetic and thinking in solidarity with it, but his archive and paradigm is limited, for it excludes motifs that illustrate the significance of race in its most general constitution, and more importantly antiblackness. To pair the methods found in the book with the best of the black radical tradition surely will point to a new human. As Steve Biko cogently observed many years ago, 'problems are not solved completely when you alter the economic pattern, to a socialist pattern. You still don't become what you ought to be.'[16]

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Finally, almost a century after the fact, the proceedings of the 1922 Fourth Congress of the Communist International are available in English, thanks to the diligent translation and careful scholarship of John Riddell. Toward the United Front: Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922 – the latest in a multi-volume collection of documents from the years before, during and after the Russian Revolution of 1917 – was made available to a limited audience in its 2011 hardback edition, and as of November 2012 in a much more affordable paperback version published by Haymarket Books (2011a; 2012a).

Although only in print for a few months (at this writing), Toward the United Front has already served to re-animate an engaged discussion about the big experience which was the Russian Revolution of 1917. November 2011, the eighth annual Historical Materialism conference in London, U.K., marked the book's publication with a series of panels involving thirty-eight different presentations, which 'reflected vigorous activity in this field, while also pointing up some research challenges for historians of the workers' movement' (Riddell 2011b). At Historical Materialism in Toronto, Canada in May 2012, the book was again the centre of many of the discussions, providing the theme for 11 presentations on three different panels (Riddell 2012b).

Ian Birchall, an intellectual long associated with the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) in Britain, has written one of the earliest extensive reviews of Toward the United Front. 'Grappling with the United Front' is a very welcome, thoughtful and useful article, an article that serves as a good entry point into the massive volume.

One issue raised early on by Birchall merits further consideration, and will provide the framework for this article. Birchall writes: 'Many years ago, when I was young, it was common to find orthodox Trotskyists who claimed they based their politics on "the first four congresses of the Comintern". (You can probably still find such people in the remoter reaches of the Trotskyist blogosphere.) A position that made some sense in the 1930s, when Trotskyists were insisting that there was a clear break between Lenin and Stalin, became less and less relevant as both capitalism and the working class went through enormous changes' (2012, 195). Birchall is making a point, underlined by Abigail Bakan at a 2012 Toronto symposium on the Fourth Congress, that the proceedings of this (and the other congresses) need to be approached not as textbooks but rather as history books (Riddell 2012b). A too uncritical reliance on the First Four Congresses, is inevitably accompanied by a 'too angular' understanding of the contrast between the 'experienced Russian' leadership of the Comintern, and the 'inexperienced, mistake-prone' leadership of the non-Russians.

Avoiding a too uncritical approach to this complex history has been made much easier with the publication of Toward the United Front and its companion volumes. They provide documentation of important discussions and political positions which are still relevant, many decades later. They also reveal key moments where the Comintern leadership, including its core Russian section, was quite wrong, sometimes

catastrophically so. It is, for instance, generally conceded that the Comintern leadership made a serious error in the March Action of 1921, and this will be briefly examined here. Less well-known is the Russian invasion, the previous year, of the oppressed nation of Poland, which – because less well-known – will be examined here in more detail. These two events taken together graphically (and tragically) illustrate Birchall's point. However, with this history in mind, it will become clear, that this is an important issue for more than just a handful in the 'Trotskyist blogosphere', as he maintains. Some veteran Marxist writers who helped frame this discussion in the 1980s and 1990s, veteran Marxists long associated with Birchall, need to be critically re-read with this approach in mind.

First, take a quick survey of the 1921 German débacle. What we now know as the 'March Action' of 1921 was an attempt by the German Communist Party (KPD), to 'force' the German workers into revolution, even though the party represented only a small minority of the working class. 'The essence of the March Action … was that "the party went into battle without concerning itself over who would follow it" … Rather than break off the contrived operation, the leadership increased the pressure on members and used all the means it could think of, including sabotage and faked bomb attacks on Communist property, to bring other workers out on strike' (Morgan 1975, 398–399).

The party paid an enormous price for this adventurism. It was, arguably, irreparably damaged. Thousands of party members were arrested, "400 sentenced to some 1,500 years hard labour, and 500 to 800 years in jail, eight to life imprisonment and four to death" (Broué 2006, 506). Tens of thousands left the party, many leaving politics altogether, with party membership plummeting from 450,000 to 180,443 (Angress 1963, 217n). Pierre Broué's 1971 study, available in English since 2006, documents the very accurate analyses of the Luxemburgist cadres Clara Zetkin and Paul Levi, who in March 1921 – before the fact – were absolutely clear that the German left was in no position to challenge for state power, and who were the first, Levi especially, to openly oppose the ultraleft politics which led to such a disaster (2006, 507–515). By contrast, the Comintern leaders – the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) – pushed hard for the March Action, and were proven completely wrong. Lenin and Trotsky – after the fact – provided extremely clear critiques of the failures of the March Action. But hindsight is always 20/20, and in the decisive weeks in March, the ECCI's key representatives in Europe were aggressive advocates for this very costly failure. The lessons from this catastrophe are codified in the politics of the united front. There is a straightforward reason this term informs the title of the Fourth Congress proceedings. The united front concept, as Birchall indicates, was the central theme of the Fourth Congress (and the Third Congress) of the Communist International.

We know a little bit about the March Action. It is a classic example of the problem of substitutionism – bypassing the mass self-emancipation of the working class, and attempting to substitute for it the actions of a minority "radical" section of the class.

We know quite a bit less about an even more serious event, the 1920 Russian invasion of Poland. Here was a much more extreme case of substitutionism – the attempt to substitute the revolutionary class with the bayonets of the Red Army.

In the spring of 1920, a Polish army had occupied Kiev, the most important city in the Ukraine. The Russian counter-attack was quickly successful in pushing the Polish army back to the "ethnographic" border of Poland. Unfortunately, the Russian Army did not stop there, but instead launched a massive invasion of Polish territory.

Leon Trotsky opposed this invasion. "Trotsky was convinced … that the entry into Polish territory by a Russian army, even under a red flag, would be felt like an invasion in the manner of Tsarism and would provoke a leap in Polish nationalism." Trotsky did not believe "in the export of the revolution at the point of bayonets" (Broué 1988, 269, author's translation). On the Russian side, nationalism also came to the fore – but not the nationalism of an oppressed nation, but the ugly patriotism of Great Russian chauvinism.

> Many Russians, including former Whites who had fought against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War, opposed the reestablishment of Polish independence, and regarded the war as a traditional conflict between two opposing states. As a result, numerous former tsarist officers joined the ranks of the Red Army, including most famously, A.A. Brusilov, who wrote on 1 May 1920, that the, '… first measure [of the Soviet regime] must be agitation of national patriotism, without which an army cannot be strong and battleworthy' (Croll 2009, 19–20).

In Russia, the Bolsheviks were playing with a very dangerous fire – the fire of Great Russian chauvinism. Trotsky saw this, and argued against the invasion, but unfortunately stood almost alone against the vast majority of the Russian leadership, including against Lenin (Trotsky 1970, 457). Ignoring the advice of Trotsky meant ignoring the advice of the person who was, without question, the most experienced in these matters. In 1917, he had been head of the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the St. Petersburg Soviet, the committee which organized the October Revolution. From 1919 to 1925 he served as People's Commissar of army and navy affairs, and was the pre-eminent political and organizational leader of the Red Army which emerged victorious and saved that revolution from defeat by foreign invasion and internal civil war. But this experience was ignored, and against Trotsky's advice, the invasion of Poland proceeded, and proceeded with little sense of restraint or caution.

The 1920 Second Congress of the Communist International was in session while the invasion was under way (proceedings of which are available in Riddell 1991a; Riddell 1991b). "Delegates to the Communist International sitting in Moscow were in paroxysms of excitement as they watched the flags showing the positions of the Red armies move

forward every day on the huge map that hung on the wall. World revolution seemed within reach" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 4). This reflected the view, held by virtually all of the senior Comintern leaders, that a military victory in Poland could be a spark for revolution in Germany. In the full flush of these illusions, Lenin gathered Comintern delegates from Germany around a map, asking them where in East Prussia there was likely to be an uprising to greet the victorious Red Army, after it had swept through Poland and reached the border with Germany. "The three Germans," one of whom was Paul Levi, "stared at him in amazement. East Prussia was known as one of the most conservative German regions". Expecting an uprising there to greet invading Russian troops correctly struck these delegates as absurd (Angress 1963, 67).

If it was absurd to expect conservative German peasants to rise up at the sight of Red Army bayonets, it was even more absurd to expect Polish peasants – long the victims of Great Russian chauvinism – to greet this army as their liberators. The Russian general leading the invasion – Mikhail Nikolaievich Tukhachevsky – had achieved extraordinary success in the Civil War in Russia. But that success was based not so much on his military "genius," but on the clear understanding, primarily shaped by Trotsky, of the class politics behind the Civil War. In Russia, the military campaigns coincided with a class struggle of peasants against landlords. This meant that Tukhachevsky could march his massive armies through land where the peasants would "provide them with supplies and make good his losses in men" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 4). For the Russian peasants, the victory of the Red Army over the White Army meant a victory by the Russian peasants over the landlords who had kept them poor and oppressed for generations. This made Red Army victories in the Civil War in Russia, part of the revolutionary victory of the oppressed classes in Russia.

But Poland was not Russia. True, the Polish peasants were oppressed by a rich and corrupt landlord class, just as were the Russian peasants. But they were also oppressed by Russia, through a long history of invasions and occupations. The relation of Poland to Russia was analogous to that of Ireland to Great Britain, Quebec to English Canada, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) to the United States. The Polish people were an oppressed nation within the prison-house of nations that had been Tsarist Russia. An army of Russian peasants was not going to be greeted as a liberation army any more than would be a British army in Ireland, an English Canadian army in Quebec, or an 18th-century U.S. army in Haudenosaunee territory in what is today New York state.

There is another aspect to the invasion – an odious aspect – that has to be examined. Not only was the territory through which the Russian army was marching that of an oppressed Polish nation – it was territory with a very large Jewish population. The instrument with which the "liberation" of Poland was to be accomplished – the Red Army – was to say the least, ill-suited to the added task of liberating the Jews of Poland. Tukhachevsky might very well have been a brilliant general. He also had a background, as a young man, of being an anti-semite. In 1917, during World War One, he was a

prisoner-of-war in Bavaria, and there made the acquaintance of French journalist Remy Roure, "one of the most prominent journalists and newspapermen in France in his day, a founder of Le Monde and its political editor from 1945 to 1952" (Furr III 1986, 297 fn 11). In 1928 Roure published, in Paris, a biography of his now famous former cellmate. He records a conversation revealing the most vile anti-semitism. "The Jews … are a low race. I don't even speak of the dangers they create in my country" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 3). Those who wish to read the whole excerpt can follow the footnote. This small portion of the full quotation reveals Tukhachevsky's anti-semitism very clearly. The year of this prison interview was the same year, a few months later when back in Russia, that he was to join the Bolshevik Party.

Anti-semitism was an issue not just for ex-aristocrats like Tukhachevsky, but for the very poor peasant class which formed the core of the Red Army. This millions-strong conscript army was a brilliant construction, crafted principally by Trotsky, but it was not well-suited to liberating an oppressed nation, let alone one with a large Jewish population. Three-quarters of the Red Army soldiers were peasants, and, according to Orlando Figes "… its [rank-and-file soldiers frequently became involved in violent looting, especially when passing through non-Russian (particularly Jewish) areas."

> The Red Army, it is important to bear in mind, was predominantly Russian in its ethnic composition. Even units conscripted in the Ukraine and other non-Russian regions (for example the Tatar Republic) were largely made up of Russians. Anti-Semitism was a powerful and growing force in the Red Army during the civil war, despite the fact that a Jew, Lev Davidovitch Trotsky (Bronstein), stood at its political head. Trotsky received hundreds of reports about his own soldier's violence and looting in Jewish-Ukrainian settlements, some of which he must have known from his youth (1990, 195–196).

This chronic problem became acute once the Red Army was defeated, and retreating in disarray back to Russia. "The men had begun deserting in large numbers, while those who remained took out their disappointment on the inhabitants of the villages and towns they passed through, particularly the Jews" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 5). Political commissars, attached to this army, were horrified. When the retreat took the army, now reduced to a rabble, into the heavily Jewish city of Zhitomir in the Ukraine, a telegram, dripping with urgency, was sent to Lenin.

> In recent days Zhitomir has faced a new task. A new wave of pogroms has swept over the district. The exact number of those killed cannot be established, and the details cannot be established (because of the lack of communication), but certain facts can be established definitively.

> Retreating units of the First Cavalry Army (Fourth and Sixth Divisions) have been destroying the Jewish population in their path, looting and murdering … Emergency aid is vital. A large sum of money and food must be sent (Lenin 1996a, 117).

These Russian bayonets were not going to lead to liberation in Poland.

The invasion – the attempt to spark an uprising of the oppressed people of Poland through the use of the bayonets of a Russian army – was an unqualified disaster. Trotsky called it "the catastrophe before Warsaw". Because of the invasion, he argued, "the development of the Polish revolution received a crushing blow" (1970, 458–459). "[W]e have suffered an enormous defeat" said Lenin, "a colossal army of a hundred thousand is either prisoner of war or [interned] in Germany. In a word, a gigantic, unheard-of defeat" (1996b, 106). But in this speech, Lenin only partially confronts the scale and importance of this defeat. He did not, for instance, address the fact that it was a defeat preceded by a completely wrong perception of the likely response of the Polish nation, and a defeat resulting from a military operation carried out against the advice of Trotsky. In addition, Lenin was almost certainly underestimating the scale of the defeat. A contemporary military history puts Russian losses in excess of 200,000. Tukhachevsky "like his hero Napoleon in 1812 … had lost an army". In the days before finally signing a peace treaty, with conditions worse than had been on offer before the Russian invasion, "the road to Smolensk and Moscow lay open" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 5). The defeat in Poland, then, did not only destroy prospects for revolution in Poland. It severely jeopardized the very existence of Soviet Russia.

With these two incidents in mind, read a selection from the 1985 history of the Comintern written by the late Duncan Hallas, a founder and for many years a central leader of the SWP in Britain. "[O]n the main issues, on the central thrust of its political line, the Comintern leadership was right and all its opponents, in their different ways, were wrong. That is precisely why the heritage of the first four congresses, in principles, in strategy and in tactics, is so indispensable to revolutionary socialists today" (1985, 164).

This perspective informs Hallas' entire approach. In the Introduction to his book, he quotes Trotsky, who wrote: "The International Left Opposition stands on the ground of the first four congresses of the Comintern." Hallas then argues that "[t]he Socialist Workers Party, in Britain, also stands on this ground – which is why the emphasis of this book is on the Comintern's revolutionary period, the period of the first four congresses and immediately after" (1985, 8–9). Two years after the publication of his book, Hallas went on a North American speaking tour to mark the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917. In an interview published at the time, he argued: "We take from Trotsky …the tradition which he contributed to making, of Bolshevism and of the Communist International in its early years after the Russian Revolution. …The whole

complex of both ideas and experiences that were developed during this period of socialist history are what guide us" (1987, 5).

Hallas' book is an excellent introduction to the Comintern. It is very much a critical history. He highlights the great accomplishments of the Comintern, including a focus on the united front method. He documents clearly the degeneration after the first four congresses, when the Comintern became little more than an extension of the foreign policy of the then state-capitalist Soviet Union. And he has criticisms of aspects of its work in the earlier period. "The perspective of the Red International of Labour Unions was mistaken and, by 1921, this should have been recognized and the necessary conclusions drawn" (1985, 164). But his overall emphasis is on the key role of the first four congresses, and in those congresses the superiority of the Russian experience, the Russian political method and the Russian leadership, when contrasted with the inexperience and political confusion that existed outside of Russia. The March Action story does, of course, strain this orientation considerably. Hallas recognizes the terrible role of the Comintern leadership. But he dilutes this by deflecting the problem towards the German KPD, emphasizing that the ECCI enthusiasm for this adventure found a huge echo among leading members of the German party. That is true, but beside the point. There is no reason, with the evidence he presented, that a story could not be told of a quite far-seeing German cadre, trained by Rosa Luxemburg, who had a pretty good sense about what to do in Germany in the early 1920s, but who were muscled out of the way by a well-financed, well-staffed Comintern cadre, who had no sense about what to do in Germany in the early 1920s. We cannot schematically separate the "good judgement" of the experienced, well-trained ECCI from the "bad judgement" of the inexperienced, ill-trained German leadership. It is a frame which simply will not work.

Hallas qualifies his close identification with the Russian leadership and their political decisions during the first four congresses. "[W]e cannot simply apply these lessons mechanically without thought to different situations" (1987, 164). But an over-drawn portrait of the virtues of the Comintern and Russian party's leadership makes it difficult to identify and analyze the sometimes serious errors which they made. The Comintern leadership, in the period of the first four congresses, was not always right on the main issues. The invasion of Poland and the March Action in Germany were not small, tactical blunders – but mistakes which had historic, and tragic, consequences. Birchall is right: an angular perspective which uses the frame – "on the main issues … the Comintern leadership was right and all its opponents … were wrong" does open the door to difficulties. But the quote and the framework are from Hallas, a central theoretician of Birchall's party, not someone from the "Trotskyist blogosphere".

Birchall is aware of the limitations of Hallas' book. In another of his recent publications, Birchall argues that it and certain other Trotskyist histories "are valuable in that they defend what was best in the early years of the Comintern …while sharply contrasting that early period to the later Stalinist horrors. Yet they remain essentially

defensive." He contrasts that with the method of Hallas' co-thinker, Tony Cliff, who "drew on a different tradition, the work of Alfred Rosmer and Victor Serge, which combined a total commitment to the basic aims and ideals of the Comintern with a recognition of its limitations in practice" (2011, 400–401).

And in fact Cliff does provide sometimes very harsh criticisms of the actions of the Comintern leadership. On the March Action, he says that "unlike other defeats" it was "not brought about by misdeeds of the local national leadership, but by the adventurist policy imposed on the German party by the leadership of the Comintern." Worse, this mistake would only be partially confronted. The Comintern leaders responsible for the disaster – Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek and Kun – would be barely reprimanded. Paul Levi – in Cliff's words, "the talented former leader of the KPD, who had been wronged by the central leadership of the Comintern" – would end up expelled and outside the party. With good reason, then, Cliff calls this chapter of his biography of Lenin, "The Great Cover-up" (1979, 110–111).

But remember, Cliff is dealing with this as an isolated exception to a general rule. The March Action was "unlike other defeats". In his four-volume biography of Lenin, the 1920 invasion of Poland – much more serious than the March Action, certainly in terms of lives lost, probably also in terms of its impact on the Russian state – is not even mentioned. He does deal with it in his biography of Trotsky, agreeing that "Lenin's policy turned out to be wrong and costly" (1990, 132). But this seriously understates the scale of the catastrophe. The overwhelming emphasis of the bulk of Cliff's many writings on the Russian Revolution, is on the superiority of the Russian leadership – in particular the superiority of Lenin – when compared with the leaders of the left outside of Russia. Cliff, quite in the spirit of Hallas, in general paints a picture of an experienced, wise Russian leadership, interacting with an inexperienced, sometimes foolish non-Russian left, a non-Russian left prone to errors and mistakes which needed to be corrected through a deep study of the Russian, Bolshevik history. Cliff makes this point very sharply in his biography of Trotsky. "The Congresses of the Comintern were schools of strategy and tactics, and at them Lenin and Trotsky played the part of teachers, while the leaders of the young Communist Parties were the pupils" (1990, 217).

This approach is not helpful. The error on the March Action was not a single moment in an otherwise unblemished record. The 1920 catastrophe in Poland was equally destructive to the revolutionary process, and equally the result of the "teachers" – in this case Lenin – making an error of enormous proportions. This error was not a minor, accidental one – but one which exposed crucial flaws in Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' very conception of revolution. In a secret speech in 1920, Lenin outlined the most serious of these flaws, when he explained to the audience that, while it was not put into a resolution or minutes of the Central Committee, "we said among ourselves that we must probe with bayonets whether the social revolution of the proletariat in Poland had ripened" (Lenin 1996b, 98). This is a shocking statement. The attempt to "export" the

revolution through military invasion is the antithesis of the notion of self-emancipation which underlies any meaningful Marxism, a self-emancipation which was the essence of the Soviet experience at the core of the Russian Revolution. It was not just an episodic mistake. On 23 July 1920, "Lenin wrote to Stalin raising the possibility of a thrust through Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary with the aim of staging a revolution in Italy. In his reply, Stalin agreed that 'it would be a sin' not to try" (Zamoyski 2008, chap. 4). This approach was taken up and codified by Tukhachevsky (1969) in a theory of the "revolutionary offensive war" – an explicit argument that socialism could be advanced through force of arms. Trotsky furiously combatted these deeply substitutionist notions of socialist transformation, this theme, according to Isaac Deutscher, running "like a red thread through his writings and speeches of this period" (1954, 473). In a critique of Tukhachevsky, Trotsky openly links the two episodes – the Russian invasion of Poland in 1920 with the German attempt at a revolution in Germany in 1921. "Since war is a continuation of politics by other means, must our policy be offensive? … This was a very great and criminal heresy, which cost the German proletariat needless bloodshed and which did not bring victory, and were this tactic to be followed in the future it would bring about the ruin of the revolutionary movement in Germany" (1981, 5:306).

The "teacher-student" binary does not work as a framework during two crucial moments, the 1920 war with Poland and the 1921 March Action in Germany. In fact, this framework is misleading as a way of understanding the very core of the Fourth Congress, and the key term in the title of the Fourth Congress proceedings, the "united front". As Birchall indicates, "[t]he united front was not spun out of the skulls of the Comintern's leaders. It was born of the experience of workers in Germany" (Birchall 2012, 199). Riddell, in his introduction – leaning on Broué's classic history – outlines this very clearly.

> The ongoing need for …a united front was posed by an assembly of Stuttgart's metalworkers in December 1920, acting on the initiative of local KPD activists who were strongly influenced by Zetkin. The metalworkers adopted a resolution calling on the leadership of their union, and of all unions, to launch a joint struggle for tangible improvements in workers' conditions. …Although the Social-Democratic leaders rejected this appeal, the Communist campaign in its favour won wide support from union councils. …A month later, in January 1921, the KPD as a whole made a more comprehensive appeal for united action to all workers' organisations, including the Social Democrats. This "Open Letter" reflected the views of party co-chair Paul Levi, working in collaboration with Radek (Riddell 2011a, 6).

It is very significant that it was workers in Stuttgart, Germany who were the first to arrive at the united front approach. As Riddell indicates, it is Stuttgart where Clara Zetkin had her base and where she had influence. This base had been built over years. In 1916 and 1917, Rosa Luxemburg's Spartacists (precursor to the KPD) had "put their advantage as the first outspoken opponents of the war to good use, building themselves strong positions in the party organizations in Stuttgart, Braunschweig, and parts of Berlin" (Morgan 1975, 45). The united front approach emerged out of the experience of the German workers themselves – out of the work, in particular, of the advanced workers influenced by Zetkin and the other Luxemburg-influenced members of the KPD. The united front approach was momentarily generalized into the German movement through the "Open Letter" initiative of another German leader, Paul Levi – but encountered almost universal opposition from the representatives of the Comintern working in Germany. The implementation of the united front approach was tragically derailed through the March Action catastrophe, outlined above. It is only after this catastrophe that the united front approach was generalized as a method, into the Communist International as a whole.

It is true that during both the Third and Fourth Congresses, Trotsky in particular, clearly outlined the key principles of the united front, and in this sense was the teacher, lecturing to pupils at a school of strategy and tactics. It is true that he articulated a clear opposition to Lenin in the run-up to the Polish invasion, and did his best to "teach" the Bolsheviks of their mistake in the months after. But it won't help to replace Lenin with Trotsky, and retain the frame of "teacher-student" to understand the dynamics of the Comintern. To paraphrase the young Karl Marx, circumstances are changed by human beings, and the educator must herself be educated (1976, 4). The emergence into consciousness of the need for the crucial united front orientation came from the experience of the German workers and was at first carried publicly by key German socialists such as Zetkin and Levi. It is the active, organizing experience on the ground, serious socialists interacting with advanced workers, where the educators became educated.

The outline presented here of this little-studied episode in the Russian Revolution poses many issues which can only be touched on here, and which will have to be investigated in greater detail on another occasion. What I want to suggest, is that the different perspectives on the invasion of Poland – best crystallized in the contrast between the vehement opposition to invasion articulated by Trotsky, and the retrospectively naieve and quite wrong support for the invasion by Tukachevsky and Lenin – reflect tensions at the very heart of the Bolsheviks' understanding of the nature of revolution.

This was not the first moment where Trotsky and Lenin found themselves on opposite sides of an argument. Ian Thatcher has characterized the relationship between Trotsky and Lenin during the war years immediately preceding the 1917 revolutions, as "a story of almost continuous opposition" (1994, 114). This opposition was not softened

with anything resembling diplomacy. "Trotsky," Lenin wrote in 1914, "has never had any 'physiognomy' at all; the only thing he does have is a habit of changing sides, of skipping from the liberals to the Marxists and back again, of mouthing scraps of catchwords and bombastic parrot phrases" (1964, 160). The year previous, Trotsky wrote about Lenin, saying "the entire edifice of Leninism at the present time is built on lies and falsification and carries within itself the poisonous inception of its own dissolution" (cited in Service 2009, 129). We can reject the simplistic explanation for this history of antagonism offered by Stalinist historians, an explanation whose purpose is to portray an unbroken line of Trotskyist "crimes" in order to discredit his political legacy. What this antagonism does represent, I would suggest, are some quite different emphases on the key aspects of the class struggle in Russia and Europe on which Trotsky and Lenin built their perspectives.

Trotsky, in the manner of Luxemburg and Gramsci, understood the profoundly democratic, self-emancipatory core of the working class, urban, European workers' movement. It was not for nothing that in both 1905 and 1917 he was elected chair of the soviet in St. Petersburg. On several occasions before 1917, Trotsky expressed the opinion that Lenin did not always clearly grasp this urban, democratic, proletarian core of the coming European revolution. Trotsky in 1915 "characterized Lenin as a thinker in whom 'revolutionary democratism and socialist dogma live side by side without having been amalgamated into a living Marxist whole'" (Thatcher 1994, 105). This echoes the young Trotsky, who in the wake of the famous 1903 split in Russian social democracy, agued that Lenin was too much the Jacobin, and not enough a social democrat (a phrase which at the time meant "revolutionary socialist") (1979). Jacobinism was the revolutionary form appropriate to revolutions against feudalism, such as the French Revolution. The leading section of those revolutions was a relatively small section of the urban petty bourgeoisie, relying in the city on the periodic intervention of the urban masses, relying in the countryside on the periodic mass actions of the rural peasantry. There then typically evolved a highly centralized urban core, with a big emphasis on militarization, which operated with a certain suspicion of the urban and rural mass. The mass action in the cities, in particular, could become a problem, as that action tended to push beyond the bounds of the anti-feudal revolution and test the territory of an anti-capitalist revolution, something the Jacobins were not prepared to countenance.

The Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 involved a combination of this kind of Jacobin anti-feudal revolution: a democratic revolution against semi-feudal, Czarist conditions – and something completely new and which demanded very different strategies and tactics: a workers' revolution against capitalism. Neither revolution could win without the victory of the other. Lenin and the Bolsheviks navigated the difficult project of combining both revolutions, and Lenin openly embraced incorporating Jacobinism into the workers' movement. "A Jacobin who wholly identities himself with the organisation of the proletariat — a proletariat conscious of its class interests— is a

revolutionary Social-Democrat" (Lenin 1961, 381). This incorporation, however, was not an easy task. The tactics appropriate to the anti-feudal revolution are not easily imported into the anti-capitalist revolution. Within the latter – at its core urban, working class and democratic – forward progress is only possible through mass self-activity. There is a high degree of democracy built-into this experience – taking its highest form in institutions such as the soviet. Upheavals against feudalism are different. All upheavals against feudalism do, of course, involve furious mass action by the rural peasantry. But they also always necessitate a highly centralized, militarized struggle – the Roundheads of Cromwell's era or the Jacobins of the French Revolution. The insistence on the invasion of Poland represented an over-emphasis on the military aspect of the struggle. The push for an insurrection during the March Action even though the KPD represented a small minority of the working class, represented an attempt to sidestep the self-activity of the urban working class. Both reflected the extent to which, throughout the Bolshevik cadre, there was a misunderstanding of the extent to which the European class struggle had evolved away from the tactics of an earlier era and towards the tactics of mass, democratic, self-emancipation appropriate to the class struggle in contemporary capitalism.

This limitation of the Bolshevik experience does not invalidate a more general point. "On many issues that have proven central to world social struggles, such as racism, colonialism, women's emancipation, and the struggles of small farmers, the [Fourth] Congress mapped out the road that the workers' movement followed during the subsequent century" (Riddell 2011a, 54). The publication of Toward the United Front makes easier a rounded assessment of the work of these Congresses, and of the entire era of the Russian Revolution, an assessment which embraces both the successes and the failures – the helpful and constructive positions taken, as well as the catastrophic and destructive. It is, as Birchall indicates, "an invaluable work of reference" (2012, 196). One of the really striking aspects emerging from this work of reference, is the light it sheds on the deep humanity of the participants. The political "lines" developed at these Congresses did not come from edict or prescription, but were rather the result of sometimes harsh debates between serious activists from different countries, most of them intensely engaged with the social movements of the day. "These delegates were tough women and men who had lived through an exceptionally demanding decade" (Birchall 2012, 197). Reading the proceedings of this and the other early Congresses, will enhance the reputation of some of these militants (Clara Zetkin and Paul Levi for instance), and diminish that of others (Grigory Zinoviev and Béla Kun to name two). That is all to the good. To properly assess the lessons of the past, we need all the information from that past, and on the basis of that information, draw our own conclusions about how best to use this history in our own work in the 21st century.

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Reviewed By Ted McCoy
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What is the value of dissent and resistance in Canadian history? In Resisting the State, Scott Neigh answers this question by suggesting that the history of activism and social movements can provide an alternative to conventional history that lionizes consent and consensus. Along with a companion book on gender and sexuality, the book offers stories of resistance constructed from the viewpoint of activists. Neigh suggests that these

stories speak about Canadian history with dissenting voices – viewpoints not represented in Heritage Minutes and government-published citizenship guides. He asks how history might be read if approached from the standpoint of the oppressed and powerless. While these questions will not be new to historians of the left, Neigh makes a valuable contribution by revealing aspects of the social history of Canadian activism and social movements that are personal and, at times, extremely moving.

Neigh's work is striking because it shows the deep personal connections between activists and their causes. The book is based upon oral-history interviews that Neigh conducted with fifty people drawn from a diverse group of long-time social activists. Each chapter explores the experiences of a key individuals in social movements. These include anti-war pacifism, anti-racist and anti-colonialist movements, community and labour organizing, the anti-psychiatry movement, and anti-poverty human rights struggles. From this diverse list, Neigh makes interesting choices that will offer new insights to scholars in multiple fields. For example, Chapter 3 details indigenous resistance in Toronto and Winnipeg in the 1970s and 1980s, revealing a dimension of urban anti-colonial activism that is seldom considered alongside the history of government-Aboriginal relations in the twentieth century. Another fascinating chapter explores the anti-psychiatry movement in Toronto in the 1970s. This is interesting not only for what it uncovers about the sometimes mutually oppressive powers of medical science and the state, but also because resistance to psychiatry was a movement that dissipated and fractured after a decade of struggle. There are lessons here, and possibly lingering questions too. The harrowing experiences of the interview subjects incarcerated and treated against their will explains the rise of the anti-psychiatry movement and the need to investigate how the state is complicit in the abuses of medical power. We might also question why the movement faded and what this might say about how medicine, or any other professional or juridical power can supplant resistance and attain uncontested (or unearned) legitimacy.

My criticisms of the book are minor and relate to intent and scope. The book does not necessarily deliver what Neigh intends in the way of an alternative Canadian history. In reaching for this goal, however, Neigh is correct that Canadian history should include voices of dissent in moments other than the Riel Rebellion, Winnipeg in 1919 or Québec in 1970. The interviews he draws on reveal a more continuous social history of activism than those flashpoints illustrate alone. And although the book may overreach on its stated goal, it is perhaps too subtle about what it accomplishes on questions of resistance and the scope of individual struggle. Neigh focuses on how particular activists relate to the state, suggesting that these stories are materially connected through this common touchstone of power, oppression, and even banal bureaucracy. But as many of his subjects and Neigh himself argue throughout the book, there are other material connections at play that were also targets of resistance in the form of capitalism, racism, and gender inequality. This is the history of resistance to something more than the state,

a struggle for equality that reaches for something greater than what the state can possibly deliver.

The book is successful at demonstrating the value of resistance not just as a social relationship or an element of Canadian history, but as something that shapes an individual life. Neigh's work details the deeply personal reasons that people are drawn to activism and social protest. The interviews at the heart of this book personalize activism, and in the larger sense, the national history that envelops (and sometimes overcomes) activists. Neigh recovers these voices – and this is in itself a valuable activist project – and turns them to the larger task of speaking to Canadian history. In the process, the book also provides a varied vocabulary for how we talk about activism and what it means to be politicized. At times Neigh is self-conscious about the differences between his connection to activism compared to the role that struggle played in the lives of his subjects. Lynn Jones of Nova Scotia distilled this divide while reflecting on a lifetime of anti-racist organizing in Nova Scotia: 'you call it activism; I call it surviving' (107). Ultimately Neigh brings each set of interviews around to answering a bigger question – why people struggle as they do. The different answers emphasize the value of the activist history in Resisting the State.

Comack, Elizabeth. 2012. *Racialized Policing: Aboriginal People's Encounters With the Police*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. ISBN 978-1-55266-475-9. Paperback: 22.95 CAD. Pages: 254.

Reviewed By Ted McCoy
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Elizabeth Comack's Racialized Policing arrives at a moment of heightened concern and awareness over the troubling relationship between Aboriginal people and police forces across Canada. The issue reached a crisis point in early 2013 with international pressure from Human Rights Watch over RCMP abuse of Aboriginal women. These demands proliferate amidst ongoing calls for a national inquiry into missing or murdered women from Aboriginal communities across Canada. These issues also are being folded into the growing Idle No More movement which presents a timely opportunity to focus anti-colonial protest on problems of race in policing and criminal justice. Comack's research serves as a valuable primer for this project. The book convincingly argues that policing in Canada is inherently racialized – understood as the manner in which racism infiltrates policing, and in turn, racializes First Nations people.

Moreover, Comack points to larger systemic structures of racism that are reproduced by policing in Canada. In this sense, Racialized Policing provides a broader context and historical overview for understanding the current flashpoints in the relationship between Aboriginal people and the police.

The book explores the relationship between First Nations people and police in multiple jurisdictions. An excellent chapter on racial profiling in Ontario expands the scope of the material on Aboriginal people to include Black communities. Comack explores the controversy ignited in Toronto and Kingston and the telling denials of both police and the public that racial profiling happens in Canada. In the face of anecdotal evidence that is routinely refuted, Comack points to the larger systemic basis of racism and how it is manifested in the practice of policing.

After drawing on the historical record of Aboriginal-police relations, Comack offers detailed examinations of three contemporary cases – the shooting of J.J. Harper by Winnipeg police in 1988, the freezing deaths of Aboriginal men in Saskatoon after being left in isolated areas outside of the city, and the shooting of Matthew Dumas in Winnipeg in 2005. Juxtaposed in this way, Comack illustrates a pattern of abuse and a framework by which these incidents can be understood as a reflection of systemic racism. As she admits, these arguments are bound to be unpopular, particularly in a political climate in which the police are represented as unquestioned guardians of public safety. However, the evidence Comack assembles is too overwhelming to ignore. The arguments she advances about racism require little in the way of academic theorizing, although Comack provides thoughtful analysis throughout the book. These examples are devastating because they reveal a brutality that would be senseless if not for the overwhelming implications about race and racism in Canadian society.

A striking commonality between the examples assembled by Comack is consistent unwillingness by police to acknowledge that systemic racism exists. This manifests itself in multiple ways, from the everyday attitudes that presume criminality, poverty and dependence, to systemic practices that have resulted in tragic or deadly outcomes. This "discourse of denial" often shifted blame to Aboriginal people for their own victimization and suggests that the disconnect between racialized policing and how police view themselves continues to contribute to this problem. The way Comack lays out this recent history might also provide context to current calls for a national commission into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The book suggests that we have traveled this road before. Each of its case studies resulted in official inquiries of various stripes, and yet the systemic nature of racialized policing prevails. Even in criminal trials where police are indicted and convicted, police forces offer staunch resistance to the implications of racism.

The city of Winnipeg is at the centre of much of the racialized policing Comack investigates. In Chapter 6 she draws on the findings of interviews with 78 individuals from Winnipeg's inner-city. These interviews acknowledge the growing reality of urban

poverty, crime, and violence in the lives of First Nations people. This reorients our attention away from reserves and rural settings and illustrates a different manifestation of colonialism in urban Canadian society. This shine a light on not only the problematic relationships between Winnipeg police and Aboriginal residents, but also the larger process by which urban spaces become racialized. Comack connects these trends to larger structural developments. Growing economic inequality across Canada and the neoliberal dismantling of the social welfare state are not abstract phenomena in Comack's account – they contribute directly to how Aboriginal people experience poverty and the criminal justice system. The larger argument made by Comack is that the police are heavily implicated in reproducing these outcomes. The experiences of the subjects in this chapter make this connection explicit and this material is among the most obvious strengths of Comack's investigation.

The contemporary examples chosen by Comack are effective, but as she points out, they also reflect a long history in which police have maintained an upper hand in a very unequal relationship with Aboriginal people. Comack suggests that one way forward would be reframing the central issue facing Aboriginal people as a problem of inequality that results in impoverished social and economic conditions. This too is at the core of what Idle No More might accomplish with sustained pressure. Comack's book is a timely suggestion that the structures of criminal justice should be called into question and subject to demands for a new path forward.

Luxton, Meg and Mary Jane Mossman, eds. 2012. *Reconsidering Knowledge: Feminism and the Academy*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. ISBN 978-1-55266-476-6. Paperback: 29.95 CAD. Pages: 168.

Reviewed By Dayna Nadine Scott
Osgoode Hall Law School

The book, and the lecture series at York University that spawned it, were conceived as an opportunity to look back on the themes and ideas put forward in a publication called Knowledge Reconsidered: A Feminist Overview, that was produced by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) in 1984. As Mary Jane Mossman (my colleague at Osgoode Hall) and Meg Luxton explain in the Introduction, the CRIAW publication, and others like it, came in the context of a developing understanding in Canada and the United States that feminist knowledge had 'perspective transforming' elements and therefore, instead of being simply 'tacked on to

the curriculum', it should instead transform it from within. It would do so, according to the authors in this collection, in part by completely destabilizing the notions of an 'objective' or 'normative' perspective on truth (14-15).

In looking back over the decades since the publication of Knowledge Reconsidered, the Luxton and Mossman volume covers topics such as the emergence of women's studies programs (and their re-casting in the 2000s as gender studies or women's, gender and sexuality studies programs, up to their contemporary dismantling in some universities); the interdependence of theoretical and empirical advances in fostering transformative teaching and learning; the (re)definition of the university's role in a 'new knowledge economy', including the trends towards clientism and a customer-service mentality that have pervaded not just teaching, but now also research climates in most universities; the possibilities for a transnational feminism that is 'location specific but not necessarily location-bound'; and the importance of historical studies of women's resistance and feminist empiricism.

The feminist agitations over the 1970s and 80s that fundamentally changed the landscapes of universities are celebrated, and yet the editors allow questioning of the depth of this transformation. Overall, their claim is that the production of feminist knowledge is not a project that should be confined to the university; it must be a common project of connection and collaboration between feminist academics and community activists and organizers. But this, in our present climate, is a tall order.

In her chapter, 'The University on the Ground', Janice Newson puts her finger on a dynamic those of us working in universities over the past decade intuitively 'know': that economic and political influences once shut out of academic program development are now routinely infiltrating – at the same time as universities enthusiastically seek to reach their tentacles outwards into new domains of 'community', enterprise and governance. This is not all negative, of course, as initiatives to get universities to engage in meaningful ways with the communities they are located in, or are mandated to 'serve', can be transformative. But the slick talk of engaged scholarship has an oily element, a slippery surface on which it can be impossible to get traction. For example, as M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty argue in their chapter, 'Cartographies of Knowledge and Power: Transnational Feminism as Radical Praxis', the energetic pursuit of 'academic-community' partnerships and 'offices of community relations' can reinforce the academy/community divide ('at the same time masking the creation of the divide') and 'normalize the spatial location of the academy as the epitome of knowledge production' (46). In this context, it is difficult for those of us who do want to maintain connection with activist communities, and genuinely engage in a collective project of research and action that transcends the university's hallowed halls, to determine how to react to the official university's now ubiquitous, but shallow, endorsement of that goal. How can we begin to cultivate circumstances through which activists and scholars can collaborate to define 'imperatives that do not rely on the academy for self-definition even

as the academy summons them, and reifies them in that summoning...'(47), in the midst of all of this glossy talk of 'partnering'?

The 'communities' the official university has in mind of course, may not be the ones that come immediately to mind to scholars who consider themselves 'engaged'. Instead, they include often, as Margaret Thornton shows in her chapter 'Universities Upside Down', private sector corporations or industry associations. 'It is somewhat paradoxical', she argues, 'that the resources of public universities are now being used for the private good of corporations...' (84). This dynamic is also sharply gendered, as the volume makes clear, because the techno-preneur, who can easily be slotted into a role producing useful knowledge with a commercial purpose, squeezes out those of us toiling mainly in critique, an aim 'currently depicted as feminized and dispensable' (87).

The deliberate underfunding of post-secondary education by neoliberal governments, according to Thornton, forced universities to enter the market, justified fee hikes and prompted the 'questionable liasons' with industry. All of us caught up in this system, meanwhile, are expected to 'defer to those above, ...tak[e] responsibility for those below, [and]...disciplin[e] the self in terms of the new norms' (89). In this respect Lorraine Code's comment made in the context of her analysis of the challenge to epistemological orthodoxy inherent in Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) can be applied to the dilemma facing all of us teaching in universities today: 'it is implausible and indeed careless to assume without question that knowledge transcends the circumstances of its making' (21).

The authors, collectively, call for renewed commitments to the creation of feminist knowledge and 'continuing resistance to efforts to negate its radical critique, both within and outside the academy' (20). The collection is an important resource for feminist academics, and the space it opens up for theorizing engaged scholarship and critically assessing its possibilities and potential pitfalls, is welcome.

Peters, John ed. 2012. *Boom, Bust and Crisis: Labour, Corporate Power and Politics in Canada.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, ISBN: 9781552665183/ Paperback: 29.95 CAD. Pages: 208.

Reviewed By Bradley Walchuk
Brock University

The second publication in Fernwood Publishing's 'Labour in Canada' series, an impressive collection of critical essays edited by John Peters, examines the declining job

prospects for the vast majority of Canadians, a continuation of neoliberal public policy, and the resulting polarization of wealth and income between the broader working-class and a select few, which Peters (p. 10) identifies as 'the richest 10 percent'. Despite suggestions from the federal government and neoliberal economists that Canada managed to avoid the worst of the recession, that Canada's regulatory scheme has saved it from the perils facing many western countries, and that employment opportunities are on the rise, this text succinctly argues that 'the reality ...has proved far different from the rhetoric' (p. 16).

The book is conveniently divided into three sections: the first analyzes uneven impacts of resource development (especially oil) in Canada and the unequal distribution of wealth that results from it; the second examines the role that public policy - firmly entrenched in neoliberal ideology - has facilitated this inequality; while the final section considers the weaknesses of Canada's labour movement in organizing new workers and altering existing workplace laws.

In the book's first chapter, Peters outlines two fundamental points which inform much of the remainder of the text. The first is that 'since the late 1990s the power structure of Canada's society has fundamentally shifted to favour the affluent and the corporate elite' (p. 17). Much support for this assertion is found in the first section of the text. In his analysis of Newfoundland and Labrador's oil 'boom', Sean T. Cadigan identifies the limited economic spinoff of the 'boom,' and finds that those living outside of St. John – and particular women – are still faced with low wages and job insecurity. Likewise, Diana Gibson and Regan Boychuk's discussion of tar sand development in Alberta finds that this 'business-driven social experiment' has channeled considerable amounts of wealth in the private sector, while simultaneously gutting the public sector, in what they call 'governing for the few' (p. 55). Likewise, Stephen Arnold identifies the potentially bleak future for Hamilton in light of the decline of Canada's domestic steel industry, largely the result of government policy, in this case the absence of a national industrial strategy.

The second section of the book, which emphasizes provincial labour market policy, continues this line of argument, and finds further evidence of the shifting power structure of public policy and its adverse effects on the working-class. Two cases studies, one on British Columbia and the other on Québec, provide concrete examples of the ways in which neoliberal governments have altered the power structure between labour and capital and redistributed income to benefit the wealthiest. David Fairey, Tom Sandborn, and John Peters trace the B.C Liberals reign in power, which was characterized by generous tax cuts and write-offs for corporations (especially in the burgeoning resource sector), a systematic deregulation of the provincial Employment Standards Act, and an overhaul of the Labour Relations Code. Likewise, Peter Graefe examines the unravelling of the once highly-touted 'Québec model' (high union density, progressive industrial relations laws, and leading social programs) as 'just one example among others of the

neoliberal transformation of provincial economies' (p. 125). In fact, a similar analysis could have been provided for Canada's other provinces.

The second fundamental point outlined by Peters highlights 'the decline of organized labour and its waning influence on business, government and policy' (p. 18). Building off Graefe's analysis in chapter 6, the increasingly weak and ineffective nature of organized labour is examined more fully in the book's final section through the use of two case-studies: the lack of success in organizing workers at First Nations' casinos and labour's inability to 'make even minor changes to health and safety policies' affecting precarious workers in Ontario (p. 13). In chapter 7, Yale D. Belanger examines various hostile, and often unsuccessful, organizing drives at First Nations' casinos. While these casinos are 'potent symbols of First Nations territorial sovereignty battles', they are increasingly symbols of a battle between organized labour and capital, and more specifically First Nations' capital (p. 160). Belanger is optimistic about the growing relationship between organized labour and progressive First Nations activists as a potential means for increased collective bargaining. That said, an analysis of organizing efforts at various state-run casinos (such as those in Niagara Falls, Ontario) would further highlight the limitations of the organizing capabilities of many unions. Similarly, Lewchuk, Clarke and de Wolff's analysis of the changing nature of Ontario's health and safety regulations since the late 1990s relies on quantitative data to illustrate not only the limitations of the province's current regulatory scheme (which they describe on p. 167 as 'increasingly unworkable'), but also the specific ways in which already vulnerable precarious workers are made even more vulnerable in the current climate.

Overall, this edited collection effectively builds upon an important body of literature that focuses on the adverse impacts of neoliberal public policy and the growing polarization of power, wealth and income in the post-2008 recession. This book offers new and insightful analysis on the provincial effects of these policies and the resulting polarization, while convincingly implicating the state's neoliberal agenda in helping to create this polarization. While the neoliberal agenda has certainly eroded the power and influence of organized labour through legislative change, the book also forces those within the labour movement to reflect critically upon their own weaknesses and limitations (independently of the state). This honest reflection is of considerable merit, especially in light of the unlikelihood of the state reversing its policy direction at any point in the near future. If labour wishes to regain its influence and strength, it will need to re-develop its own capabilities and facilitate the growth of its rank-and-file activists. The book does not, admittedly, prescribe solutions to the problems facing organized labour in a stand-alone chapter, though the concluding remarks of each chapter offer some suggestions for workers and their unions to best overcome the current challenges they face.

McAlevy, Jane with Bob Ostertag. 2012. *Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell): My Decade Fighting for the Labour Movement*. New York and London: Verso Books, ISBN: 1844678857. Hardback: 25.95 US. Pages: 318.

Reviewed By Joel Harden
Activist and Independent Researcher

Given today's dismal realities for unions, both in Canada and around the world, it is best not to mince words about Jane McAlevy's recent book. Raising Expectations is, quite simply, the best thing on organizing I've read in a decade. Maybe that is because I have worked for organized labour, and seen first-hand its potential in winning the victories workers deserve. I do not think unions are tired relics of postwar history. But even if that is your view, this book might convince you otherwise.

If you want a progressive strategy that can win in tough times, this book is for you. If you are looking to inspire participation in your union, this book is for you. If you are sick of being pummeled by bosses, this book is for you. McAlevy will spur head-nodding and a range of emotions. Her story is inspiring, sad, and instructive. Above all, Raising Expectations is a reminder of workers' power, and the role unions can play in organizing that power. It affirms that workers want organizing victories, and that victory creates its own momentum. It is also honest about union failures, and the way defeat, all too often, gets snatched from the jaws of victory.

McAlevy's work experience does not fit the usual script. She held top union organizing jobs in the US (first at the AFL-CIO and later with Service Employees International Union) after a decade of work in student politics, Latin America, popular education, progressive foundations, and grass-roots environmental movements. Because she has worked in a variety of places, and participated in organizing at an activist and leadership level, she offers unique insights about strategy and tactics.

McAlevy is highly critical of (what she calls) 'shallow mobilizing', where union leaders, staff, and consultants design campaigns while activists get talking points. At the same time, she is also harsh with local union activists who build narrow fiefdoms, and alienate union members or community allies in the process. Instead, McAlevy supports a 'deep organizing' approach that builds on the experience of union members. Raising Expectations chronicles efforts, in challenging circumstances, to identify workplace leaders, recruit them to union work, and develop their capacities as skillful organizers. That training is informed by a 'power structure analysis' of the workplace and community in question, an analysis produced after hundreds of interviews with union members.

Importantly, this work is not done by third parties (e.g. pollsters or consultants), but by union staff and worker activists themselves.

With this analysis in hand, McAlevy thinks unions gain a sophisticated sense of the workplace, and the links between union members, community charities, local politicians, clergy, and even business leaders. She describes this as 'whole worker organizing' which appreciates a worker's entire life, both on and off the job. As such, no artificial divisions are made between "union" and "community". Instead, the organizer looks for the relationship between union and community concerns. They soon realize union members care about community issues like decent housing, well-funded schools, religious values, affordable child care, or clean air and water.

These issues are then championed by the union, and new relationships with community allies are built in the process. All the while, organizers track success by "charting" workplace and community power dynamics, and this helps the union understand its aims and goals. In the end, what gets produced is an organizing strategy that grasps the potential of union power. Also unearthed are the obstacles the union faces as it struggles to build influence. On several occasions, for example, McAlevy talks about the impact of racism which distances workplace leaders from the union. On one occasion, during an organizing stint in Stamford, Connecticut, she encounters local white union leaders who have alienated potential allies in African American churches. This example (and there are more) illustrate why a commitment to equality must guide union organizing, for doing otherwise ignores dangerous weapons in the boss's toolkit.

But how successful, you might ask, has "deep organizing" been? The proof is in the practice. As unions suffer diminishing returns, McAlevy documents a string of organizing successes, even in right-to-work states like Nevada or Missouri. Her strategy transformed once-dormant locals into fighting organizations, capable of winning industry-leading contracts and fielding successful candidates for local elections. There is no sensible reason why similar results cannot happen elsewhere. Of course, this assumes union organizing is informed by "common sense". Common sense would dictate unions embrace organizing that builds power, mobilizes members, and wins victories. But all too often, as McAlevy experienced first-hand, many union leaders place a far higher emphasis on organizing efforts they can control. Loyal officials or consultants are tapped for advice, who then offer leaders "message tested" campaigns or organizing strategies. These points are then handed to activists, who are expected to repeat them with minimal training. Members, if consulted at all, are an afterthought, and do not look to their union for answers. Unions then fade into the furniture of mainstream politics, their irrelevance once again reassured.

McAlevy knows her opinions are not popular – but that is because most unions, in her view, are not serious about organizing at all. In a recent interview, she claimed the majority are surfing off gains made in the postwar years, and content to muddle through losing battles with employers. Her hope lies with progressive union leaders, staff, and

activists willing to take risks. That was the engine for her success with 'deep organizing', and her source of hope for campaigns to come.

Raising Expectations is a welcome tonic to the worrying direction in which unions are headed. Its embrace of bottom-up organizing has the potential to renew the labour movement, something I experienced first-hand when similar strategies were used during the CLC's recent pension campaign. Without question, "deep organizing" requires work. It requires resources, is far more time-intensive, and harder than letting consultants do the heavy lifting. But rather like junk food, nothing substantial gets produced from such shallow efforts. It is time unions rolled up their sleeves, mobilized their members, and tapped the potential of workers' power. Our unions, our communities, and our children deserve nothing less.

James, Carl E. 2012. *Life at the Intersection: Community, Class and Schooling.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, ISBN 978-1-55266-470-4. Paperback: 18.95 CAD. Pages: 136.

Reviewed By Kimalee Phillip
Independent Researcher and Educator

Despite many communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) experiencing ongoing socio-economic problems, somehow, the community of Jane and Finch stands out in the minds of Torontonians and the broader Canadian public. By centering his book on what has been labeled as one of Toronto's most 'troubled neighbourhoods' — Jane and Finch – Carl James does an extraordinary job of applying a critical race and class analysis to the realities faced by those living within that neighbourhood, confronting and complicating the ways in which that community and its members have been constructed by mainstream Canadian media and the general public, as different from Canadian values, morality and lawfulness. James uses these realities and stereotypes to illustrate to the reader that communities such as Jane and Finch can and do rise above the racist, classist and monolithic boxes to which they are typically confined.

James divides this short book into six main chapters where he touches on issues such as the labeling and stigmatization of the Jane and Finch community to the significance and meaning behind physical space and how that affects ideologies and shared perceptions and goals. He also focuses on the use of educational programs within the community; the importance placed on education by members of the community; the media's portrayals of violence that further concretize the pathologies associated with

communities such as Jane and Finch and concludes with a discussion around the need for a community-centred approach to creating and providing educational programs.

It is important to note that although I refer to the Jane and Finch community in the singular, throughout the book James reminds us of the ongoing intricacies and pluralities of identities present beyond the traffic intersection, reminding us that though the media has branded Jane and Finch as a 'black community', that there in fact exists a diverse set of people from various ethnic backgrounds who call Jane and Finch their home.

One of the things that should be appreciated about his approach is its consistent engagement with self-reflective methods that call into question his socio-political location and his choice – even responsibility – to tell these stories. This engagement, for instance asking community members questions such as 'am I the person to write this book?', should be a critical part of the writing and research process of any scholar-activist who truly acknowledges accountability and responsibility to the community that they are writing about. Acknowledging that this story is not about him, James also endeavours to include the stories of people who lived or continue to live in Jane and Finch while reminding the reader that even those who identify as being 'from the community' can contribute to the stereotypes and stigmas that negatively label the community and its members.

The media, as James has illustrated, has consistently labeled Jane and Finch a community to 'get out of' and not necessarily a community where one can aspire to live, grow up and raise a family. By filtering the types of stories and histories that exit and are used to identify the community, it becomes easier to recognize the exemplary students and others who makes it out of the community while simultaneously demonizing the community that produced them. This individualizes issues and mitigates attention placed on the systemic barriers and structures of oppression that contribute to the root causes of the inequities faced by the community such as racism, poverty, under-funded education, limited community resources and low-wage, precarious jobs.

One of the common and most persistent themes within the book is the attention placed on education as a social equalizer of sorts. It is true that many immigrant families whose members originate from the Global South identified higher education as an unquestionable priority but many of the young people, even when they acted as though education was not important, acknowledged the significance of post-secondary schooling. However, according to James, the current educational system is based on Western, Euro-centric standards that fail to validate the cultural, economic, political and social realities of the students who identify as anything other than white, middle to upper class, and who speak English as a first language. To illustrate the limitations of the current educational system and the general public's resistance to anything that poses as an alternative, James relies on testimonials from students and educators. These testimonials identify power imbalances experienced within the classroom, the disassociated relationship between

curriculum taught and the realities faced by students beyond the school. The testimonials also show that race is not the sole factor behind whether a student feels supported and identifies with a teacher.

Life at the Intersection calls for an urgent intervention of critical pedagogical tools; equitable curriculum that reinvents the standards used and is unafraid of shifting the curriculum based on students' individual needs; as well as a community-centred approach to education that faces head-on issues of social class, poverty, politics and the material realities that contribute to ongoing inequitable distribution of resources and wealth in students' lives and communities. An issue that James touches on briefly but that perhaps needs further exploration is the anger and frustration faced by students. These concerns must be addressed without further delegitimizing students' feelings. These feelings, typically characterized as 'scary' and undesirable emotions such as anger and pain, need to be validated and dealt with in productive ways that contribute to material improvements for those feeling oppressed? This needs to be part of the critical pedagogical methods that James calls on us to engage with.

Dayan, Colin. 2011. *The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, ISBN 9780691070919. Hardcover: 29.95 CAD. Pages: 343.

Reviewed by Darren Pacione
Carleton University

The primary intellectual-political project of Colin Dayan's The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons challenges how law constitutes identity, particularly the permeability of notions of legal personhood. Using Haitian lore of law and dogs, and American common law legal histories of persons, slaves, zombies, and apparitions, Dayan, an American Studies and Humanities professor provides a language through which the permeability of life, death, and civil disability may be (re)understood and reframed. Such discussion urges the consideration of the legal thresholds between what is inside and outside of the person (mind and body), the community (society and exile), and the law (norm and exception). Thus, in the context of the Anglo-American legal system, the modern boundaries of civil, political and legal life and death are troubled to expose historical lineages of systemic abuses and normative practices stemming from the antebellum to the modern period.

Chapter by chapter—driven by questions of legal rituals and architectures of state and legal power that make and unmake the legal subject—this text prompts illustrative conversations about how legal histories of slavery, imprisonment, punishment, and colonialism construct and relegate legal subjects through penological technologies (e.g. chain gangs, forced labour, prolonged isolation, etc.) to effectively civilly disable and make them less than human within the law. In such a state of 'civic death', explains Dayan, the subject is 'drained of self-identity, forever anomalous, condemned as extraneous to civil society, excluded from belonging' (32). In a word: abandoned.

In the presented histories of slaves and prisoners, law, or more precisely, the rule of law is emphatically stripped from the (il)legal subject through a grammar of exceptionalism. The Agambenian formulation of this notion is expressed not as an exclusion (i.e. the subject is excluded through law), but as an abandonment—an abandonment by law. In effect, as Dayan puts it, the human subject is 'in a negative relation to law' (78). While the narrative of American exceptionalism is neither an explicit nor a dominant theme of the author's critiques, the examples of the 'war on terror' detainment apparatus and modern penal technologies are rich with its marks. As the second chapter expounds a complicated legal history of civil injury in antebellum period case law, the slave is described as dead in civil law — lacking civic status and personhood. However, if in breach of criminal law, the slave is temporarily constructed as criminal and ascribed elements of moral agency and intent. The slave, thus, is interpellated by criminal law and temporarily humanized for the purpose of trial, only to be banished once more through punishment.

The prisoner or detainee, just as the slave in its historical context, exists at the liminal cusp of its own legal identity. In chapter three, however, the legal status of the modern banished subject is contested through a language of legal and human rights. In the dissenting opinion of O'Lone v. Shabazz (1987), a case concerning a constitutional accommodation for an inmate's right to communal prayer, Justice Brennan writes that prisoners exist 'in a shadow world', but come to light when they make a constitutional claim, and 'they ask us to acknowledge that power exercised in the shadows must be restrained at least as diligently as power that acts in the sunlight' (100). What Dayan urges us to remember about the power of law is that in contexts of criminality and legal liminality of, for example, the prisoner or detainee, judges and prison officials are quick to rephrase 'punitive detention' to administrative segregation. Poignantly, Dayan observes, '[this] linguistic sleight of hand made the illegal legal' (79).

In an effort to express this relation to law, Dayan, in later chapters, suggests and expands on the terminology of 'negative personhood', that is one who exists in a negative relation to law, or in other words one who is disabled by law. For example, the slave, a 'hyperlegal' construction considered unfree, was also considered as 'dead in law' (139). Other examples of liminal beings accounted for by Dayan—that is those banned or expelled from their person, the community, and the law—include: criminals; security

threats; terrorists; enemy aliens; illegal immigrants; migrant contaminants (and workers); unlawful enemy alien combatants; and ghost detainees. While the author succeeds in making stirring connections between the violence of law in the antebellum period and its twentieth century continuities, including mass incarceration, supermax prisons, and the 'war on terror', what remains untroubled and unaccounted for by Dayan's theoretical gaze and otherwise scrupulous analytical framework is the colonial history and legal subjectivities of the Indigenous subject, the American and Canadian Indian, and its relation to law, property, land, and non-Indian society.

It is at this point that I must distinguish this work, and in effect this list, from other similar conversations about personhood, liminal subjects, and the law. In Impersonations: Troubling the Person in Law and Culture (2009), Sheryl Hamilton argues for the recognition of the 'fragility' and limits of person and personhood by exposing the personifications of 'liminal beings' (women, corporations, computers, celebrities, and clones) as the incompletely 'made' personae. However, what Dayan grapples with are notions of personhood, but more specifically, ones that explore the power of law and attentively focus on the violence of law as it manifests through legal subjects including inmates, slaves, and security detainees.

The Law is a White Dog is a vivid exploration of literature, history, and law. It asks hard yet stimulating questions about the systemically entrenched racial, colonial, and ideological inequalities of the Anglo-American legal system. As a text concerned with the role of law in the (un)making of legal identity, this book makes a very valuable contribution to the field of socio-legal studies as it forces one to think about the violence of law and to trouble the assumptions made about the rule of law in modern liberal democratic societies. It is of interest to note the author's sole treatment of the notion of the rule of law: 'This world is singularly cruel. Its discriminations overturn logic, infect and befoul behaviour. And they reside in the rule of law' (137). As a present-day political project, this effort identifies the everyday consequences of remaining silent to systemic injustices.

Instructions to Authors

Socialist Studies: the Journal of the Society for Socialist Studies is an interdisciplinary journal with a focus on describing and analyzing social, economic or political injustice, and practices of struggle, transformation, and liberation across the world. The Journal seeks to make a major contribution to scholarly and political debates among the progressive left in academic, policy and movement circles by publishing original research of high standards.

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