pedagogies *in the* flesh

case studies on the embodiment of sociocultural differences in education

Edited by

Sarah Travis, Amelia M. Kraehe,
Emily J. Hood, and Tyson E. Lewis

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Editors

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Differences in Education

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Preface: Reflection on *Pedagogies in the Flesh*

Pedagogies in the Flesh speaks to both the magnificent and dreaded ways the body stirs learning and consciousness toward possibilities of human emancipation. The ethics and pedagogies that unfold are very much in line with my own work on *decolonizing the flesh*[1] and *schooling the flesh,*[2] inspired by Paulo Freire's reading of the body.[3] Paulo Freire left behind a legacy that argues passionately for the relationship between pedagogy and the body. It encompasses a pedagogical sensibility that is fully cognizant about the primacy of the body in the construction of knowledge. Freire's pedagogy of love is anchored to an understanding that, first and foremost, we are material beings; and that teaching and learning, whether in the classroom or out in the world, entails a humanizing ethos of embodiment that supports dialogue and solidarity, as we labor together for the common good.[4]

As educators, students, and cultural workers participate more integrally in the dialogical processes of communal learning, the materiality of our bodies must be understood as rightful allies in the formation, evolution, and expression of our collective consciousness and, thus, the world we occupy.[5] The power of the body and the phenomenology of knowledge inherent in its existence cannot be denied. The histories and material, social, and affective conditions of human beings are made visible by our bodies. Our histories of survival are witnessed and revealed in our skin, our teeth, our hair, our gestures, our speech, our emotional expressions, the movement of our arms and legs, and the multitude of gazes that inform the physicality of our responses. The ways we use and remake our bodies as powerful sites of counter-hegemonic resistance demonstrates the

organic quality and significance of the body to identity formation in all its manifestations. As such, bodies are living "maps of power and identity",[6] which offer meaningful information and powerful insights into the tensions, struggles, anxieties, ambiguities, as well as aspirations and dreams, particularly, of youth whose cultural, class, gendered, and sexual differences yearn and seek expression within the classroom or on the streets.

What *Pedagogies in the Flesh* makes very clear is this: it is absolutely insufficient to rely on abstract approaches to teaching and learning where disembodied words and texts are privileged in the construction of knowledge. For, "words not given body (or made flesh) have little or no value"[7] to the process of personal and social transformation. Educational processes of estrangement sustain false dichotomies that alienate our bodies from the world—dividing us from one another and splitting us off from the true realm through which liberatory possibilities can emerge. Counterpunctual to this process of estrangement, Freire affirmed the body as indispensable to the evolution of consciousness. "[Our] consciousness, with its 'intentionality' towards the world, is always conscious of something. It is in a permanent state of moving towards reality. Hence, the condition of the human being is to be in constant relationship to the world."[8]

Moreover, it is through embodied relationships with the world and others that we evolve in consciousness and discover the common ground across our differences to struggle together in the interest of democratic life. Anything that interferes with or negates this essential relationship to *unity within diversity*[9] sets the stage for social, material, and political oppression, robbing our sensibilities and alienating our humanity—leaving us numb and defenseless in the face of violence and the trauma of oppression. The dialectical relationships between the body and consciousness, the object and subject, and students and the world are inextricable to a critical understanding of life and to forging actions that can have real consequences on the lives of the oppressed. This latter point is illustrated repeatedly in the stories shared among the contributors of this groundbreaking volume.

Living Body Recollections

I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body, which rises towards the world.

Merleau Ponty[10]

In reading *Pedagogies in the Flesh*, I was deeply moved by the recollections of a multiplicity of instances where the living body summoned flashpoints of attention and awareness, whether through experience of joy and delight or rage and fury or grief and mourning or pain and despair. In essence, what we find in these stories is a subtle confirmation of Merleau Ponty's claim, "The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them."[11] Moreover, through stories of indelible traces of experiences negotiated through the vehicle of the body, I too found myself recollecting on an earlier moment[12] when I was fiercely grappling to *rise towards the world* by finding greater meaning in the pain of my childhood and its impact upon my political commitments to liberation.

As a child, my life was one of constant trauma. My mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia, prone to rage, physical violence, self-hate, and alcoholism—an atrocious combination. It was not easy to be the eldest child in our home. I was made responsible for things that were far beyond my years. The level of trauma I experienced could only be described as that of growing up in a war zone. I never knew when or where attacks on my body would be launched. Generally, these came daily and without provocation. My mother was deeply irrational when angry or inebriated. Hers was the fury of an intelligent woman chained to a sewing machine in a dusty sweatshop in order to survive. As a child, I had to learn to duck the constant missiles of her rage and abuse. This bodily invasion was further exacerbated by the sexual abuse I endured between the ages of six and eight at the hands of my mother's boyfriend—a bodily invasion that further disrupted my sense of innocence and safety in the world.

My sister and I took very different venues for surviving the abuse. She became the "non-achieving" resistant child and I the constantly achieving and appeasing child. Neither venue was better than the other, beyond exterior appearances. Our bodies were left incredibly damaged emotionally; so much so, that neither was able to establish a lasting intimate relationship. Moreover, no matter how hard we may have tried, we passed on many of our complexes and anxieties to our children, who have also had to struggle in their own ways. Hence, bodily trauma in childhood is a phenomenon of generational transmission; even when the physical and emotional abuse ceases, it leaves us scarred and, often, without the coping strategies or inner steadiness to contend with constant social anxiety.

If this were not enough, for working-class females of color, the violence of a classist, sexist, and racializing society persists in a myriad of ways, institutionally reinscribing our abuse over and over again, making it difficult to completely disengage our bodies from the triggers of abuse. It takes tremendous fortitude and perseverance to own the neediness and insecurity, which the colonial matrix of power subjects upon women in our communities, particularly in a "just get over it!" society that is not kind to the afflicted body of those deemed other. A heart wrenching consequence is that we have seldom received the love, attention, compassion, regard, or resources required to garner sufficient mental, physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and spiritual health or simply to establish a firm footing in life. Depending on our particular dispositions, we may focus on achieving in order to feel loved—to the point of disaster; or we might withdraw from life to shroud ourselves; or constantly fight with others to free ourselves of the internal chains; or find a million and one escapes to subdue (even temporarily) the suffering of our estranged body.

Hence, the most poignant aspect of such childhood trauma is that it is not only about childhood—for the body persists. The trauma can torment us until our death, if we cannot face the ordeal, over and over again, *through our bodies*, until at last we can generate the liberating beauty and brilliance of the soul. And this, of course, is easier said than done, particularly, in a world where oppressed people are reeling within our bodies, given the daily authoritarian assaults and consequences of disembodied formations that shape our world. Yet, often we are left unconscious, alienated, and numb to the bodily torment and violence perpetrated upon us and other oppressed people, seldom finding counterhegemonic spaces for undergoing the radical reflection necessary to transform our lives and communities.

THE POWER OF RADICAL REFLECTIONS

The vigilance of radical reflection keeps these patterns of valuation from congealing into abstracted entities of attributes and properties...
—*Calvin Schrag*[13]

My recollection stems from the realization that *radical reflection* can only unfold through an understanding of the indisputable role of the body to the conditions of our lives, the process of human learning, and the struggle for our emancipation. This points to a phenomenon that must be linked to a deep sense of respect, value, and responsibility for the precious-

ness of life and the courage to name the unspeakable and hideous experiences of the living body in order to move beyond the reified complexes, fears, and insecurities that alienate and disable our capacities for intimacy and solidarity, holding us prisoners of an internalized shame and self-hate—where we are never good enough! Such are the struggles of many whose bodies have been deeply traumatized in childhood or beyond—begging the question: To what extent is education and the political economy in collusion with the perpetuation of exclusion and violence through the domestication and estrangement of our bodies?

Radical reflections born of emancipatory vigilance and grounded in the interdependent dialectics of the body and difference are powerful safeguards against curricular epistemicides and political subjugation, in that these transgressive reflections can trigger dissent, breakdowns, and disruptions of hegemonic privilege and exclusion that are fueled by the tyranny of the body. Brooke argues, "radical reflection makes the Self possible by undermining the ego…by going under it, back to [the] body."[14] This critical phenomenology of the body is armed with the idea that without the flesh, we are unable to make sense of the material world and, thus, unable to transform neither the relationality nor the materiality of oppression. In contrast to the colonizing gaze of Western logic and its oppressive taxonomies that assault our right to human difference, the messy aliveness and unpredictable textures of enfleshment serve as potential pathways to liberation. Hence, social resistance and disruptions of the body are not only essential to humanizing our existence but absolutely necessary to the evolution of political consciousness and social transformation.

As such, radical reflections of difference grounded in the living body, such as the stories across *Pedagogies in the Flesh*, can generate through dialogue educational opportunities for unveiling the wisdom of the body's capacity for difference; and, by so doing, struggle, in the Deleuzian sense, to *bring something incomprehensible into the world*[15]—namely, a just and loving world. What all this reminds us is that neither should education nor political struggle be conceptualized in ways that divorce us from the primacy of the body. Instead, liberation must emerge organically as a living political struggle for social consciousness, which begins and ends at the very source of our existence—the inspirited flesh.

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Notes on Contributors

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Amanda Alexander is an assistant professor in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Arlington, USA, and she is the area coordinator for the department's Art Education program. Alexander explores (inter)national and local community-based arts research and learning, sustainable social and culture development, and social justice. Living, working, and conducting research in Peru with artists, she has presented and published work in journals such as: *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*, *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, *Art Education*, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement,* and *International Journal of Education through Art.*

Charles Bingham has been studying schools, from inside and out, for 53 of his 55 years. He was a student for 20 years, and has been a teacher for

33 years. He has taught all levels, from elementary school to PhD, in many places—from rural South Africa, to Washington State, to Chicago, and now in Vancouver, BC, Canada. He is currently Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Charles has been engaged in various social justice practices for many of his years in schools, from participating in a unique reverse-integration experiment in 1968 in the USA, to teaching in Apartheid South Africa from 1983 to 1987, to authoring texts on educational recognition and emancipation.

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Tapo Chimbganda is a Zimbabwean-born psychoanalyst, educator, and researcher. She did her clinical training in Dublin, Ireland and completed her doctorate in Education at York University, Canada. Tapo uses psychoanalysis to engage with life writing as she extrapolates the effect of social discourses in the classroom, in particular discourses of difference. Tapo is also interested in abstract pedagogies, questioning how educators engage with the teaching and learning of such human qualities as empathy, forgiveness, and love. Her upcoming book *The Classroom as Privileged Space* (2017) tackles the difficult subject of "safe space" in education.

Cala Coats is an Assistant Professor of Art Education at Stephen F. Austin State University, USA. Her research focuses on the intersection of ethics and aesthetics with an emphasis on embodied engagement, collective action, public pedagogy, and aesthetic activism. Coats has recently published a chapter in *Convergences of Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Global Civic Engagement* in addition to articles in *The Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education, Art Education, The International Journal of Education and the Arts, Visual Arts Research,* and *Trends.*

Angela C. Coffee is a college English teacher. Profoundly interested in the relationships between language and power, her work focuses on the intersections and entanglements of race, social class, gender, and sexuality within schooling. Particularly attuned to the historical constructions of white women teachers in education, her work seeks to disrupt and complicate notions of goodness and help, and to engage with stories as both dangerous and liberating constellations of creation.

Antonia Darder is an internationally renowned Freirean scholar who holds the Leavey Endowed Chair in Ethics and Moral Leadership at Loyola Marymount University and a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Education post at the University of Johannesburg. She is author or editor of numerous books and articles in the field that explore the social and material relationships of culture, class, power, and pedagogy in perpetuating inequalities. For almost four decades, Darder has labored as an educator, activist, writer, artist, and cultural worker, committed to the larger vision of liberation in the USA and abroad.

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He marked his clinical retirement by joining Maastricht University's School of Health Professions Education and later moved to his present post in Belfast. His interests are workplace learning and the relationship between emotions, identity, and power in the caring professions.

Towani Duchscher is a PhD candidate in the Werklund School of Education, at the University of Calgary, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Her research focuses on exploring the embodied lessons that students learn from the hidden curriculum of schools. Towani is a mother, teacher, dancer, poet, and student. As a dancer, Towani has always been confronted by issues of body image as society has definite ideals regarding the dancer body. She works to value her own body and the strengths that she brings to dance. Towani strives to help her daughter to develop and maintain a positive self-body image and self-confidence.

Lauren Freeman is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville, USA. She is also an affiliated faculty member in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and a core faculty member in the MA program in Bioethics and Medical Humanities. She works on feminist bioethics, phenomenology, and philosophy of emotion. Currently, she is editing a special issue of the *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* on the topic of feminist phenomenological approaches to bioethics, medicine, and health. She is also working on a book on microaggressions within the context of clinical medicine.

Ido Gideon is a PhD student in the School of Education at Oxford Brookes University, currently living in Israel and writing his thesis: 'A Political Phenomenology of Citizenship Education in Israel'. The motivation to write this thesis stems from Ido's own experiences as a citizenship education teacher in Israeli schools. Through this research, Ido aspires to describe education as a political experience, by retrieving meaning, rather than engaging in explanatory causality. Ido's hermeneutic-phenomenological position towards educational research relies on the fundamental ontologies of Heidegger and Arendt to research political education as lived experience.

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Tim Jung is an English teacher at Northside College Preparatory High School in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Tim's goal, as a privileged white teacher, is to find literature as a mode of representation available to all students who come from differing backgrounds. Moreover, Tim believes that the ethical life is

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Ryan Kober is a Master's candidate in the Applied Anthropology program at the University of North Texas, USA. Her area of focus within the program is Migration and Border Studies with an emphasis on Latin American migration. As an undergraduate she advocated for the rights of undocumented college students, and she continues to collaborate with immigrant communities at the graduate level. For her Master's thesis, she is currently working with Central American and Mexican female asylum seekers in the Dallas area. Through her research she hopes to show that women are not passive victims, but rather active agents of change even as they move within male-dominated transnational spaces. Her other interests include environmental justice and grassroots organizing.

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David R. Montalvo is a student and campus organizer at the University of North Texas studying sociology, history, women's and gender studies, LGBT studies, and Latinx Studies. He also commits to doing feminist and anti-racist activism in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. He plans on taking critical theoretical frameworks and finding dynamic ways to make them more accessible to marginalized communities in the DFW area.

Monica Moreno is studying anthropology at the University of North Texas. She was born and raised in Corpus Christi, Texas, where she received an Associate in Arts Degree from Del Mar College in 2015 with the support of her friends and family. She then moved to Denton, Texas, to attend University and became interested in various social movements especially those that fight for the rights of Latinos and the LGBTQ+ community. After graduation she hopes to use her anthropological training to enter the nonprofit sector and continue to be an inspiration to her 16 nieces and nephews.

Karin Murris is Full Professor of Pedagogy and Philosophy at the School of Education, University of Cape Town, South Africa. Grounded in philosophy as an academic discipline, her research interests are critical posthumanism, intra-active pedagogies, school ethics, and post-qualitative research methods. She is principal investigator of the *Decolonising Early Childhood Discourses: Critical Posthumanism in Higher Education* research project funded by the South African National Research Foundation. Her monographs are *The Posthuman Child* (2016), and (with Joanna Haynes)

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Darian Marcel Parker is the creator of existential psychoanalytic anthropology, a theory of consciousness inspired by Sartrean philosophy and symbolic anthropology. Parker's *Sartre and No Child Left Behind: An Existential Psychoanalytic Anthropology of Urban Schooling* (Lexington Books, 2015) uses EPA to understand the existential predicament of children in failing schools. Parker has PhD, M Phil and MA degrees from Yale University's departments of anthropology and African-American studies, and BAs in English literature and anthropology from UCLA's College of Honors. He is the founder and CEO of Parker Academics (www.parkeracademics.com), an innovative company that provides a neuro-existential approach to test prep and tutoring.

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Mark D. Vagle (Professor, University of Minnesota, USA) is an award-winning instructor, researcher, and author. He grew up working class in the most impoverished county in Minnesota and now reluctantly identifies as upper-middle class though his body does not want him to—bringing, to his research and teaching, his experiences moving from, in, and through these socially classed identifications. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Educational Researcher, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Qualitative Inquiry, Field Methods, and The Journal of Curriculum Studies.* Vagle has authored or edited three books, including *Crafting Phenomenological Research.*

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Introduction: Flashpoints—The Breakthrough of Sociocultural Difference

Amelia M. Kraehe and Tyson E. Lewis

One learns early on in life to identify and differentiate an "us" and a "them." Indeed, there is evidence that this distinction occurs even before the onset of beliefs or mental propositions take shape (Gallagher, 2006). One might argue that the conceptualization of difference is shaped by a preconscious grasp of difference that lives within, on, and through embodied entanglements. And this is true for the most basic forms of difference as it is for more complex, sociocultural differences that are rooted in material inequalities and symbolic meanings requiring maintenance and adaptation. Many have written about the ideological and discursive constructions of sociocultural differences in educational institutions and cultural worlds beyond the classroom (see, e.g., Ahmed, 2012; Lareau, 2003; Laura, 2014; Michael, 2015; Pascoe, 2007; Stevenson, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Yet there has been little discussion in the field of educational theory about how subjects experience difference phenomenologically, that is, the experience of being made different or "Other" that is embedded within our

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preconscious habits, orientations, perceptions, and intuitive understandings of the world. We are interested in difference as it is lived and felt through preconceptual comportment with Others. How, we ask, do we make sense of our own difference and the differences of Others at the most palpable moments when difference carried with us through ways of seeing, hearing, moving, and gesturing suddenly appear and take us by surprise?

> In the popular media, such moments are often described as *flashpoints*. Here are several examples:
>
> When Bree Newsome visited Ferguson to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Michael Brown Jr.'s being killed, she was not going back to the source of her activism. It was actually the Trayvon Martin killing in 2012 that brought her into what is now a national movement. But in Ferguson she was visiting the place, she said, where people really began to fight back against a newly defined common enemy. "Trayvon Martin, that was when I got pulled in, that was when a lot of people got pulled in … But Ferguson was a flashpoint moment."[1]
>
> Donald Trump took heat when he spoke about "anchor babies" and seemed to relish the fallout from his latest provocation in the race for the GOP presidential nomination. Then Jeb Bush echoed the phrase and found himself on defense—and increasingly exasperated … Whatever the issue's lasting value, "anchor babies" is the latest buzz phrase, hashtag and flashpoint in the volatile debate over who should stay in the U.S. and who should leave.[2]
>
> While in basic training, one is continually addressed as faggot or girl. These labels are usually screamed into the face from a distance of two or three inches by the drill instructor, a most awesome, intimidating figure … This process is used as a means to threaten the individual's sexual identity … Recruits were brutalized, frustrated, and cajoled to a flash point of high tension. Recruits were often stunned by the depths of violence erupting from within … After a day of continuous harassment, I bit a man on the face during hand-to-hand combat, gashing his eyebrow and cheek. I had lost control. For the first time the drill instructor didn't physically strike me or call me a faggot. He put his arm around me and said that I was a lot more man than he had previously imagined.[3]

Scientists describe *flashpoints* as physicochemical happenings. They are measurable moments when ambient conditions located just beyond a fluid's surface surround and bring forth volatility.[4] The flashpoint signals where, when, and how this previously stable entity meets, mixes, and

erupts with some other entity. "At the flash point the application of a naked flame gives a momentary flash rather than sustained combustion, for which the temperature is too low" (Daintith, 2008, p. 227). Similarly, one could say that a flash is, in a more general sense, a heightened occasion, arising from the activation of power that disturbs a seemingly fixed relationship. We see important connections between the physicochemical description of flashpoints offered by scientists and the physicosocial moments of disruption articulated in the media. Raised to an intensity that is both real and felt in the body, a flash signals kinesis, change, violation, or creation. Often it is only when we take note of uneasy gnawing and nagging in the body's memory stores that we are able to locate, re-experience, and articulate the fiery sensations that mark the time and place of the flashpoint. Such sensations are critical to understanding how difference is accomplished and its implications for education.

In this book, the notion of *pedagogical flashpoints* is an invitation to examine specific instances in which bodies educate and are educated in sociocultural difference in various formal and informal contexts, including schools, universities, museums, communities, and so forth.[5] By sociocultural formations we are referring to the making of the self as an occasion through which socially and culturally situated bodies are construed and experienced within and against histories of racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, speciesism, and class inequality. Thus, sociocultural differences are not neutral. They emerge from asymmetrical power relations (re)produced and maintained by historical, structural, and symbolic forces. These differences are durable indexical locations and intersections that demarcate groups of people and the hierarchical relations between them. It is inaccurate to reduce or atomize *sociocultural* differences as merely *individual* characteristics, feelings, or experiences. One's participation in the world, and thus one's knowledge of the world, is always influenced by dynamic, overlapping, and adaptive systems of power that inhabit and inform the body and bodily senses in preconscious ways (Alcoff, 2006).

Phenomenologically speaking, flashpoints are lived phenomena. To experience a flash is to experience a moment of interruption or suspension in normal behavior, perception, and everyday experiential flow. The flash erupts, temporarily sending an affective surge throughout one's extended sensorium. Such affective surplus might be experienced in terms of uncanny weirdness, shock, cold sweat, a lump in the throat, existential disorientation, perceptual blurriness, and so on. These abrupt and intrusive moments are, as the term indicates, states of emergence where our plans suddenly don't work, we cannot find our way, or preconscious

intuitions are suddenly confirmed. A flashpoint is like a flare in the night sky. It indicates a change in a material, embodied state, and calls for some kind of special attention and focus. These flashpoints thus disorient us from going about our business and reorient us toward that which is suddenly urgent and pressing (even if we don't fully understand or appreciate what that thing is or its immediate relevance). And like a flare, the flashpoint suspends the flow of time, taking us out of time (or slowing time down), so that the world feels oddly frozen. The flare captures us, holds us hostage, leaving an imprint not unlike an afterimage burned onto the back of the retina. The flashpoint is therefore assaulting, and when it washes over us, it abruptly halts the usual passage of time, rendering inoperative our plans.

For us, the surge of the flashpoint is not merely disabling. Rather it indicates a breakdown in everyday coping in ways that might reveal the otherwise taken-for-granted sociocultural background of lived experience. As Heidegger argued (2008), breakdowns in our most basic forms of everyday attunement are educational opportunities, un-concealing certain facets of experience that are otherwise invisible or peripheral. Breakdowns are also *breakthroughs* that flare up in our perceptual field, shifting the withdrawn background into the foreground of conscious experience. Through phenomenologically attuned descriptions of flashpoints, we can craft language capable of articulating forms of sociocultural understanding that are tacit, prelinguistic, prethematic, and prereflective. These are ways of knowing that we intuitively understand yet rarely, if ever, fully articulate to ourselves (let alone others). Such understanding is so familiar, so embedded in our basic forms of everyday comportment that it is invisible until it breaks through the veil of transparency to become an unavoidable facet of experience.

The aim of this collection is to focus on describing concrete circumstances, events, singular moments, or sensations so that phenomena of sociocultural difference(s) suddenly well up as uncanny yet salient, palpable, and constituting dimensions of educational experience. Our gambit is that such descriptions offer unique entry points for reconsidering how sociocultural differences are written on and through the body. Each flashpoint attempts to get at what sociocultural difference feels like in order to reveal a perceptual structure and/or the essential meaning underlying the phenomenon. While not denying the relevancy of structural critique of institutions or the narrative richness of ethnographic studies, here we want to focus on the embodied structures of sociocultural differences as they are

lived in and through limbs, perceptual structures, sensations, orientations, and affective surges as they happen in particular moments that interrupt experiential flow.

FLASHPOINTS AS FLESHPOINTS

Because flashpoints are embodied surges that disorient us and reorient us toward that which would otherwise be unthematized in our everyday experience, they are always already *fleshpoints*. Bodies are central to the descriptions of flashpoint, but bodies are only one locus/node of the more diffuse webbing often referred to in phenomenological literature as the flesh. As our three examples above indicate—Ferguson, the "anchor baby" phenomenon, and the aggressive sexual bullying in basic training—flashpoints involve power over and through bodies but also exist in the charged atmosphere between bodies. For Merleau-Ponty (1968) "the flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance" (p. 139). In this sense, flesh subtends the particularities of a given body and any image/thought we might have of the body in our mind. The flesh is neither inside us as an idea nor outside us as an object, thus pointing to the ways in which bodies and worlds are interdependent and co-constituting. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, the flesh is the basis for "intercorporeity" (p. 141) which "makes the organs of my body communicate and founds transitivity from one body to another" (p. 143). The intercorporeity of the flesh does not fuse the self and the other so much as set the stage for how they relate to one another, communicate with one another through gesture, speech, and desire. The most basic experience of this intercorporeity is the phenomenon of touch. When one touches something, one is simultaneously touched by it. Thus, the active subject (who is doing the touching) becomes the passive object (who receives the touch). This fundamental sensation of reversibility (wherein subject becomes object and activity becomes passivity) means that the flesh is always already relational, folding the outside into the inside. In this sense, the flesh is not "mine" or "yours" the way bodies are. Rather it speaks to a more fundamental level of intertwining wherein self and Other pass through one another not unlike passing through a permeable membrane. As such, there is not a gap or void between two bodies so much as an invisible connective tissue of flesh that compels and repels bodies toward one another. It is precisely because of the fleshiness of bodies that Otherness is never truly outside or over there. Because Otherness is always already woven into the flesh, individual bodies are never fully

immunized against difference, bodies are never self-same or self-identical. While this might undermine the notion of an autonomous self, Merleau-Ponty points out that without the chiasmic structure of flesh, bodies would not be able to differentiate or communicate with one another. Thus for Merleau-Ponty, the Otherness within is a purely enabling feature of "our" phenomenological experiences of the world.

Although Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh as the most basic form of intercorporeity between the embodied self and world is provocative and phenomenologically apt, he can be faulted for situating his analysis of the flesh as below/subtending sociocultural differences. Whereas Merleau-Ponty emphasizes how the flesh provides the connective tissue necessary to achieve a kind of experiential flow or environmental equilibrium, we would like to suggest that this is not the experience of all bodies. Indeed, for minorities, the experience might be one of perpetual discordance with environments that *do not solicit them* or *afford* them action. Indeed, for certain bodies, the environment might be perceived as inherently hostile; the flesh might be experienced as *putrid*.

Challenging Merleau-Ponty, we would argue that the flesh is not outside of power but rather power and flesh also form a chiasma. Perhaps the classic illustration of this is found in Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). While living in the mostly Black neighborhoods of Antilles, Fanon was "satisfied with an intellectual understanding" (p. 110) of the differences between Whites and Blacks. But once Fanon stepped into the world of White privilege he suddenly *felt* on a pretheoretical, preconscious level the full weight of the "white man's eyes" (p. 110). Importantly, it was not an encounter between ideologies, ideas, or beliefs that affected Fanon, but rather "the movements, the attitudes, the glances" (p. 109) of the Whites he came into contact with—their bodily gestures and perceptual postures. In other words, it was on the level of flesh and the entwining of gazes, movements, and attitudes within an asymmetrical perceptual space that first and foremost constituted Fanon's experience of racism. This subsequently led Fanon to substitute Merleau-Ponty's notion of the generic "body schema" for what he calls the "historico-racial schema" (p. 111). Fanon's terminology historicizes and contextualizes the body schema, taking into account the ontology of race as a determinate factor in one's relation to the world. For us, it is critical to point out that Fanon's theorization of the historico-racial schema came from a particular flash/fleshpoint, which was first and foremost a rupture with the implicit equilibrium and flow between self and environment.

Hortense J. Spillers furthers Fanon's insights, making a distinction between bodies and the flesh, but this time within the economy of American slavery. Spillers (1987) writes, "before the 'body' there is the 'flesh,' that zero degree of social conceptualization" (p. 67) that forms the crucible of pain and suffering through which racist social distinctions become immediately recognizable and acceptable as "natural" and thus "necessary." The marks of the flesh are not restricted to particular bodies, but can be handed down through generations who also bear the burden of captivation and mutilation as well as the marks of privilege. For Spillers, the flesh is the fulcrum of a distinctly "American grammar" (p. 68) through which White and non-White bodies speak, scream, spit, yell, and cry out to one another. The fleshiness of this grammar—this American style of living the violence of slavery—fundamentally shapes generations of bodies and how they orient themselves. Bodies live through the flesh of Others, and because of this, bodies are never whole, never pure, never innocent of the scars and/or privileges of the flesh that bind us together through the ambivalent violence of loss, love, pain, and desire. And while Spillers is most concerned with the American experience of the flesh, we would like to propose that the grammar she articulates could be extended to White settler colonialism more broadly.

Alexander Weheliye (2014) further argues for the centrality of the flesh as a grounding concept for understanding sociocultural difference. For Weheliye, the flesh problematizes reductive notions of "agency" and "resistance" when discussing forms of oppression. While certain discourses of agency and resistance informed by Western, Cartesian notions of subjectivity assume "full, self-present, and coherent subjects working against something or someone" (p. 2), the flesh suggests a preconscious and presubjective way of apprehending the various entanglements of desire, intentionality, orientations, and so forth that traverse and exceed any notion of a willfully directed and subjectively aware sense of self. Weheliye grounds his phenomenology of racism and sexism in "textures of enfleshment" (p. 91) that have a subterranean life of their own *above* the intentions of particular subjects with attending aims and projects and *below* any attempt by the law to fix subjects to particular, recognizable identities/subject positions. Furthering both Merleau-Ponty and Spillers' work, Weheliye sees fleshpoints as points of chiasmic convergence and divergence between pain and pleasure, violence and flight, creativity and receptivity. They are anchoring points that explain how sociocultural differences become fleshy constituents of self, and in turn how such differences produce hungers, pains, scars, and pleasures that do not

fall nicely into existing models of agency and yet nevertheless speak of a subaltern dynamism of flesh that may just lead toward new forms of life.

Eric Santner's (2016) work further complicates Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the flesh. For Santner, one cannot think of the flesh without grounding it in historical, political, and theological contexts. One aspect of Santner's work that is particularly important for this book is the way in which he brings together Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh and Marx's labor theory of value in order to highlight the particular nature of the flesh within a mercantile society. Under capitalism, the flesh as a social medium becomes abstracted from the actual bodies of laborers in factories and is transformed into surplus value. Thus, the flesh takes on an economic dimension. The economization of flesh means that it must be managed, disciplined, and ultimately made productive as capitalist relations. Whereas for Merleau-Ponty the flesh binds together bodies immediately, here social relations become mediated through capitalist relations. For Santner the "pound of flesh" which forms the crux of the plot of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* offers a key piece of evidence of this historical shift. What is "weighed" in the play is something of the body that has been extracted, abstracted, and invested with a particular economic value. Here we see a movement from the flesh as theological (spirit), to phenomenological (the primal dimension of the social), to economic (surplus value). In short, there is an economic base that conditions the forms of misery and joy that are possible in and through fleshy entanglements with each other and with things.

For these theorists of the flesh, Merleau-Ponty is a point of departure. Whereas Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the flesh as an enabling, vibrant, and intercorporeal webbing, flashpoints reveal how the flesh can become enflamed, decay, and putrefy under the weight of a certain kind of grammar (colonialism, racism, and capitalist exploitation), but also how the same flesh can sometimes mutate into new formations that resist falling into easily definable categories of progressive or regressive politics.

THREE INTERVENTIONS: THEMATIC, PEDAGOGIC, AND METHODOLOGIC

In all cases, Fanon, Spillers, Weheliye, and Santner point to the chiasmic indeterminacy and complex ambiguities of the flesh. The present volume is indebted to this work, and hopes to extend it in three ways: thematically, pedagogically, and methodologically. First, we would like to thematically highlight the phenomenological centrality of flashpoints for thinking though the lived experience of an agonistic flesh. Flashpoints *distill* the experience of

the flesh as discussed by Fanon, Spillers, Weheliye, and Santner into a potent and concentrated moment in time that stands out from the flow of experience as an example of the ambivalences of trauma and desire (not always in equal measure). These concentrated moments might recall the violence of microaggressions as discussed in the social-psychological literature (Pierce, 1970, 1980; Sue, 2010), but there are three key differences. First, microaggressions are largely described as psychological phenomena, meaning they are mental stressors and subtle traumas that affect self-perception, body image, and propositional beliefs. Flashpoints, on the other hand, call attention to the preconscious affective intensities and fleshy moods which are not reducible to internal, mental operations. Second, microaggressions are directional. They have (1) an efficient cause and (2) a specific target. But flashpoints lack this necessary directional structure. They are more diffuse and atmospheric in nature. They involve bodies but are primarily charges and discharges that are anterior to the body. Third, unlike microaggressions, flashpoints are more deeply ambivalent and thus difficult to share/describe. While it is certainly the case that microaggressions leave the target feeling confused (questioning what just happened, possible motives, etc.), such responses are heightened or intensified with a flashpoint precisely because an efficient cause may be difficult (if not impossible) to identify. In short, microaggressions certainly can be flashpoints (and often are), but not all flashpoints are microaggressions.

Highlighting the unique phenomenological experience of the flashpoint also brings us to the second major intervention of this text. Our specific question concerns the *pedagogy of the flesh* (Darder, 2011), or how this invisible tissue underlying intercorporeal relations can teach lessons about the peculiarities of how sociocultural differences are lived. For us, flashpoints are specific instances in which the flesh educates. Flashpoints help us understand how the flesh complicates dichotomies between self and Other (or self and society, private and public) and certain forms of privileged discourse (which favor either mind or body as foci of experience). Descriptions of flashpoints may help induce what Merleau-Ponty (2012) would call "radical reflection" (p. 251). Whereas intellectual reflection on one's beliefs/mental states pull us away from engaging in the preconscious world of flesh, radical reflection enables us to touch the flesh, and in turn be touched by it. Stated differently, radical reflection returns to the prereflective field of phenomenal experience itself so we might tentatively describe its elemental qualities, structures, and corporeal meanings. Merleau-Ponty describes this gesture as follows: "Neither the object

nor the subject is *posited*. In the originary field, we do not have a mosaic of qualities, but rather a total configuration that distributes functional values according to the demands of the whole … Thus, reflection only fully grasps itself if it refers to the pre-reflective fund it presupposes, upon which it draws, and that constitutes for it, like an original past, a past that has never been present" (pp. 251–252). Radical reflection returns us to the perceptual entanglement of bodies' push and pull, granting us an opportunity to be educated in ways of the flesh. In other words, flashpoints point toward fleshpoints that *know* the lived experience of sociocultural difference before we consciously articulate what these differences mean.

In this collection, phenomenological descriptions provide flashes of insurrection where the tacit familiarity of the body with the world of sociocultural difference can become thematized and opened for radical reflection. Our third methodological contribution concerns the use of phenomenological descriptions as case studies of the flesh. The *phenomenological case study* provides descriptions of enfleshed bodies and bodies of the flesh in distinct ways. Through radical reflection, readers can become attuned to how bodies move, gesture, sweat, breath, bleed, collide, and merge with one another in the plasma of the flesh. Collections on sociocultural difference often use case studies for their pedagogical content. However, we want to emphasize how a phenomenological case description is itself a *distinct* methodological form of inquiry. Narrative case studies often (1) unfold according to a plotted sequence of fictionalized events, (2) are told from the perspective of a third-person narrator, (3) culminate in a rather (predictable) set of questions and/ or lessons. Phenomenological case studies on the other hand emphasize rich descriptions of lived, first-person experiences wherein familiar narratives are ruptured and easy political, educational, or cultural lessons fall short. The case studies presented in this volume help focus attention on unnerving moments when the ambivalent "lessons" that the flesh teaches concerning sociocultural differences are channeled through bodily relations of violence, tension, fear, anger, uncanniness, desire, and so forth.

Indeed, when first soliciting flashpoints for this volume, we received many narrative cases that had a similar structure: background context, an emergent narrative, the appearance of a problem, a moment of indecision, and a culminating list of lessons learned and advice given. For us, the rather predicable structure of these narratives did not seem to capture the ambiguities and aporias of the fleshy entanglements of bodies. Instead of a typical narrative structure, formal distance, and academic convention, we were looking for descriptions that shocked or surprised us, that captured the embodied qualities of experience, and that exchanged academic detachment

for intimacy and vulnerability. In short, we wanted descriptions that were risky and that made us feel unsure whether or not we should even include them. With this in mind, we urged our authors to revise their cases and to engage in more phenomenological description with less theorizing, less contextual background, and less formal restraint. While sometimes necessary, we felt that these conventions of academic writing could get in the way of *what an experience really felt like*. What emerged from this process of revision were increasingly vivid and rich moments that did not fall into predicable categories. The flesh had started to speak.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

We organized the resulting phenomenological case studies loosely in terms of six different kinds of flashes. The organization around embodied responses provides readers with an alternative way of entering the text, a refreshing departure from the staid manner of organizing books on difference around isolated factors such as class, race, gender, sexuality, ability, and so on. Flashes are not restricted to one set of bodies. Rather, they are transversal intensities within a flesh that is as alien as it is intimate to those it envelopes. These flashes are raw, unnerving, and sometimes disorienting. Some do not easily fit into how we think bodies *should* act or how stories *should* unfold. Most lack closure, and in this sense are radically open-ended or aporetic. While some are grounded in certain phenomenological theory, others push against such theorization. Yet we hope that it is precisely the ambiguities, aporias, and uncanny excesses which make them pedagogically rich for classroom discussion. The flesh does teach, but its lessons are difficult to formulate without being reductive or clichéd. Indeed, to remain true to the phenomena (and thus let the phenomena show themselves), these descriptions have to employ excessive imagery, poetic language, and forms of investigation that might cut too close to the bone for comfort. To be educated by the flesh is therefore an uncomfortable experience precisely because its language does not easily conform to academic standards, scholarly expectations, or political agendas.

Each of the six groupings presents variants on a particular kind of flash with its own phenomenological structure. "Affective Intensity" points toward moments when sociocultural difference writhes across the flesh, producing moody envelopes that might, at first, defy easily identifiable emotions. Whereas emotions often have specific causes and can be clearly labeled, affective intensities surge, sway, leak, and affront us with

tonalities and richness that defy labels and seem to lack efficient causes. "(In)Visibility" speaks to the strange moment when the flesh either makes us visible or invisible, where our color, gender, sexual orientation, class, or even species become salient as sociocultural phenomena. The descriptions categorized under "Disorientation" offer up moments when our everyday orientations are ruptured and no longer provide clear paths for us to follow. Although the self seems lost in such disorientating events, falling off-line also reveals how sociocultural differences make certain lines for certain bodies possible in the first place. The selection of descriptions titled "Assault" exposes the implicit connections between violence on and through the flesh and education within an agonistic society. To assault and to be assaulted means that the flesh rips, tears, but also heals and scars. As such, assault concerns the language and grammar of educational violence as it is written in the medium of skin and bone. "Friction" is a section dealing with the breakdown of intercorporeal immediacy and understanding, and attempts to navigate these breakdowns in order to produce breakthroughs (in the form of new kinds of intimacy or recognition). When certain elements rub together, they produce flashes from the points of contact. Such contact speaks simultaneously to a closeness and a distance, to convergence and divergence—hence the potential within every point of friction to cause heat. Friction within the flesh means that flesh brings us together just as much as it tears us apart. Finally, we have included a section of flashes titled "Bodily Resistance." Such resistance is often, as Weheliye would remind us, preconscious and below the level of consciously directed agency. This is a subaltern resistance found in fingers, hands, muscle, and tissue—a certain kind of resistance that can only be claimed by a subject as an act after the fact and upon radical reflection.

We hope that this collection of flashes will get under the skin, irritate, and produce a certain shadowy imprint on the eye of the reader. The descriptions are, themselves, part of the flesh of the world, and therefore embody the sting of sociocultural differences. They might leave us temporarily blinded by a flash of (mis)recognition or silenced by a sensation of painful (un)familiarity. For Merleau-Ponty (1968), ideas are merely extensions of the flesh—we can only think that which the flesh already knows. In this sense, descriptions as phenomenological case studies are inscriptions on and through flesh. The descriptions are alive: they bleed, they whisper, they cry, they spill off the page, they haunt, they fracture, they attract, they repel, they dream, and they startle. And this flesh is *ours*—to cut into it is to cut into that which binds and separates subjects within a world rife with racism, classism, sexism, and anthropocentric hierarchies. Thus, we cannot dissect this flesh too quickly, transforming it into a mere object that we can critically

analyze from a safe distance. Rather descriptions *of* the flesh are always *in* the flesh, calling forth an educational ethic that demands the extension of hospitality toward the ache of longings, the sadness of regrets, the pain of loss, the inheritance of shame, and the disorientation of existential doubt. This is the uncanny terrain of pedagogies in the flesh.

NOTES

1. King, C. (2015, May 6). Bree Newsome says Ferguson gave the movement "a revolutionary spirit." *The St. Louis American*. Retrieved from http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/article_0673c41a-4297-11e5-b2d3-1bd91ef38ff8.html

2. Kellman, L., & Woodward, C. (2015, August 26). What's behind the "anchor babies" buzz phrase? *The Rundown, PBS Newshour*. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/whats-behind-anchor-babies-buzz-phrase/

3. This excerpt comes from Helen Michalowski's well-known collection of male war veterans' accounts of bootcamp and other aspects of military life. Michalowski, H. (1982). The army will make a "man" out of you. In P. Macallister (Ed.), *Reweaving the web of life: Feminism and nonviolence* (pp. 326–335). Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.

4. *Flashpoint* is usually spelled *flash point* when referring to the meaning given by scientists. In chemistry, for example, flash point is defined as the "temperature at which the vapour above a volatile liquid forms a combustible mixture with air" (Daintith, 2008, p. 227).

5. The notion of pedagogical flashpoint is inspired by the concept of curriculum flashpoints put forth by Kraehe, Hood, and Travis (2015). Curriculum flashpoints are declarations and provocations of knowledge contained in concepts, stories, images, sound, movement, language, and other artifacts. They are the catalytic ideas and materials that mediate latent understandings of sociocultural difference and, therefore, can be used to support critical reflection and the construction of new knowledge.

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Affective Intensity

When Bodies Require Trigger Warnings

Tapo Chimbganda

In 2014, Oberlin College in Ohio drafted a trigger warning policy spurred by a petition from students who felt some of their learning was affecting their mental and emotional well-being (Flaherty, 2014). The ensuing global debate focused on the role of academia in dealing with what can be referred to as *difficult knowledge*. During this debate one black female professor, Jade Davis (2014), wrote of her embodiment of triggers: "For many students, realizing that, as the professor, I am the person who has knowledge and power over them, is traumatic." Her comment was apt in reframing the pedagogical significance of race, gender, and other embodiments of difference in higher education. I therefore explore the rejection of difficult knowledge and the resistance to social justice pedagogy in higher education. Worth contemplating is the requirement of trigger warnings for certain embodiments of difference. The significance of Davis' statement lies in the interrogation of what constitutes a "trigger" and how these triggers are in fact mechanisms for the perpetuation of higher education as a hegemonic space where difference is potentially harmful to those who are visibly different and most importantly to those who must highlight, through pedagogy, the injustice of these differences.

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I reflect on my own experience as a racialized woman teaching about the psychosocial consequences of race and gender politics to people who see my role as accuser, not educator. My flesh, within this dichotomy, triggers guilt, anxiety, and resentment in my students. The students' resistance to the implications, complications, and disruptions—all of which are necessary to accomplish some level of social justice in pedagogy—make this my difficult knowledge. As I teach, students perceive my actions as accusatory and selfish. They see me as the embittered black woman calling for a pound of their white flesh. This dynamic plays out in countless ways that create a tense learning environment. My body becomes a site of contention. One particular incident, which I can only describe as a flashpoint, served as a pedagogical moment for me as I was forced to acknowledge my embodiment of triggers for some white students.

One day, I walked into my undergraduate class and began my lecture on racism in early social work practices. I pointed out, with documented evidence, that racialized children were often unnecessarily apprehended from their disadvantaged homes. These children were placed with white middle and upper class guardians who were supposed to be better parents on the simple basis of socioeconomic status. That statement immediately alienated me from my students in a way I had not previously encountered. I witnessed the exchanged looks and the changes in demeanor as my students visibly rejected my words. Then, one student looked at me with what I can only describe as disgust and muttered, "Here we go."

My immediate reaction was silence. What had I triggered? What was this student bracing for? Should I be bracing myself, too? Should I keep going and risk more than a muttered resistance? I wondered, in my secondary processing, had my words elicited this response or was it my body as I was saying the words. Did my black body make what I was saying offensive?

I knew already that I would not back down on a matter of social justice but how could I teach and console at the same time? The animosity that my body triggered created a tense teaching atmosphere. Students who normally spoke up and responded to my words now hid in their silence. Silence was not an option for me. This is when I learned—my flashpoint— that being a black social justice-focused educator would require me to injure many students. I would hurt them, trigger their anxiety and their anger, but never console them. If I chose to console them I would be choosing to be silent about injustice. At that moment, I cast my lot with those who refuse to close down their identifications in the name of social order, efficiency, mastery, and yes, even community (Britzman, 1998).

Flashpoints such as these happen as the word implies—in a flash but in that moment countless and complex traumatic histories converge in a spark that triggers a fight or flight response in students. They also occur at the level of the flesh, where physical pain may be absent but a fight or flight reaction is triggered. Standing in front of them, not only am I holding the trigger threatening their blissful ignorance but I am the trigger itself. I, in myself, create what students cannot bear and yet I cannot bear their inability to bear me. In that space we are engaged in inconsolable education that leaves us all in a flux. Inconsolable education occurs "when the histories of inequalities are viewed as interruptions to the real business of curriculum, when the complications of lives lived are dismissed as irrelevant complaints" (Britzman, 1998 p. 52).

I cannot utter the word "race" without drawing attention to my own and that of my students. I have come to realize that there is no way around this dynamic. That flashpoint was for me a revised lesson in traumatic pedagogy (Chimbganda, 2015). I had experienced my own evisceration as a student forced to sit through traumatic pedagogy. This time, it was I who was disarticulating my students and refusing to console them. As I reflect on the brutality of pedagogy, I wonder if there is any form of social justice pedagogy without evisceration.

During the 2014 debate on trigger warnings, a few crucial points highlighted the complexity of teaching in higher education. My flashpoint is a summation of a couple of these points. First, in higher education there appears to be some confusion between the quest for political correctness and the quest for mindful education. As Smith (2014) states, "We are beginning to see a new era of correctness, in which the protection of a small group of students who might be harmed in an unpredictable fashion overrides the academic freedoms of university professors." Avoiding teaching and articulating the injustices we seek to correct through education because they will injure does not result in meaningful learning. However, we should be mindful of what trauma our teaching triggers, in the same way we should be mindful of the triggers we embody in our person.

Secondly, trigger warnings are not just for those who are recovering from trauma. They are warnings that the student might encounter difficult knowledge. They warn that learning and becoming "educated" means acquiring discontentment. This difficult knowledge brings insight, which concerns the acknowledgement of discontinuity from the persistence of the status quo, and hence asks something intimate from the learner (Britzman, 1998). Essentially, what I teach requires students to let go of their resistances.

It requires them to acknowledge the differences between us historically as well as currently. It requires an emotional sacrifice of their privilege. However, as Britzman (1998) asks, "In our time, which, after all, is never just our own time, how can we grapple with the stakes of the learning when the learning is made from attempts at identification with what can only be called difficult knowledge" (p. 118)? My white and privileged students often cannot bear to identify with aggressors in oppressive history. I myself cannot bear to identify with victims of oppressive history, and yet I must teach through this identification. In my flashpoint, I came to this truth and at that moment, had the choice to accept it or reject it just as my students were facing the same options in their own identifications.

I struggle constantly in my pedagogy with this now established practice of difficult knowledge. As I teach, I know there is a resistance and rejection of what my flesh signifies. I must contend with the triggers my body brings to the classroom. In my ongoing practice, that flashpoint has become a point of reference as I continue with my quest to "educate" without mitigation. Indeed, my black body standing in front of the classroom teaching about injustices against racialized peoples might require a trigger warning but what would it read?

Warning! The black woman in front of you will remind you of the aggressive and oppressive acts of white people against non-white people not just historically but currently. It will make you feel guilty, angry, and anxious. She will not console you, even if you cry. But when done, we might all reach a new level of human dignity.

Questions

1. Did my black body make what I was saying offensive? If so, how?
2. Indeed, my black body standing in front of the classroom teaching about injustices against racialized peoples might require a trigger warning but what would it read?
3. As I reflect on the brutally of pedagogy, I wonder is there any form of social justice pedagogy without evisceration?

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The Embodied Harm of Stereotype Threat

Lauren Freeman

You are the only female student in an upper-level undergraduate seminar. Not only are you the only female student in the class, but the discipline is dominated by (white) males. Not only is the discipline dominated by white males, but the professor of this class is a white man. Moreover, there are no female professors (in general, let alone women of color) in the department nor any female graduate students. You have no female mentors, and there are very few other female undergraduate students in the department with whom you can commiserate, or with whom you even just talk about the state of affairs within this class, this department, or this discipline.

The syllabus for the class is vague. Each week, one of the other male students in the class gives a brief presentation on the week's material, though there is no mention of this assignment in the syllabus. You figure that it might be an ad-hoc assignment, or something informal that certain students worked out with the professor in advance. At first, you think nothing of it. But as the weeks go by, you come to realize that this assignment is not ad-hoc, it is invited. More weeks pass and you wait for your invitation. Each week, you get excited for the possibility of presenting on the following week's material. But the invitation never comes. The semester ends.

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You were never asked to give a presentation. You were the only student who did not present. Not only that, you were also the only student in the class who did not speak at all the entire semester. You never voluntarily participated. You were never called upon to speak.

Most often you aren't a nervous or shy person. In fact, you tend to be quite outspoken, confident, and comfortable in your own skin.

Not in this class.

You sit at the same seminar table with all the other men. They joke around with one another before class begins, make small talk, compare the weeks for which they were asked to give presentations, but nobody notices you, nobody asks you how you are, when you are presenting, or why you are not presenting. Not only does that issue fly under the radar, but you fly under the radar (or were you pushed?).

In this classroom, you feel invisible.

You are invisible.

You clam up, sweat, lose your appetite. Your stomach becomes knotted. Your mouth goes dry. When you try to take notes, your hand shakes. As your pen touches the paper, you notice a slight tremor. Your handwriting reflects this. Had you been asked to speak, or had you been spoken to, your voice would have quivered, you heart would have raced. But you weren't, so they didn't. Would anyone have noticed if you'd stopped showing up to class? Doubtful. Would anyone have cared? Probably not.

You meet with the professor in his office to discuss your term paper. Maybe in this context, things would be different. But you are nervous, your heart races, your palms sweat, your hand shakes, your voice quivers, your thoughts come out all wrong.

You leave his office.

Your passion dies.

You begin to wonder what *you* are doing wrong, what *you* aren't properly understanding, why the professor isn't excited by you or your excitement, why you weren't asked to give a presentation, or asked about what you think, or why in class you are not spoken to at all.

You feel cold and discouraged and numb.

You feel that you aren't smart enough to be there, that you aren't living up to the standards. That you *can't* live up to the standards. You feel like a failure. You are a failure. Surely, if you were smart enough, analytic enough, philosophical enough, creative enough, or if you'd had anything important to say, then you'd have been asked to give a presentation or at

the very least, you'd have been engaged with or spoken to. Surely it's that your ideas aren't interesting or worth hearing. But how would anyone have even known?

***

Analysis of the Case

The unwelcoming, monolithically male classroom environment is fueling an embodied reaction in our female student. Her reaction also manifests itself psychologically and existentially as a changed attitude about herself, her competence, her potential, and her worth as a student. What can explain these and other dimensions of this situation is stereotype threat (ST). ST is a social psychological phenomenon which, most generally, can be defined as a concern about being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype (Williams, Jurcevic, & Shapiro, 2013). ST occurs when environmental cues make salient to a person the negative stereotypes associated with their group, thereby triggering physiological and psychological processes that have negative consequences for their performance on certain tasks (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and on their behavior and self-identity more generally (Blum, 2016; Freeman, 2018; Goguen, 2016; McKinnon, 2014). ST affects members of stigmatized or underrepresented groups when they are minorities in certain contexts. It works by producing additional cognitive burdens that interfere with and often impede one's performance. It can also undermine interest and motivation in the stereotype-relevant environment or task (Williams et al., 2013). ST can be internalized and affect how members of stigmatized or underrepresented groups think of themselves but it doesn't always operate in that way. That is, to experience ST one need not necessarily have internalized the negative stereotype; one must only have an awareness that the negative stereotype exists and be motivated to disprove it. *Inter alia*, for one who suffers from ST, it involves a fear of being judged or treated stereotypically and anxiety that negative stereotypes might be true of them, or that others might think that they are true. ST is provoked when one belongs to a group that is negatively stigmatized in a certain context (e.g., racial minority and lower socioeconomic status [SES] students in academic settings, female students in math classes) (Croize & Clare, 1998; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995), when one is in that context, and when one's group membership is made salient.

Some of the documented consequences of ST within academic settings—many of which our student above experienced—are that it can interrupt learning (Rydell, Shiffrin, Boucher, Loo, & Rydell, 2010), increase mind-wandering (Mrazek et al., 2011), reduce perceptions of one's own potential in stereotype-relevant environments (Aronson & Inzlicht, 2004), undermine one's sense of belonging in the stereotyped domain (Good, Dweck, & Rattan, 2008; Walton & Cohen, 2011), reduce interest in stereotype-relevant majors and careers (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002), thereby limiting the range of professions that those suffering from ST can pursue and in the long run can contribute to educational and social inequality (Good et al., 2008; Schmader, Johns, & Barquissau, 2004), foster disengagement from the stereotype-relevant domain (Nussbaum & Steele, 2007), and, over time, it can lead to poor physical health (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

What is equally worrisome about ST is that the harms that result from it not only manifest themselves physiologically, but become embodied (Freeman, 2015, 2018). What it means for the harms of ST to become embodied is that they are not just momentary, one off experiences, nor are they merely "skin-deep." Rather, they can be penetrating and enduring. That is, the harms that result from ST don't cease when students leave classrooms; rather they become a background context, horizon, or atmosphere within or against which people experience themselves in the world. In other words, what it means for the stresses of ST to become embodied is that they become a part of a person's daily existence in ways that manifest themselves through a person's bodily existence and comportment in the world. Specifically, and as we saw above, the stresses and anxieties become a part of *how* one exists in the world. Our student lost her appetite, displayed anxiety, had trouble speaking, and shook with nervousness; on account of these responses, she lost interest in her studies. Fears of confirming stereotypes can manifest themselves consciously and unconsciously. They manifest themselves consciously in anxiety of which subjects are aware and they manifest themselves unconsciously in a subject's elevated heart rate, increased blood pressure, and in anxiety of which subjects are unaware.[1]

What our student experienced in the *fleshpoint* discussed above—a common stereotype about women in male-dominated fields—is that she wasn't as smart, qualified, outspoken, interesting, quick, competent, or successful as her male counterparts, nor did she have the potential to be. The male-dominated classroom environment within the context of a larger male-dominated discipline is causing our female student to live up

to these negative expectations of how females perform, or better, under-perform, along with the bodily manifestations of these lower expectations. Moreover, our student comes to define herself in terms of these stereotypes. Her self-understanding and performance are altered and diminished on account of the ST. Her feeling in the world has changed. She sees herself negatively, defines herself through the lens of others, and ultimately lives in a space that is not hers. She tries to succeed in this alien, unwelcoming space, but she cannot. Her gender precludes that. Her body precludes that. In this space, success is reserved for males. Her changed attitudes about herself, her diminished performance in this space, and her embodied reactions to this are causing her harm. This is worrisome. It is worrisome because it is all too common.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever experienced stereotype threat in a classroom or other setting? If so, what could the teacher, professor, or person in a dominant position have done differently to alleviate this harm?
2. If you are an educator, how might you change your classroom practices to try to alleviate stereotype threat in your students?
3. What are some other strategies that educators can use to make their classroom safer for marginalized students?

NOTE

1. For more detail on an experiment that studied anxiety that was the result of ST of which subjects were unaware, see Steele (2010, pp. 114–118).

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Grieving with Rage

Ryan Kober, David Montalvo, Monica Moreno,
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I will copy you in on the University notice, but I do want you to be aware.

I quickly glance at the inbox on my phone. I know I should not do it; I need to concentrate on my family not on work while I get dinner ready. I keep looking. I see an email from the Dean of Students and I open it feeling guilty. I justify my compulsion thinking that if it is from the Dean it must be important. I start reading, "It is with a heavy heart" my eyes quickly scroll to the end of the sentence and finally I read her name. My heart feels heavy too. I have gotten used to the closeness of death recently—my father, my graduate students, the elderly patients at the facility where my mom stayed recently. But this time, my heart is filled with panic instead of sadness because I can't remember her face. I try to pause for a moment, but I fail to remember what she looks like.

The voice of my mother jolts me. She reminds me that it is time for me to take her blood pressure, and I am forced back to my life as I see the numbers on the blood pressure monitor slowly climbing. I swallow my emotions, and shake the guilt off. I have to continue my second shift, or is it my third? I better get dinner on the table quickly, tomorrow is a school day, and my daughter needs to go to sleep.

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I open my eyes the next morning and remember the email. I take care of my daughter, my mom, my dog, get done with my first shift, and settle on my computer to begin the second one. I take a deep breath and read the email again looking for her name. I search the university's official electronic class roster hoping I can find her picture. I look through the list, click on her name, and open her student profile. My heart races. I see her face, and I recognize her beautiful smile. She is now alive in my memories, and I feel rage. I remember that the morning before her tragic death she uttered some of her last words in my class, in my presence, and I am now aware of all that we lost. –**Profe**

The Dean of Students Office has received notification that [your student] passed away on April 27, 2016.

"Grand Prairie police have arrested a 22-year-old man after finding a 20-year-old woman dead with gunshot wounds in his parked car at an apartment complex." (CBS DFW, 2016)

I was walking across campus when I read the email informing me of her death. My heart dropped to my stomach and I felt sobs forming in my chest. I cried as I walked back to my apartment, and once I was inside, I sobbed on my roommate's shoulder. My voice kept repeating in my head how unfair it was for her life to be taken away so violently, and how she'll never get the chance to live out her dreams. Nothing felt real in that moment; everything seemed surreal and dreamlike. My mind raced back to the night we worked on our group presentation, back to a time where she was laughing and talking about her favorite artist and the paintings she had to finish for her finals. Then it raced forward to the day we presented our project and how nervous we were. I cried off and on for that entire weekend. Despite only knowing her for a brief semester, I will always remember her by her kind soul and smile and the joy she felt when she talked about art. Her spirit lives on in my memories of her. –**Autumn**

I remember waking up to an email notification from Profe. I read just the first sentence and had to stop. I read it over several times to make sure I read it correctly until it finally sunk in.

This is real.

My first instinct was to text Autumn. She saw the email, came home, and we cried together. The next several days felt strange. I thought that I couldn't mourn "too much" because I wasn't that close to her, but I also felt that if I didn't mourn at all then I was a bad person. I felt a sense of guilt because I did not know how to mourn correctly. To make it even worse, practically nobody else was mourning, and I knew the semester

would continue on regardless of her passing away. We simply were not given adequate time to process it all. It was all so sudden, so brutal, so tragic. I remember Autumn asking me if we should do the peer evaluations for her. It was part of the class requirement for our group project. I paused for a second and jokingly thought, "Well, she has been gone for a while so I'll have to take off points." I know it was probably in bad taste. I'd like to think I was just trying to cope. I don't really know if I have been dramatically changed. If anything, my worldview may have gotten more nihilistic. –**David**

All, [your student] has been withdrawn from Spring 2016.

As I continued to read through the email describing her death, the violence of the crime deeply impacted me and the shock kept me from reacting immediately. The moments of emotional release came suddenly and each time they occurred when talking with fellow students. As a graduate student, I often feel as if I am at the beginning of my professional life, so engulfed in tasks, deadlines, and assignments that I forget to step outside of the academic bubble. Over the past year as I experienced loss, I am always left feeling angry about the ways in which the lives of students just get pushed aside and forgotten. In this case it came to a head as we were forced to enter her final grade for the semester only to find that the two options available, Withdrew Passing or Withdrew Failing, were not representative of her circumstances or achievements in the course. I continued to think about why this issue was impacting me, and why I was so angry. As I gave myself the space to contemplate, I realized that it was due to the collective stance of universities toward deceased students: they no longer mattered. As soon as a student is unable to contribute to the university, the university stops investing, their lives no longer matter. Her death, for me, represented the lack of humanity, lack of long-term investment, and, ultimately, the lack of love within institutions of higher education. –**Ryan**

I thought I should ask about the final essay. Is there something I should include in my essay about her? How should I honor her work when discussing our project? I've never had to deal with something like this, and I am really saddened to have to ask these questions but I want to make sure she is recognized and honored properly. –**Monica**

"The emotional force of a death … derives less from an abstract brute fact than from a particular intimate relation's permanent rupture." (Rosaldo, 1993)

Our collective rage has a purpose. In the seminal book, *Culture and Truth*, anthropologist Renato Rosaldo (1993) theorizes rage as an integral component of the ongoing process of grieving. For Rosaldo,

death has an emotional force which can only be known subjectively. Acknowledging and processing the emotional force of experiencing collective pain has the potential for creative action. Much like this opportunity to write together, there continues to be urgent need for spaces in which students and educators can cross over the institutional boundaries that encourage us to remain detached from each other. Because of the experiences of deep pain and grief that we felt after her passing, we are able to acknowledge the necessity for intimacy and the institutional forces that push against our shared human experiences. The façades of "student" and "teacher" that we spent all year building up were forced to come down as we grieved together. In this space, emotions were no longer a weakness or something that needed to be hidden; rather they were the tools that helped us to truly acknowledge and see each other.

It was the tragedy of this death that woke us up to the dehumanizing power of institutions and their traumatic effect on all of our lives. The attempts to wipe clean and control the force of life and death ruptured in front of us as we agonized over our mixed emotions. We learned to search for each other's souls, fighting against the distancing of the brutal forces of erasure within the university. Together, in our class, we experienced silence, and we heard each other's hearts beat for the first time. In this fleeting moment, we felt our lives in communion, and, as we write about her death firmly grounded in our lives as brown, queer, white, female students and faculty, we try to cultivate the intimacy taken away from all of us.

QUESTIONS

1. How has death been a part of your life? How has it affected your community?
2. In what ways do you think rage facilitates or impedes discussions about systemic oppression?
3. What do you think are some of the ways in which educational institutions dehumanize students and their families?
4. What roles should emotions play in fostering "safe" spaces for students?
5. What are some of the ways educators and educational institutions can help recognize and honor the legacy of marginalized individuals and groups in our society?

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Feeling Pedagogy: Parenting and Educating in the Flesh

Keffrelyn D. Brown and Anthony L. Brown

A Pedagogy That Hurts

As Black parents, we understand going to the library can incite emotions of both fear and excitement. The fear being that most of the books whether fiction or nonfiction will explicitly or implicitly adhere to a White Eurocentric world view. The excitement, however, is that the library is also a place where you can find histories and truths about the world that you might not find in school or at the local bookstore.

On this day, we had our usual large stack of books, some listed on the school summer reading list, and a good number we selected had African Americans represented in the story. Our son, with his usual excitement, proudly went to the self-check-out and scanned all the books we selected. This routine had become our ritual. We believed that if our son went to the library frequently, he would nurture a love of books. This would give him access to a whole world of imagination, creativity, as well as cultural capital gained from just going to the library. Even more, going to the library, he would learn how to develop an intellectual arsenal to ward off the subtle and overt world of White supremacy and miseducation about Black life.

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From a standpoint of fear, the library was the canonic guardian of White lies but, in keeping with the long tradition of Black freedom, was also a space of transformation from the cruel world of anti-Blackness (Dumas, 2016) waiting to corrupt the conscience of our young and impressionable Black boy. The library, both a space of problem and possibility, was an appropriate place to find stories that echoed the histories of joy, pain, love, anger, and human condition. These stories would be read in the quiet of the night, becoming part of our son's memories and growing knowledge of books.

As a new father, Anthony had always dreamed of the day that he could take part in the sacred tradition of parenthood—the bedside chapter book read-a-loud. This was a precious moment for both of us, but particularly for Anthony. The bedside read-a-loud offered an intimate space of connection and security, while also challenging every myth about the absent Black father. That summer we chose first to read one of the Laura Ingalls Wilder (Wilder, 1953) books, *Farmer Boy*, since staff at our son's school held this series in high regard. Neither of us had read *Farmer Boy* or any of the other books in the series as children. We selected this text because it focused on a little boy (Wilder's husband when he was a child) and we thought our son might make a connection with the main character. While our son enjoyed the book, several brief comments that portrayed Indigenous people in a stereotypical (and dehumanizing) fashion put us off. We were surprised to learn that this story was situated in a context where hostility existed between White settler families and Indigenous people native to those communities—what Tuck and Yang, (2012) call settler colonialism. These sections were generally only one sentence so we decided to edit out these portions of the story since we were already well immersed in the text.

When we finished, our son wanted to read more books about the little boy in the story. We told him about Wilder's companion book that described her experiences living on a farm as a young girl. This text was *Little House in the Big Woods* (Wilder, 1932). A few days had passed and similar to *Farmer Boy* we encountered a small portion in the middle of the story that included a questionable portrayal of an Indigenous man as an expert (if savage) runner. We stopped reading for a moment, addressing this issue with our son and then continued. This was exacerbated by something we never imagined reading. In an effort to keep the reading lively, Anthony sang the following passage:

So they went laughing to bed and lay listening to Pa and the fiddle singing:

> *"There was an old darkey*
> *And his name was Uncle Ned,*
> *And he died long ago, long ago.*
> *There was no wool on the top of his head,*
> *In the place where the wool ought to grow."*

At this point, Anthony had read enough. His first emotion was anger but not wanting to set a bad example to our son he tempered his emotions (although he wanted to fling the book across the room). Our son knew something had gone wrong. The room was quiet and the zeal Anthony had for reading the book immediately left the room. Anthony stepped outside of the room to silently read the rest of the passage:

> *"His fingers were as long,*
> *As the cane in the brake,*
> *His eyes they could hardly see,*
> *And he had no teeth for to eat the hoe-cake,*
> *So he had to let the hoe-cake be."*
> *"So hang up the shovel and the hoe,*
> *Lay down the fiddle and the bow,*
> *There's no more work for old Uncle Ned,*
> *For he's gone where the good darkeys go."*

Angered by the reading, it hit Anthony. He was singing a minstrel song! The Black minstrel tradition of entertainment was popular during the late 1800s and provided derogatory images of Black people as happy-go-lucky simpletons, satisfied with their status as second-class citizens. As Anthony silently read and reread the passage to himself outside the door of our son's room he realized that this racist text had entered the safe confines of our home.

Reading the vileness of the passage brought a strange feeling of guilt and/or shame. We were taking part in denigrating ourselves! How could Anthony have allowed a text of such anti-Blackness to become part of our sacred family tradition? What struck us about this experience was that we had not randomly decided to read this book, but rather our son's school, one committed to a humanistic education, had identified the text as recommended reading. For both of us, this situation brought anger, frustration and confusion. Who should we blame for this? Was the school

to blame for placing this on the list of must-reads? Were we for selecting it and reading it in our home? Should we condemn Laura Ingalls Wilder for publishing this and other books steeped in Black and Indigenous racist rhetoric? Should we ask that schools ban its future use?

We were arrested with anger and the uneasiness that a book so beloved, both well-received and often used in elementary schools (as we have later witnessed) could have such problematic ideas about race. Taken in consideration with the all too common problem of Black and Indigenous absence in American children's literature, this whole situation becomes even more absurdly vile! In this case, we existed, but in blackface! This was minstrelsy and worst of all, nobody around us seemed to know or care that a beloved author and book was anti-Black and racist!

Our sacred space had certainly been tarnished but like all good freedom fighters we tarried along, taking from this incident the cold realization that racism is everywhere. Just like we have to teach our children to avoid the trigger-happy police officer that might do harm, we must also teach our children how to recognize and then navigate the subtle violence of anti-Blackness.

Yes, we were angered, saddened and also confused. We also wrote letters to the school leadership, met with teachers and staff, published a paper on race and curriculum that included passages from other racist children books and we told everyone we could about this book. We also, in the words of hip hop artist Jay-Z, "brushed the dirt off our shoulders" (Carter & Mosley, 2004) and continue to persevere with our sacred tradition of finding and reading aloud chapter books for our son and now daughter. We also have a renewed awareness that race matters in the most subtle and unexpected of ways. Being Black in America is emotional—sometimes invoking sadness, fear and anger. But like James Brown once said: "we gotta get over before we go under" (Brown, 1974). This is the existential experience of being Black, an academic, and a parent in America.

Moving Forward

Most days, parenting is difficult. At least it is for us. It is never clear if any decision is the right one or if how we chose to respond will pan out as helpful, instructive, or lead to some yet to realize destruction. Children do not come with manuals. Much of what we have learned is gained in the moment or reflective of what we have (or wished we had not) experienced ourselves. The challenges of parenting are endless. And they are real. Deeply felt and enshrined in our bodies. This is the essence of what a pedagogy of flesh means.

Incidents such as the one we described crop up in our everyday lives and remind us that the education work we do is real and that it matters. These incidents, along with the theories and the emotions associated with them fuel our passion to learn more and do more toward creating a society and educational system that is more equitable for all. A pedagogy of flesh is real. It is felt. Deeply. This pedagogy is emotional and it asks that we take notice of how concerns over our Black children's education in an anti-Black world reside in every fiber of our bodies. Here, theory meets the flesh. Our work is personal and individual but it is also structural. A common, everyday family ritual of bedtime reading fully illuminated the longstanding anti-Black curricula practices scholars, including ourselves, have examined in and beyond the twentieth century. This does not make it easier to address when confronted with it in the everyday space of our homes. In our profession we research, write, present, and teach about the relationship between teaching, curriculum and historically marginalized students of color. We are keenly aware of the research on the negative social and academic outcomes that result when culture and race are rendered invisible in PK-12 schools.

But as parents and people of color ourselves we are also painfully aware of the colorblind and nonaffirming curriculum knowledge and learning experiences offered to students and their connection to students and the families and communities from which the students come. The challenge that we, and so many parents of color, encounter is finding ways to affirm the racial, ethnic, and cultural selves of marginalized children of color in the knowledge made available in schools and venerated and honored across society.

QUESTIONS

1. How can parents address issues of racism when they occur in unpredictable ways?
2. Based on this story, what theories of race and racism can be employed to examine this case?
3. What advice would you offer this family to address this issue?

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Tears at the Eye Doctor

Samuel D. Rocha

I am seated at the retina specialist office, waiting for a 12:30 p.m. appointment. I arrived at noon. Just earlier I was seated on the 99 express bus where I was reading an interview with translators, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, in the Summer 2015 issue of *The Paris Review*. As I read Pevear say "He [Tolstoy] liked to attach certain epithets to certain people," I was gripped in a sudden emotional sense of what I was doing and who I was to be doing it. My eyes welled with tears and a feeling of raw gratitude swept over me. As soon as the moment faded, the bus stop arrived and I walked to my appointment to write this description in the waiting room.

These moments of sudden tears have become ordinary, but never routine. Only a few people have asked me why I cry. No. I don't think anyone has asked me directly, but I've been told that someone asked someone else about it one time. In every instance of tears I can recall a sentiment identical and universal, indisputable. It is not as simple as "raw gratitude." It extends into the sense that I am acting out a work of fiction, that I could not have

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ever imagined that I would be a university professor, paid well to read and write and talk to people—sometimes I am even allowed to sing and play guitar. There is something foreign to me about this way of life that, at the exact same time, feels effortless—suspiciously effortless.

I was going to write about my grandfather's funeral, starting with the flexing sinew, fiber, and muscle of the horses standing nearby. Then I thought I'd describe my cousin and uncle's Navajo prayer to the four directions at my other grandfather's funeral or the shoveling of dirt into his grave. In a way, I am writing about both of those things because these tears are also a sense of kinship to them and all my ancestors, while also feeling that I couldn't be further away from them in my present state of being.

I am forced to interrupt and remind you, dear reader, that while this is but a *description* of something, it can only accomplish a description of what I am doing seated in this chair as the clock now reads 12:21 p.m. And even this more present existence, in this chair, is not what you are reading, because *you* are reading and I am no longer writing. Everything I am saying has already been said and offered; it is up to you, now, to decide what to do with it.

My ancestors are not well known to me, although I know that I come from the lands of South Texas, the Rio Grande Valley, and the Southwestern Rockies of New Mexico and Colorado. My father was adopted and my mother's side of the family has its own unique complications. My parents raised me in a niche of Pentecostal Roman Catholicism between the USA and Mexico, where they were full-time missionaries. It was a high calling, but the day-to-day life was often insular. Nothing could have seemed more remote than the Academy. I aspired to become a priest or an office worker—maybe a lawyer.

Many have grown up poor, but the sort of poverty I have in mind was ancestral, and even cultural, and also voluntary. This means that my sense of being poor is not Marxist. I am proud of much of it, but it also weighs on me as I become more and more aware of becoming quite middle class. This transition sounds purely economic but, again, there is much more to it. When I buy my children brand new Crocs at the mall or when I take the family out to a restaurant I will sometimes experience the same tears I did on the bus just minutes ago.

It is now 12:30. Time to check in.

They will soon dilate my eyes and I won't be able to type. But, until then, I should remind you that I am trying to describe something that just happened on the bus and happens a lot, something that is real to me, but

that I do not quite understand. The affective presence of being moved to tears is easy to understand by those willing to experience it.

The drops are in. We'll see how long my eyes last.

My grandmother, Elida Rocha, had this condition. She would cry almost on demand, my father and grandfather would sometimes tease her for it—"va llorar, va llorar…" She would cry telling jokes and saying prayers and goodbyes. I never felt that she was being dramatic or fake. Her tears never struck me as insincere. I never felt comfortable with her tears being made into a joke.

My father has this affective presence when he speaks at church, especially his testimony which is a religious conversion story of how he was healed from a decade-long addiction to heroin. He doesn't quite cry; he has learned to choke up, to keep his composure enough to continue speaking.

I saw my paternal grandfather cry, a real hard short cry, only once that I can remember, when visiting his father's grave. It struck me how sorrow can stay fresh after so long. Tears are not something I can recall from my mother's side of the family, but my grandfather's lack of tears was a sign of the same phenomenon for me. At his funeral dinner, my mother told a story about giving him a gift that he received by saying "I don't deserve this." She cried then, and I did too, and those words of his tell me the same story.

My sons are moved to tears often, especially by film and literature. As we read *Old Yeller* we all cried during the last chapter. When we finished reading *Redwall* I cried the same tears I've been trying to understand—my tears were not brought on directly by the book, as with *Old Yeller*; these were meta-tears, tears that observed the situation and brought it into the whole.

I've always been moved to tears in my imagination. I used to imagine the death of my parents and my sorrow about it. This was not a fantasy; it was an experience of premature mourning. I wonder about my eulogy, sometimes. I rehearse lectures and acceptance speeches and often I even try them out aloud and find myself moved to the same sort of tears. When I was a young boy I am told…

Time to get some pictures of my retina taken. It is 12:47 p.m.

Back.

When I was young I am told that I was once playing make-believe, pretending to hunt a bear, and was found sobbing in the bathroom because the bear was going to eat me. This sort of behavior hasn't stopped entirely. I suspect that some…

Time to get my eye pressure tested. It is 12:51 p.m.

Back. More drops applied, but somehow I am able to see, mostly, although it is getting slightly blurry.

I suspect that my tears are linked to this sense of imagination that I acted out as a child. If I am speaking about something to my students, there is often something else going on in my mind that can sometimes both compliment and disrupt what I am saying with tears. This is one reason why I have never been suspicious of books. In books there is a sort of immaterial imaginary world that, as cliché as it sounds, provides entry and access and, also, escape and exit.

I've never understood why one should assume that reading Homer or Dante or Twain would make me, or anyone else who is not Greek, Italian, or American, question my identity or become someone else, something I'm not. I read and re-read stories and books without any desire to stay the same or to be what I am. It never occurred to me that my fascination was insufficient. I import myself into books, perhaps, but the truth is that I don't give a damn about my true self or my identity in that way. For me the identity that really matters is the one that these tears remind me of and I am not insecure about keeping or losing them.

This is probably the reason why I have no patience for most political art or "critical" literature or theory. It is not because I find the political aspects ideologically offensive; quite the reverse is often true. But I am not trying to figure out an external or social solution in the liberal or democratic sense. What I am after is that sense that Augustine wrote about in his *Confessions*: "I have become a problem to myself."

I am not confident enough to stop crying. I am secure enough to feel at home in a place that is not my home. I am not able to return to a real home, so I dwell in a mythic one instead.

It is 1:01 p.m. I cannot see well enough to type any more.

QUESTIONS

1. What happened the last time *you* wept?
2. What do tears make *you* think of?
3. Where do *your* tears come from?

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(In)visibility

The Color of Crayons: A Preschooler's Exploration of Race and Difference

N. Dede A. Addy

In the preschool classroom in which I worked, the children were regularly tasked with drawing pictures of themselves. This activity allowed children to demonstrate skills we had been working on in class, such as writing their own names, and to work on fine motor skills through the manipulation of crayons and pencils. Moreover, it allowed the children to express themselves through pictures. For "self-portraits," some children simply drew stick figures or outlined an image of themselves using their favorite color or any crayon they could find: red, blue, black, green. Other children, such as Lily, made a more concerted effort to find a crayon that mirrored their own skin color and to fully flesh out their images, coloring between the outlines. In our predominantly white classroom, this often meant searching for shades of yellow, peach, or tan. Such was the case with Lily.

Lily is a five-year-old Chinese-American child adopted by white US parents. I am a black female teacher-assistant in Lily's classroom. The two of us are the sole individuals of color in this otherwise all-white classroom. On one day in particular, the children have just been instructed to leave the carpet where we have all been sitting, to find their seats at the table,

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and proceed with their drawing for the day. As the children transition to their desks, I stay in the carpeted area to tidy up. Lily hangs back with me in the carpeted area as the rest of the children move to their seats at the table. Lily approaches me, calling my name, "Miss Dede?" She wants to share something with me. "Yes, Lily?" I reply. Although the other children are nearby, they are busy with their drawing task and do not pay us any attention. The lead teacher in the class is also busy preparing for our next activities. This affords Lily and me a bit of privacy. Holding her arm up next to mine, she smiles and says that her and I have "the same skin." This, she contrasts with her white adoptive brother, who is not in the class, but whose skin she tells me is "different." After her proclamation, Lily returns to her desk to draw her picture, beaming with pride. The two of us have just shared a moment. It is a moment that I was not expecting but one that Lily apparently wanted to share with me, and at this time, only me.

In that moment, or sometime just prior, Lily has discovered something new that she now takes the time to share with me. Her smile and her tone reveal that she is proud to share her newfound knowledge, as many of the children in the class do when they have made a new discovery or mastered a new skill. Although Lily has noticed that she is somehow different from the rest of her family, she doesn't display any negativity attached to that discovery. Instead, she seems to demonstrate a pride in figuring something out and in making a connection with me.

In an instant, this new awareness about skin color has shifted Lily's sense of self: shifted the very way she sees herself. One day, she is quite literally a girl with peach-colored skin. The next, she is a brown-skinned girl. Although her skin has not physically changed color, in her eyes, it now takes on a darker shade. The shift appears outwardly in the new color that Lily uses to represent herself on paper. Rather than waiting for another child to finish using a peach or yellow crayon, Lily happily and deliberately reaches for a brown crayon and proceeds to draw a picture of herself with it.

Her drawing, as an outward display, indicates a change in her internal perception. Prior to this moment, Lily identifies herself as a member of her family and one marker of that family membership is the sharing of skin color. Now Lily observes that her own flesh marks her as somehow different from the rest of her adoptive family and positions herself along a spectrum of skin color that aligns her with someone outside her immediate family. Whether the change was prompted by events in the classroom, at home, or both, Lily's new self-awareness shifted her positioning relative to her family and to the rest of the world. Interestingly enough, however, she makes no comment about how her skin color is different from her classmates.

But how did this new way of seeing feel to Lily? Again, her outward responses are informative. As with many young children who master a new skill or piece of knowledge, Lily smiles with pride at her new discovery and her belief that the two of us shared the same skin color. Lily displays similar pride with subsequent self-portrait drawings. In my observation, she beams just as happily over the brown-skinned drawings of herself as she did over the peach-colored ones. Although there was a disorientation and reorientation taking place, she does not display signs of distress. Rather than feeling a literal stripping of the skin, the substitution was a rather easy one, perhaps as easy as changing one's clothes. Still, Lily's new drawings indicate a desire or need to demonstrate her new self-awareness and to represent herself as accurately as possible, in line with her recent reorientation. She is no longer satisfied with the use of a peach- or tan-colored crayon, which had previously seemed highly appropriate. Fortunately, Lily was able to easily find a suitable new crayon, in brown, to fulfill her desire.

Lily's assertion that the two of us have the same skin also demonstrates a longing to belong. Her sense of family belongingness had been disrupted, and she experiences a momentary displacement. Her words and actions suggest a desire to find commonality with another salient individual in her world. My presence and my darker shade of skin help her to reorient herself in a new way. She does not substitute me in place of her parents, but she nevertheless identifies a form of similarity and difference that was previously unexamined. She may not have formed the concept of race or acquired the language to articulate it, but Lily makes an intuitive discovery that skin marks individuals and groups and can be used to unite and divide them. In that moment, Lily longs to find a sense of belonging according to her own skin.

I cannot specify how long Lily identified herself as brown-skinned or if she still perceives herself in this way. I was an assistant in the classroom for just one academic year, and I did not actively track her use of color over that entire period. It is possible that this moment was a mere flash that gave way to another temporary representation of self. Nevertheless, Lily's shift acts as a possible precursor to an understanding of racial difference based on the socially constructed belief that meaningful differences are attached to classifications based on skin color. Moreover, understandings of racial differences are predominated by a white/non-white binary in which whiteness is the norm. Therefore, it is perhaps no surprise that Lily, as an Asian-American, finds that her only option is to orient herself in regards to that white norm, either toward it or away from it. My blackness, acting as a polarizing force, offers a repositioning and she aligns the two of us according to our non-whiteness.

Lily's case offers a glimpse into how markers of racial difference can be seen and felt by young children. A quite literal form of self-representation, a self-portrait, provides an indication of how Lily herself is represented in the world around her. Little work has examined how these instantiations represent children's emerging sense of racial difference and the sensations that accompany these experiences. Closer examination of these moments, particularly in early childhood, can help to reveal more about how socio-cultural difference is lived and experienced in the flesh itself.

QUESTIONS

1. Lily is undergoing a form of self-education. What role, if any, can and/or should teachers, particularly those in early childhood class-rooms, play in these processes of self-discovery?
2. Lily is also processing and negotiating her own identity, in relation to her classmates, teachers, and family members. How are contact, comparison, and desire involved in this process and are they necessary for identity formation to occur?
3. What does this situation suggest about racial and ethnic hierarchies?

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Which Way Did He Go, George?
A Phenomenology of Public Bathroom Use

Kevin Jenkins

The need to expel the body of waste is not only a routine occurrence, it is also a routinely public occurrence. As such, its enactment is a shared experience imbued with a power dynamic between the person with the need and those in a position to permit or deny access to the designated facilities. Most often, the roles of requester and granter are clearly defined and show their relations to this power dynamic. However, in some instances, this interaction does not play out so publicly but is rather a much more private, even secretive, event between the person in need and their world, including their cultural understanding and personal history. Similar to issues surrounding *female or racial motility* (Ahmed, 2006; Alcoff, 1999; Young, 1980) as well as those regarding the *orientation of the queer* (Ahmed, 2006), transgender people, in particular, often face great difficulties when tasked by the need to use public bathrooms whether through some sort of overt prohibition from without or one that is self-imposed.

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A Spaceless Body

Finishing work in the computer lab at the university, I feel an urgent need to urinate and exit the lab, immediately pivoting to the right so that I can proceed down the hall and enter the restroom. I take two steps before lifting my eyes to the door at the end of the hall and immediately stop. My feet will not lift from the ground as if heavily weighted or glued to the spot. I stare at the shut door of the women's restroom. It is no longer a space for me. Although I never felt comfortable going into women's bathrooms, I have almost always used one because I could force myself past the dysphoria associated with being relegated to all-female spaces in light of the need to alleviate bodily distresses. Yet no matter the growing urgency to urinate and the excruciating pain in my lower abdomen and groin that has now begun, this time, I cannot enter that space. After two years of using that particular space, it now prohibits my entrance and seems to repel my presence with an energy as though we are like magnetic poles. I only began hormone replacement therapy (HRT) a few weeks ago as part of my medical transition from female to male. But since I do not yet pass[1] for a man and given my history in that building perceived as a female-bodied person, the men's room denies me as well. My body cannot extend into those spaces (Ahmed, 2006).

This *inhibited intentionality* (Young, 1980) certainly applies to how I move (or not) in the world. It is surely due in part to having been conditioned by the world's insistence on reinforcing some expectations on me based on the gender assigned to me at birth. Nevertheless, for whatever self-imposed restriction I place on myself, it is not based so much on the belief in a lack of ability (Young, 1980) as it is on the understanding of a lack of permissibility. Women can extend themselves into such female-only spaces as women's bathrooms. But since I do not identify myself as a woman nor present myself as one, I cannot extend myself into such spaces. And since the world does not yet recognize me as a man, I may not extend myself into the only designated alternative. The prohibition of my action is overtly stated by signs and symbols on both sets of doors that speak directly to the internal incoherence of my body image (Alcoff, 1999). This point is brought to the foreground with the sudden flash of a memory from years ago when I was prohibited by a college administrator from using either bathroom (Halberstam, 1998). The fear of punishment glues me to this spot in the hallway.

The transgender body disrupts cisgender heterosexual[2] spaces and disorients the inhabitants by its presence. Given that these cisgender spaces

are constituted under the premise of a static, fixed gender that abides by a strict binary assigned at birth, the transgender body denies that premise and is thus assigned no space. Instead, the transgender body is to experience such discomforts as to either resign itself to spacelessness in a cisgender world or to become straightened and aligned with that world (Ahmed, 2006). But a body cannot maintain a state of spacelessness and survive.

In the past, I had to carefully negotiate each visit to a bathroom since no gender-neutral facilities were available. The choice to enter the men's or women's room depended on which had fewer occupants or if the facility were located in an area I felt anonymous so that no one would recognize me and accuse me of being in the wrong space. My past compromise is not an option at this moment. It is no longer just the fear of harassment from others that renders me unable to enter the men's or women's bathroom. I cannot take action because either choice will be a painful defeat. Entering the women's bathroom is acquiescing to the straightening agent (Ahmed, 2006). Using the men's means admitting to my out-of-placeness by acknowledging the validity of my nervousness and sunken stomach when occupying an unfamiliar space with which I know according to my self-image I should instead be wholly familiar. I realize that I will not be able to occupy either of those spaces—never again the women's, but also not the men's—until I feel my presence there will no longer be out of place. My being comfortable and in place will not happen until I become invisible (Ahmed, 2006).

Becoming Invisible

At the end of summer, I am two months on HRT. I have gained some muscle, making me thicker and with shoulders now broader than my hips. Although I have no facial hair, my jaw is squaring out, helping to masculinize my face.

As I enter a retail store, a young man welcomes me with a respectful "sir" and asks if I need a cart. My back straightens, causing me to stand more erect. Pushing the cart through a main aisle with few people in it, a slightly older male shopper walks in my direction on the other side. We lock eyes. His brow furrows. My breath becomes shallow and my pulse quickens with nervousness as he reads me. Does he know? Surely, he knows. Is it because I made eye contact? I hear men do not make eye contact. But, I cannot look away now. If I look away, he may perceive it as weakness or guilt. His eyes narrow slightly as he nods to me. I return the gesture, and

we pass each other. His nod differs from those I previously received. It lacks the cautious hesitation I typically experience when read as a female. Yet I know from the look on his face, one that is familiar after so many years living as a very visible butch lesbian, that he still feels a small amount of uncertainty in determining my gender.

Ten minutes later, a lesbian couple walks in my direction from the other end of a grocery aisle. The tension leaves my muscles as I near them. Though strangers, we have a familiarity through shared experience. I look at them and smile, waiting for the inevitable returned gaze and acknowledgment that lesbians give each other when present in the same space. But they pass me without as much as a glance. The usual orientation of our bodies or faces toward one another does not occur. I stop and turn my head to watch them, expecting them to feel the presence of another lesbian that they just passed and to turn back to verify this. Instead, they continue to the end of the aisle and turn right.

To them, I am merely a heterosexual man with whom they have no connection, someone invisible in a sea of heteronormative consumer behavior in the store. I sigh deeply as my stomach tightens and feels as though it drops. My chest feels hollow. My nasal passages twitch, tingle, and burn as when I am about to cry, but no tears form. Then, this feeling of mourning my lost community is replaced with one of weightlessness as though floating in a dream as I realize that those who would be most able to recognize my former identity no longer do. I am finally invisible.

EXTENDING INTO SPACE

My invisibility allows me to move past borders once closed to me. I extend myself into the male-only space of the men's bathroom, and no one questions my entry. I am not prohibited by its signs and symbols from entering because it is a space that now recognizes me and allows me to recognize it as a space designated for and coherent with my internal body image (Alcoff, 1999). However, when other bodies are present in the space, I understand I may again become visible for my physical discrepancies. My body must appear to perform in particular ways to remain invisible. The resulting tension prevents expedient urination. Despite the relief of extending into a male space, the ability to relieve myself as intended when I enter is arrested.

Questions

1. The author identifies as a heterosexual white man. How might this situation differ for someone of a different race or sexual orientation?
2. Although the author felt he became invisible and could move into the bathroom safely, at the end, he fears becoming visible again. How might a transgender person's perception that they may never become invisible affect how they move about in the world?
3. The statement that the "body must appear to perform in particular ways to remain invisible" while inside the public bathroom implies that there are gendered practices which constitute a bathroom culture. What are some of these practices that you have experienced in a public bathroom setting, and how do they contribute to the culture of that space?

Notes

1. To "pass" in this sense is to be read by others as the gender with which the transgender person identifies.
2. Heterosexuality is included here in juxtaposition to transgender because transgender is often, albeit incorrectly, viewed by the cisgender heterosexual community as either an extension of or a compromise to an LGB identity. Whereas, gender identity and sexuality are actually separate yet complexly interconnected concepts.

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Feeling the Sting of Being a Tattooed Mother in the Public Eye

Cala Coats

The temperature is 96 degrees today, with 84 percent humidity. A thin layer of sweat forms on my forehead, neck, and back as I walk to the car with my computer bag and purse over one shoulder and a bag full of books on the other. Pulling up to the kids' school, I rush in, leaving the A/C cranked in the car. Rose is three and more than capable of walking, but the school is positioned on a steep hill and all the other cars passing through the parking lot make her slow pace feel nearly dangerous. I swoop her up onto my hip and grab Ben's hand.

Both kids are tired and hungry as we drive to the grocery store. I am realizing the banana and crackers I ate before my 11:00 meeting was woefully inadequate, as my neck tightens and shoulders tense with Rose squealing in the back seat. "It's my book!" "I don't care, I had it first." I brusquely respond, "Can you please stop this? We will be home soon enough!" At nine years old, Ben knows better, but irritating his younger sister seems to be irresistible.

The grocery store parking lot is slammed with after-work traffic. Rose whines as we pull in to park, "Mommy, will you carry me? My legs are tired." The sweat rolling down my back pins my tanktop to my skin. I pull

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my hair into a ponytail to get it off my neck and look down at the bright turquoise sweater I'd worn to work crumpled in the passenger seat next to me. Two years ago, it had been part of a fashionable sweater set. Now it had become disfigured and fit tightly around my belly and arms, as I put on weight with the stress of finishing graduate school and moving the family. I begin to pull it on over my moist body, forming a sweat chamber inside the knit fabric. "Oh, fuck this!" I toss the sweater in the passenger seat and step out of the car. This would be the first time since we moved here that I would be in public with my arms showing. I glance back at the sweater as I shut the car door.

Once again, I lift Rose onto my hip and grab Ben's hand to get through another busy parking lot. The sliding doors open, and a man walking out of the store approaches us on my left. He is several inches taller than me, wearing a pale blue golf shirt tucked into khaki slacks. His graying hair is shaved close on the sides with a little length on top. As he passes within inches of me, he looks at Ben and then slows down and holds a long look down at me, sliding his sunglasses on over his eyes.

We turn for the produce section, and Rose asks to be put down. The kids again begin to argue as they race to grab oranges and apples. "OK, stop. Ben, you get the oranges this time and Rose and I will get the apples." "No, I want to get the apples this time." "Mommy, I don't need your help!" I glance over at a couple watching the kids bicker. As their eyes shift to me, I become aware of my body. The lines on my arms feel like a glowing beacon in the store. The man squints as he tries to make out the design on my left arm: a landscape of dandelions that stretched from the top of my shoulder to about two inches above my elbow. The flowers embedded in mixed greens, blues, and yellows had become hard to decipher on my tan skin.

I grab Rose's hand and we walk on. I spot the lettuce I need on the second shelf in between the spinach and cilantro. A woman is standing in front of it with her back to me. Her thigh is resting on the produce case, as she talks with another woman who is facing her, "Well bless his heart. I am so sorry to hear that…" Behind me, Ben exclaims, "Mom, what else do we need?" I really only need a few things, so I decide to reach around the woman rather than waiting for them to finish talking. I pause a second more and stretch my arm behind her, "Pardon me, I just…" She turns with a smile, "Oh excuse … me!" Her eyes glance down nervously at my arm reaching across her, and she jerks backward, hitting her side against her cart. She looks with repulsion at the thick vertical black line that runs

down the middle of my right bicep. The line is part of a silhouette of an electric pole. It connects perpendicularly to five thin lines that wrap around my arm with small birds perched in various positions along them. The piece was taken directly from a photograph I made a couple of years ago. Freckles now appear between the stripes like a constellation, particularly in the summer. Above the top line of birds is a solid black circle behind a large shaded rectangle with the numbers 11:11 inside of it. The unmarked area around the black circle seems to bulge more now than when I got the tattoo five years ago. Above the 11:11 tattoo, a group of entwined, faded green lines with a yellow lotus and other floral designs are held by a blue swallow flying across the front of my shoulder blade. The vines wrap over my shoulder around to my back. Together, the tattoos cover the majority of the skin above my right elbow.

I might as well be wearing nothing as patrons look sideways at me and then down at my children. The flood of frustration, bitterness, and shame are overwhelming. The lines have become a little misshapen and marks have faded with time and pregnancies, making each tattoo feel like a mistake at this moment. I want to shield the kids and scream at the onlookers. I want them to understand the deep significance of each design. Those beautiful, self-inflicted scars that had faded and blurred with time and age tell stories of my life. I look down at the kids, my island of escape in this place, and grab Ben's hand, "Come on guys, let's not take all day on this."

QUESTIONS

1. How does the supermarket become a site of socialization and, as such, teach socially prescribed notions of hetero-normativity through embodied encounters?
2. How are expectations for the visibility of women's bodies, particularly mothers, taught through pedagogical forces of emotions, gestures, and verbal responses resulting from physical interactions?
3. What effect does the visibility of tattoos have on the perception of a mother?
4. How do we navigate regional or place-specific (i.e. rural, conservative, limited diversity) norms, when our values were developed in another place (i.e. urban, mixed ethnicity, diversity of thought)? What if those values relate to physical features? How can we find healthy ways of acclimating in places of sociocultural difference or discrimination?

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Black Counter-Gazes in a White Room

Mark William Westmoreland

I teach at a university where 4% of the student body and 2% of the faculty identify as Black and/or African American.[1] Whiteness is the norm there and too often goes unacknowledged by most students. I teach philosophy, a discipline that is overwhelmingly white in every way, and often teach an introductory course required for all sophomores that raises critical questions about race. I would like for classrooms to be, as bell hooks describes, sites of possibility for the practice of freedom. But, I am not naïve to the potential for classrooms also to be sites in which people of color, Black persons specifically, remain trapped under the white gaze, which is both the lens and action through which whites view—explicitly or implicitly—Black persons. It filters that view so that the default way of seeing Black persons is as ignorant or threatening. The stories below describe situations in which this gaze is projected back onto white subjectivity, rendering it into crisis.

Good philosophy is allegedly philosophy done from a neutral, universalizable perspective.[2] It masks its particularity as white, thereby allowing whiteness to pass as both normative and hidden.[3] Talk of race is assumed to be below philosophical considerations.[4] White students often think

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their faculty of reason is without the influence of sociohistorical context; moreover, they think their whiteness is incidental to their personal identity.[5] Frequently, my Black students explain how the opposite is true for them. They are readily aware of being Black on a white campus and aware that their class contributions will not be met with the degree of respect shared by their white peers. They simultaneously are both Ralph Ellison's invisible person and Frantz Fanon's hypervisible Negro. Their personhood is rendered invisible while their Black body is highlighted as the only salient feature. This chapter details three scenarios of how white and Black students have interacted when issues of race and racism arise in class. Such stories illustrate the shattering of the solipsism of whiteness by demonstrating how whites must face the inadequacies of their (lack of) self-certainty.

1. During a discussion on white privilege, I see a student in the back shifting in his seat. Unsettled, John,[6] a white senior hoping to attend law school, politely complains about how white guys can no longer easily get internships: "Too many of these programs are open only to Blacks. They get their own scholarships for being Black. And now, even internships 'open' to everyone end up saving spots just for Black people." His face now flushed, he says, "I'm not a racist, but, as a white guy, this isn't fair because those people are getting chances that I deserve more. Special treatment is unfair." John feels conflicted and becomes slightly red in the face, angry perhaps, as his sense of individual worth is (allegedly) threatened by programs that address social equality. Marcus, a Black junior majoring in Business, sitting reclined with arms folded and eyes to the ceiling as if he's heard this before, calmly replies, "Affirmative action and those sorts of scholarships are attempts at getting us to a level of fairness." Spreading his arms wide, grinning from ear to ear, he continues, "There are dozens of other things you can apply for. You'll have far more chances than I'll ever have, regardless of when and where you intern. And the idea that you deserve that internship is cray." Sitting up and staring directly into John's eyes as if to shine a light on John's white privilege, "You don't deserve it. It ain't owed to you. The very fact that you can speak like that shows your racism." The room turns to heavy silence.

2. After giving a lecture on the history of racism in the USA, I am challenged by Melissa, a white student who aggressively claims, "They're just making this up. The victim game. Black people are free and equal. What's this stupid Black Lives Matter thing? Get over it," she says

with hands shaking. "If they don't want to work, that's their problem. Everyone's got issues. Deal with it and work hard. I work hard. I make good grades. I'll have a good job. It's common sense. I mean, look, lynching, Jim Cohen [sic] laws, slavery—it's centuries ago." Gesturing toward two Black students, "We're all equal now." Tyson, a Black sophomore, smilingly says, "We know that white lives matter." He laughs and shakes his head in frustration. "What people like you and the police don't seem to know is that Black lives matter too. I'm amazed you can so easily say 'I'll have a good job' as if that's a guarantee. Yeah, you work hard, but isn't your mother an English Prof here? Think about how that works for you." He slams both hands onto the desk. "Racism and privilege aren't just slavery era or Jim Crow."

3. Upon asking for solutions to systemic racism, I call upon Tania, a Black woman majoring in Political Science, who matter-of-factly answers, "We need reparations. I don't mean forty acres and a mule." Her tempo lessens; she straightens her back. "I mean systemic revolution. Reparations through access to affordable and good education, healthcare, and job opportunities. We need reparations through political representation and the criminal justice system—for instance, no more unequal sentencing, no more pleading guilty just because one can't afford a good attorney. We need voices like [Stokely] Carmichael and [Angela] Davis to be…" At this point, Chad, a white Religious Studies major, excitedly and nervously interrupts: "No, no, no. Those people are militants. Look, me and Meredith here are the co-chairpersons for Campus Progressives. Let me tell you how…" "Wait, no, do not interrupt me," Tania replies, her tone now defensive. She looks to me for affirmation and then, turning back to Chad, raises her voice. "Check yourself. Your privilege. I'm not a cause. I'm a person right here. Black people are people. Progressive or whatever, you're part of the disease that's killing us Black folk." Looking defeated as he sinks into his chair, Chad responds, "I'm just trying to help. Race relations keep getting worse, and I'm trying to make it better." "Well," Tania, feeling secure in her perspective, says as she points directly at Chad, "your racist self can start helping by shutting up and [beating her chest] let me speak."

When the social matrix in which one lives is constructed through the normativity of whiteness, it is difficult for whites to accept their own complicity in anti-Black racism or for them to change their habits. John's clichéd "I'm not a racist, but…" illustrates the bad faith that many goodwill whites

have.[7] By contrasting themselves with overt racists like Klan members, these white students attempt to insulate themselves, that is, to feel safe and protected, from considering their own subject position within a white normative society.[8] Put differently, by obfuscating, whites avoid the painful trauma of having to confront the fact that their lives are buttressed by white supremacy; they can maintain the warm feeling of security that all is as it should be. But the Black students call the bluff on whiteness and show how their white peers are complicit in the racist social matrix.

White students usually fail to grasp the difference between how white bodies and Black bodies traverse social space. Melissa, in short, is saying, "I don't believe you." She is manifesting her epistemic privilege, which, at the same time, is rendering Tyson's claims less than credible—the sounds coming from the Black body cannot be universalized. Melissa thinks she can control the discourse on her own terms by projecting her experience onto everyone as if it were universal.[9]

The third scenario is a case of an allegedly antiracist white person speaking louder than Black persons. Chad's interruption of Tania signals the degree to which racism (and sexism) remain operative even where a weak form of political solidarity exists. Despite his good intentions, Chad's actions are still acts of racism. Even if Chad had waited until Tania finished speaking, he ought not to become frustrated if his white help is not warmly welcomed. Even whites working for racial justice will be met with skepticism and sometimes hostility, both of which are consequences of white supremacy and not instances of so-called reverse racism.

These classroom conversations are not just about race in the abstract; they are instances of the lived experience of racialization. They reveal how bodies are already coded before any particular person enters the room. White bodies, à la the white gaze, speak qua human person the truth whereas Black bodies speak qua Black. The Black voice is assumed to be a biased one—one with an agenda. Sometimes a white student will say, "This isn't fair. You're assuming all white people are alike." What this student wants is to own one's individuality or identity. This student might admit being raced but still desires to be seen as human person rather than as white. But, in the world of white gazes, do Black persons own their individuality or does the white gaze not project content back onto the Black body, stripping one of her personhood? Black bodies are both invisible and hypervisible precisely because of their antithesis to white normativity. In other words, Black bodies are invisible to the extent that what is known about Black bodies is given in advance; they remain anonymous because

allegedly everything to know about them is already given. These same bodies are hypervisible in that the bodies that enter the scene correspond to the racist images that Black equals deviant, Black equals criminal, Black equals angry, Black equals ignorant, Black equals lazy, Black equals evil. Black persons are alienated vis-à-vis the myth of universality in so far as whites, as normative, are considered good and friendly citizens, speakers of truth, and paragons of human virtue. Our class conversations attempt to unsettle this myth and allow for Black students to give voice to the ways in which whiteness insidiously tries to reinscribe itself.

QUESTIONS

1. What are ways in which classrooms (in terms of curriculum, interaction among peers and instructors, or topics covered) perpetuate whiteness in the forms of white normativity and white privilege?
2. What is the white gaze? Put differently, to what extent are hypervisible Black bodies already coded as deviant, criminal, or lazy while their particularity as Black persons is rendered invisible?
3. Can you think of examples that demonstrate how white students attempt to retain their individuality while also attempting to speak for all humankind?
4. Can you think of examples that demonstrate how white students often attempt to control the rules of the conversation—they attempt not only to control what can and cannot be said but also how things are to be said?
5. What are counter-gazes and how might these be effective for disrupting the normativity of whiteness?

NOTES

1. While there is disagreement on whether or not to capitalize the terms "Black" and "white," I capitalize only the former. There are sociological reasons for doing so, namely, that "Black" is on par with other ethnic titles whereas "white" is not. I also capitalize "Black" for political reasons, that is, to work against white normativity and reverse racial hierarchies within systems of symbols as well as language.
2. Descartes is cited as a primary example of this, that is, the tendency to offer a universal perspective while ignoring the facticity of one's particularity. This tendency often occurs when white men speak as their voice is universally

applicable, as if they are not raced and sexed. In short, their voice is (wrongly) assumed to speak for all of humanity with no regard to sociohistorical context. See "Purification and Transcendence in Descartes's Meditations" in Susan Bordo, *The Flight of Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1987).

3. For an accessible introduction to this point, see Robert Jensen, *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2005). For a seminal essay, see Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," Wellesley: Center for Research on Women, 1988. See also Terrance MacMullan, *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009) and Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2006).

4. For an illuminating anecdote on how issues of race are often disavowed for not being of philosophical concern, see George Yancy, "No Philosophical Oracle Voices," *Philosophy in Multiple Voices*, edited by George Yancy (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

5. My white students are often uncomfortable with how I describe the whiteness of Western philosophy and culture more broadly; they become disoriented when their whiteness is brought before the counter-gaze, that is, when placed under the scrutiny of our assigned authors and of their Black peers. They are shown how they are beneficiaries of white supremacy, despite their good intentions of colorblindness, and that their advantaged position in social space exists because of the disadvantage of others. My class cuts to the heart of their assumed moral oracularity and undermines their belief in colorblindness. It teaches them that racialization is a sociohistorical process and not something natural, transhistorical, or universal.

6. Students' names used throughout this chapter are fictitious.

7. For a more robust account of the notion of "goodwill whites," see Janine Jones, "The Impairment of Empathy in Goodwill Whites for African Americans," *What White Looks Life: African-American Philosophers on the Whiteness Question*, edited by George Yancy (New York: Routledge, 2004).

8. Most likely they come from homes that taught them that systemic and widespread personal racism are things of the past. Ignorance of how entrenched their own racism is would fuel the continuation of that racism if left unchecked.

9. Whites assume, for instance, that if someone is excessively policed, then the latter must have warranted it. Or, since it does not happen to them, they assume it does not happen to anyone else—the white body being the paradigm of the human body. Melissa fails to consider how the Black body is daily met with suspicion and resistance and how, at the same time, her body—the bearer of virtue according to the white gaze—is given the benefit of the doubt.

Related Further Reading

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But I Had Windows

Mark D. Vagle

Pride

I remember being six years old, moving into our new house, in our new town, nestled between the east side of the Red River Valley and the origin of the Mississippi River (Itasca State Park) in Northwest Minnesota. It was late Spring of 1978. Our house was new, not only to us—but it was just built. No one else had lived in this huge (to me) split-level home in a development (of sorts) referred to as Green Acres. We were on the second street, the expansion. In fact, there was a big pile of dirt next to our yard, as our home was the most recent to be built—with more to come in the next five years. Existing homes had well-manicured lawns and there were plenty of signs of kids in the neighborhood—swing sets, bikes, toys. I remember marveling at our new home's big picture window, the fresh coat of tan paint, and the big yard practically begging to be played on. The road running through the Green Acres expansion was still gravel. No clean, black asphalt yet for a quiet, smooth ride. My dad, our UHaul truck, and I bounced up and down, kicking up warm dust, as we rambled toward our new home.

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Green Acres wasn't far from school, walking and biking distance even for a six year old. There you could find a great playground, football field, track, and baseball field. When my dad and I pulled into town in the UHaul (mom and my three-year-old brother Jamie [now James] followed a couple hours behind in our station wagon), folks stopped, looked—many waved and smiled. Soon after we backed the UHaul into our new driveway, a kind older man (most likely retired) came over to welcome us. I remember feeling welcome, feeling safe. My dad told him he was the new manager of Farmer's Union Oil Company—a farmer's cooperative. The older man, our new neighbor, looked pleased and perhaps impressed. I began to realize that my dad had an important job in this community. *I felt proud*. Even at six, I understood that the type of job you have matters—not only in how much money you make, but in how people see you. How they look, how their eyes respond, how they smile.

CONCERN

A couple of years later (in second or third grade), I went to my first overnight (what is now called a sleepover) at a friend's house East of town close to the center of the White Earth Indian Reservation. I was excited and nervous—but didn't want anyone to know I was also a little scared. At the time, I think I attributed my fear primarily to being away from home, but in retrospect it was not just that. I had never spent much time on the Reservation—and as a White kid "from town" I worried about what it might be like for me to spend the night with a Native American family. My friend's family was very welcoming—I again felt safe. We played, ate delicious food, and laughed. When it was time to go to bed, we went up to my friend's room, and I was shocked to see that his window, had no window—just an open space. It was late Fall in Northern Minnesota and was cool at night. I know I didn't ask him about it, but I wondered what happened in the winter.

Did my friend have to sleep in the freezing cold? Did snow fly into his room? Did they have something to cover the window? And why wouldn't there be a window?

My mother recently reminded me of this story, and how I was so *concerned* about my friend's "window without a window." That I couldn't understand how this could be. Knowing that the family struggled financially, she tried to carefully explain how some people might have to make hard decisions about what they fix and what they don't fix.

That fixing windows costs quite a bit of money.

That my same friend hid behind our house (with two-year-old windows that opened and closed by a well-greased crank) crying that next Spring at my birthday party, because he didn't have a birthday present for me.

That my mom told him it was ok.

That my mom found something in the closet to wrap up and have him give to me.

That this welcoming, safe town (to me) was (and likely still is) in the most impoverished county in the state.

That having an "important job" in this town made you middle class there, in that impoverished community (especially if you were White), but perhaps working class elsewhere…

Realization

At 18, I left my safe (to me) town for a private liberal arts college, a little over an hour away from home. I recall being aware that I was moving from a more racially diverse community to an almost solely White college—and anticipated that this new space and place would likely look and feel different. However, I assumed that, as a White person moving to a White place, the transition would be relatively seamless. So, when the odd and uncomfortable feelings I felt when arriving on campus were stronger than I had predicated, I started to wonder what was happening to me.

Must have been the newness of the place?

Perhaps that my parents had just divorced?

Perhaps a combination of the two?

Maybe.

Most others seemed to know quite a bit more about how things worked in this place. Had all sorts of amenities in their dorm rooms that I didn't have. They seemed much more prepared. Much more confident and sophisticated. They seemed to talk smarter.

The morning we were to report for orientation I got a call at my home. It had been a late night, so I was still asleep. It was my new roommate's mother stating that she needed to get on the road back to central Montana and was hoping to meet me before she left. I told her that I would be on my way, so I put my belongings in the back of my Chevy Cavalier (purchased with money from my summer job). Didn't need to use my trunk as everything I had, and thought I needed, fit just fine in the back seat without blocking my view out the back window.

I picked up my buddy who also had been admitted, and we drove to college. When we arrived, I marveled at all of the big suburbans and pick-up trucks. Entire families were hauling numerous boxes and furniture. Some families even needed trailers. What was all that stuff? Did people really need all of that? Where were they going to put it?

Later that Fall, when meeting with a Financial Aid officer, I experienced another *realization*. We were reviewing my Fall financial award and discussing some adjustments to my Spring award. The details of my award were divided among grants, scholarships, and loans. The Financial Aid officer explained that the grants tended to be need-based and the scholarships were merit-based. Basically understanding the difference between need-based and merit-based, I inquired about the specific need-based grants. I explained that the idea of "free money" to get a college education felt great. One of the grants listed was a Pell grant. The Financial Aid officer explained that this was a federal grant program designed to provide assistance to lower income families.

Lower income family?

What?

Me?

Poor?

But I had windows

***

We all live complicated, sometimes contradictory, lives. The three glimpses (shards perhaps) I have provided above were carefully chosen in order to craft this text—to provide a phenomenological invitation into, what I term in post-intentional phenomenology as, partial and fleeting explorations of how I often find myself embodying social class. There are many more glimpses I could have chosen, that would have painted different pictures, told different stories—likely not leading to pride-concern-realization, but to something(s) else. Something different, but no less complicated.

I chose these three glimpses, and called them pride and concern and realization, primarily because this is how I find myself embodying race and social class at this equally complicated time in my life. However, my experiences today are not divided up among pride, concern, and realization quite as neatly as I have expressed them here. Rather, they are more aptly conceived as Deleuzoguattarian intensities that are constantly being produced as inseparable racialized and socially classed entanglements. In this sense, it is as

though I am never only embodying pride or concern or realization, but I am always, already embodying pride-concern-realization in complex simultaneities. It is never really one thing or another, but all three simultaneously.

I am proud that my wife and I can afford a big, spacious upper middle-class house.

At the same time, I am concerned that my three White upper middle-class children will take their privilege for granted and not appreciate all they have.

At the same time, I am not really convinced that my "important job" as a professor at a major research university is any more important than all sorts of other jobs.

Is being a professor, writing this paper, inside my spacious home, a more important job than the workers who scaled my steep roof to put on new, fresh shingles a couple years back?

Is being a professor, writing this paper, a more important job than the massage therapist's—who will be helping loosen up a sore achilles tendon so I can run a race?

For some reason, my job feels empty, at times, compared to the workers who protect someone else's home from developing a leaky roof.

But then, of course, the pride aspect of the pride-concern-realization entanglement shows itself again after I receive an "Accept" email from a journal editor—knowing that not all that long ago I couldn't have imagined being able to write something that could be published.

Proud, that I have worked hard to get to where I am today.

Proud, that I have come a long way since my Pell Grant days.

Concerned, that others might not have been surrounded by generous White upper middle-class folks who helped me navigate that White upper middle-class space.

Concerned, that my own White upper middle-class children might not become what some of my White upper middle-class friends became for me.

And then also *realizing* that I have absolutely nothing to complain about—that my White upper middle classness affords me the space to even entertain such concerns. That I am incredibly fortunate to ruminate about these matters. That I should stop for a moment, and be satisfied.

Because I have windows.

QUESTIONS

1. What glimpses (shards) from your racialized and socially classed life might you choose? What story or stories would these glimpses tell?

2. Assuming we all live contradictory lives, how are these glimpses being lived out as complex simultaneities?
3. What might your body know that you have yet to find the words to describe?

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Clutching the Vacuum

Angela C. Coffee

I am covered with a light layer of chalk. As I sweep my dampened rag across the blackboard, I stir up excess and feel it softly raining down onto my bangs and nose, onto the shoulders of my shirt; it gently covers my hands. I experiment with my movement across the board. Some days, I start in the middle and work the dark, wet streaks of cleanliness outward toward the periphery. Other days I clean in segments: left to right, top to bottom, in clockwise quadrants. I find discreet delight in the myriad of possibilities in the darkness I unearth beneath the palimpsest of markings.

It is quiet, and I am alone. I typically clean classrooms after school lets out. The high school empties out so quickly after the final bell; I can slowly let out the breath I've been holding all day, finally alone. I empty

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People often judge others (and themselves), and are judged by others, based on perceived social class and economic status. These judgments might be based on where someone lives, what someone does for a living, how someone talks, what that person wears, where she or he goes to school, etc. One is not "born" with the classist sensibilities necessary to position folks into hierarchical slots, but we are all immersed in hierarchical discourses from the time we are young, and most of us unwittingly engage those discourses to make sense of ourselves and others we see in the world (Jones & Vagle, 2013, p. 4).

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the trash, wipe down the desks, vacuum, and clean blackboards. There is a methodical rhythm to the work, and I do it well. I like being left alone to do the work. I like to feel the space shift through my attentiveness to it. I like the way my mind is able to move and settle through the deliberate movements of my body. I appreciate the clarity and straightforwardness of the work; it makes sense to me. I understand it.

I have always taken some pride in this type of work. At home, the oldest of five children, I have been responsible for some of the cleaning and cooking since I was young. I liked to surprise my aunts and grandmothers with how seriously I took this responsibility, the tiny details I remembered to take care of. There was a deep sense of ownership tied up in my chores, an ownership that I experience in my responsibility for these classrooms. There is also something in this work that connects me to my family, to the small working-class farming town we lived in before moving to the city, to a way of showing love and care that's expressed through the soreness of muscles, the hard physical work of bodies.

This understanding of my work in the classrooms contrasts sharply with the experience I had during my days in school. I'm a freshman, and I've just entered into a private, Catholic high school known for its academic rigor. No one in my family has ever gone to a school like this, and—while we have largely been an academically successful family—I know I am alone in a new way here. It's an expensive school. I don't know exactly what that means; I'm just told—by all sorts of people in all sorts of ways—how lucky I am to be here, to be smart enough to earn the scholarships that let me be here, to have gotten this opportunity. I can feel the heavy and opaque responsibility of this luck. I also feel the distance and loneliness tucked up inside of it; it's harder to express this struggle—the meritocratic narrative runs so deep.

The expectations of this school are not so clear to me. I can do the academic work; I can do that. I don't feel in danger of failing out of school. While I have to work hard, especially since it's my academic performance that's allowing me to be here, I feel capable of performing in my classes and of earning decent grades. It's everything else that confuses me.

Tied up inside this space, there is a danger that I cannot see so clearly. There are so many moments—in conversations, in engaging with my class-mates, in the subtle shift of expression, bodies, and tonal inflection—in which I cannot sense the edges, the rules, the full contour of expectations here. I sense that I am doing things wrong, and it's causing me to distrust

the spontaneous and intuitive knowings of my body, to soften my laugh, to look around a bit more before I engage. These solitary moments I spend cleaning classrooms offer respite from this constant vigilance over myself. I can settle into the ease of my body's knowledge, relax into the simplicity of labor.

The inky blackness of the blackboard shines fiercely in the fading afternoon sun as I unhook the ancient and thickly coiled cord from its hook on the side of the vacuum. I walk the mass of cords toward the outlet at the front of the room, gently shaking apart the knots that have formed as I press the dusty black plug into the wall. Just then, a door slams down the hall, and even before I recognize the boys' laughter cascading toward me, my body reacts to it. My shoulders pull forward and lock themselves into place. The quiet and peace that has settled in me is sucked out of my body, replaced with a sense of panic that fills my legs with energy and wrenches the moisture from my mouth. I brace myself completely.

There is no danger here. No one is threatening me. No one has even seen me. Still, my body understands the precarity of my presence in this space in a way that I don't have words for. There is danger in being associated with this work *here*. Being seen doing this work—associated with this work—marks me. I do not belong here. Despite my scholarship, despite my academic performance, this work—the more tangible mechanism enabling me to be here—is the thing that threatens my ability to *really* be here, to be perceived as belonging or deserving full access to this space.

I am instantly filled with guilt. I feel the ethos of the school chastising me: we respect all people; we respect all work. And yet, the sentiment of "respect for all" is expressed by those who have never known this danger of association. I am flooded with shame. My body knows on some level that as I brace myself against the danger of being linked with this work, my family's way of being in the world is being disciplined out of me. This space is becoming a part of me, is operating on me, and it is teaching me to fear and reject myself.

Despite the panic in my body, the roiling waves of guilt and shame moving through me, I clutch the vacuum's dusty grip and flip its switch. Instantly, its brazen howl fills the room and I begin to clean. I force a facade of nonchalance atop my body and begin my methodical progression through the room. As the effortless ease and eyes of the boys' soccer team pass by my door, I compel their presence into the periphery of my vision. Long after they've passed, long after the carpet is clean, I continue with the movement, my muscles shuddering beneath the strain.

QUESTIONS

1. How are hierarchical discourses operating in this story? How do bodies and their contexts expose, complicate, reify, *and* resist these discourses?

2. In *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed (2006) points out the value of disorientation. The process of becoming disoriented, and the subsequent struggle of reorientation lends clarity to what it means *to be orientated*, particularly when orientation appears to be a given. How might the narrator's experience of disorientation help us more clearly see the impact of upward mobility on bodies?

3. How might the story's binaries of mind/body, inside/outside, and ease/dis-ease help us think more deeply about the histories and commitments tied up in education?

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Disorientation

The Haze

Darian Marcel Parker

A spoken utterance is a "thing"—a fact in the world. And, if there is a hearer, then that thing becomes a breathing, sentient being. If that hearer happens to be having a direct exchange with the speaker, then that being reaches a state of maturation very quickly. Somewhere within that infinite shuttling between my words and your interpretation, your words and my interpretations, is created this billowing mass of meanings, vacuums, presuppositions, anxieties, and expectancies. This being, creature, billowy mass is not likely to ever be dissolved; it is just as relentless as it is self-sustaining and self-contaminating.

I have often found it expedient to avoid those "things" that are likely to evoke particular sorts of discomfort in my hearers, especially if those things are given to rapid shuttling. Yet, these avoidances are more like attempts to control, and ultimately suspend, that shuttling, arresting the prodigal meanderings of meaning, obliterating and dis-appearing others.

In matters of race, dis-appearing became my manner of comporting[1] when I would work with Chase.

He came to me through a referral from a former colleague who had previously tutored him. She was no longer able to continue with him, so she entrusted him to me—someone whom she had gathered was in

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possession of great patience and amicability. Based on the diagnoses of numerous psychologists, Chase was a very rare variety. The reports concluded that he had many learning disabilities, and social and emotional disorders. The evaluators had also concluded that he would never have an intuitive grasp of numbers—he would always have great challenges with tasks such as telling time, counting money, and basic mathematical operations. And, in practice, these intellectual and emotional vectors were engaged in their own relentless shuttling, mutually sustaining one another, creating a billowing mass that simply was Chase's way of being in the world. These psychological evaluations provided a catalyst for these formulations. Carrying the weight of scientific facts,[2] these reports lent justification to each one of his self-deriding thoughts, gestures, and comments concerning his abilities—"That was stupid"; "I am dumb"; "I'm an idiot" were his constant refrains.

These reports had placed his mother in a necessarily precarious state of being. This was a woman who loved her son dearly and wanted to get him the best help possible. How much better can one do than a psychological evaluation and a pantheon of private tutors? In order to help her son, she had to, herself, lend veracity to those reports. She trusted them. She had to accept all the conclusions and recommendations that were presented. And, in the faint hope of delivering Chase to some state of normalcy, she trusted these private tutors, who, according to the reports, would never ensure that he permanently transcend his disabilities (for transcendence was the regulative and impossible goal of any supplemental help), but somehow live within them. Explicitly and tacitly, we all—the psychologists, tutors, and Chase's mother—made his inadequacies into facts. Conditioned by so many dependencies—dependent upon parents, diagnoses, regiments, and so forth—Chase was powerless to anything that had achieved the status of a fact: the facts of his own being and of his being-in-the-world.

I could have predicted, therefore, that he would be powerless to the facts of race. On one particular day I entered Chase's apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and completed the exact ritual that I had many times before. His mother had explained to me upon our very first meeting that this apartment was "all I've got." She had further stated that, "We have to keep it very clean because it is so small." Upon every entry I was required to remove my shoes and hang my coat in the closet just to the right of the front door. I then had to go immediately to the bathroom, which was just around the corner, and wash my hands.

I proceeded across the living room floor to the dining room table, where Chase and I would conduct our weekly sessions. He and I had an almost magical rapport. He had a weird sense of humor; so did I. He was fascinated by anything outrageous: time travel, black holes, transpermia, string theory, creatures with life cycles of only six weeks. In these sessions, I rediscovered this sensibility within myself—a sensibility that had lain dormant by so many years of conditioned practicality. The sessions were filled with warmth, laughter, and exploration. On that particular day, Chase was wearing a bright yellow baseball cap, turned playfully to the side. I paid him a compliment for his stylishness. He then took the cap from his head and placed it on mine. What proceeded out of his mouth next was shocking, yet not inconsistent with his innocent, candid, filter-less intuitions.

"Take it off. The yellow doesn't look right with your skin color." I judged his advice to be in no way malice-driven. It felt more like a reflex. Nevertheless, the space of laughter and curiosity seemed somehow profaned in that moment. How did such a notion arise in Chase's mind? Maybe it was the preeminence of "facts" themselves that was to blame. For, the reign of facts is predicated on a logic of incommensurability. And, in Chase's world, incommensurability was compulsory and compulsorily enforced. For Chase, there was a stark divide between smart and stupid, inside and outside (he never got to go outdoors much, due to his many social awkwardnesses), normal and odd, cleanliness and contamination (following his mother's rule of hand-washing, he would not even shake my hand if I had not washed mine first.). Perhaps somewhere in this conditioned logic, dark skin was incommensurable with a yellow hat. Perhaps the contrast was too great. Perhaps his blonde hair and pale skin provided a more befitting canvas for a yellow hat monogrammed in white lettering.

Yet, none of these suppositions could be explored in the moment. Had I lent them any measure of preoccupation, they would have left my eyes transfixed with an admixture of nervousness and curiosity. The air in the room would have changed. I could not risk Chase, who was exceptionally perceptive, inquiring into the transformation. More than anything, I did not want the utterance to gain momentum, to become a mass of facts that would permanently desecrate that space of laughter and curiosity. And so, I became possessed of dissociative fervor—shifting my thoughts to other topics, pretending as if I had no knowledge of my blackness and his whiteness, averting my gaze from his face, tethering myself to a present that was eternally divorced from the moments prior.[3]

The common coordinates of meaning did not apply to that moment. For, it was not even a "moment," as it was given to radical de-temporalization. Similarly, there was neither feeling nor even numbness, but rather an instantaneous dematerialization of the sentient body—a veritable disembodiment.[4]

To this day, the details of the moments just following Chase's utterance are lost in a haze.[5] The haze, which could never achieve the certitude, vividness, or permanence of a memory, is the most deeply felt impression that remains from that situation. That haze is something like the particulate matter that swirls deep in outer space, never achieving the maturity of stars, galaxies, or planets, discerned only through various devices of indirection.

QUESTIONS

1. Might "the haze" be a useful idea for revising the concepts of "memory" and even "the unconscious"?
2. In addition to its status as a type of anti-memory, the haze might also be thought of in its relation to violence (as in "hazing"). Is the haze, particularly its relation to race, a type of self-inflicted violence?
3. Can racism exist inside the body of one who is mentally and emotionally disabled?
4. Does the narrator's response to Chase disarm the latter's racist logic or support it?

NOTES

1. In *Sartre and No Child Left Behind: An Existential Psychoanalytic Anthropology of Urban Schooling* (2015), I argue that the ways in which humans adopt particular dispositions of being are a matter of "comporting," which occurs somewhere at the axes of consciousness, pre-consciousness, emotion, and neurobiological conditioning.
2. In *Sartre and No Child Left Behind*, I suggest that "facts" are not only achievements (which is likely an obvious truth in the twenty-first century), but also achieve their permanence through their status-laden positioning in our symbolic order. As such, scientific metrics achieve their facticity because of their opacity and their semantic proximity to truth.
3. Robert Desjarlais (1994) argues that "experience" suggests a cohesive self and unified set of occurrences. He submits the possibility that there are many people who do not actually experience, but rather exist in a condition of "struggling along," which is a more fragmented, narrowly temporalized way of existing.

4. The "disembodied" body, and the "de-temporalized moment" would qualify as examples of what Sartre (1943/1993) refers to in *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* as "negatites", or those beings that possess at their core structures of nothingness. Sartre's notion of the "negatite" opens the possibility for a novel language of embodiment that has at its core the concept of disembodiment.

5. Continuing with the theme of the previous note, "the haze" is a type of *negatite*—an anti-memory.

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He's Wearing a Dress

Jennifer Burke

Social scientists argue that children's gender is not a biologically prede-termined category, but is instead socially constructed. Bronwyn Davies (1989) explains that when children "do" their gender incorrectly, for example, if a boy wanted to wear a dress, they are often laughed at and ridiculed by their peers. Davies considers this practice of shaming anyone who deviates from his or her gender norm as *gender category maintenance work*. Gender category maintenance causes young boys to work hard to create an "appropriate" masculinity, in accordance with the hegemonic masculinity valued by their society. This practice reaffirms the normative gender expectations and therefore firmly entrenches the *gender binary*. Gender binary is a term used to explain the duality of gender, as every individual must either be one or the other. Young children choose certain behaviors and adopt particular beliefs because they are trapped in society's gender binary. Their daily actions define them as either masculine or femi-nine. The following narrative is an account of my experience trying to get first grade students to think outside of this gender binary.

I could not contain the slight smile that appeared on my face as I called the children to the rug. I pulled my shoulders back as I stood tall and

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proud in front of the classroom because today's social studies lesson was part of my dissertation study, and I was eager to share with my first graders the carefully selected book, *10,000 Dresses*, by Marcus Ewert. This picture book was chosen because it features a transgender girl named Bailey who dreams about dresses. Bailey is persistently told by her family to stop thinking about dresses because she is a boy. In the end, she befriends a girl down the street who accepts her for the female she really is, and they enjoy creating dresses together. I was interested in the book's message of acceptance, and hoped it had the potential to open the children's minds to the role gender plays in their lives.

As a mother of three young boys, I am keenly aware of the role gender plays in children's lives. Even before they were born, people wanted to know my children's genders. I suppose that armed with this knowledge, a name could be selected, nurseries could be decorated, and clothing and toys could be purchased in accordance with society's acceptable norms. I was not interested in perpetuating prenatal indoctrination to the appropriate socially constructed understanding of their gender. I chose to keep their nursery and wardrobe a neutral black, white and gray, and their gender a surprise until after they were born.

But despite my personal and scholarly interest in issues of gender equality I was not able to shield my sons from the pressures society exerts on young children to align their identities into the firmly entrenched gender binary. Both my family and friends began to inculcate my children into contemporary Western society's notions of masculinity. People bought them toys that boys ought to play with: trucks, cars, trains, sports equipment, and superhero action figures. I responded by buying them a pink princess carriage, a baby doll, and cooking toys. Although many boys today are given access to some things traditionally thought to be feminine, such as cooking toys, one thing that is still firmly off limits is princesses and dresses. That was why I was grinning as I clutched *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert and took my seat in the front of the reading rug. On both a professional and personal level I was eager to challenge social norms and to broaden my students' thinking by exposing them to a transgender protagonist.

As I always did, I introduced the book by showing the children the cover. Immediately, brows furrowed, heads tilted, and some children pursed their lips, as they struggled to understand the image on the cover. Most students found the character on the cover, with short spiked blonde hair and a long sparkly dress on, to be too contradictory to comprehend.

How could the two paradoxical things exist at the same time? Even before I began reading, the students were struggling to fit this image into their neatly defined gender binary.

While some students were initially confused, others smirked, suppressed laughter, or giggled openly. When I asked them, "What is so funny?" they pointed to the cover, "He is wearing a dress." Another student curled his lip and said, "Ew!" I took a deep breath to brace myself. Before I had even cracked the book open, I realized that challenging deeply entrenched social norms was going to be more difficult than I anticipated. As usual when I read books, I stopped often to ask the students questions and to field questions and comments from students. A petite boy named Carlos enthusiastically shot his hand into the air. I called on him. "This book is delorious."

"Delorious?" I asked.

Carlos nodded and went on to explain with a straight face, "Like you laugh."

I grinned when I realized what he was intending to say. "Oh, hilarious!" but then I too went straight faced, "Why? Is it funny?"

Carlos shook his hand at me as he carefully explained, "'Cause when a boy wants a dress—that's hilarious." Now he began to smirk. Some students nodded their heads in agreement.

I noticed that although Carlos was claiming the book was funny, he wasn't actually laughing. I chose to question him on this, in an effort to get him to realize that boys wearing dresses in not intrinsically funny. I said, "But you guys aren't laughing. How come?"

Aiden, a larger, stone-faced, brazen boy sitting next to Carlos called out, "Because we don't like dresses." Aiden gestured with his hand to indicate that he was speaking for the group of three boys sitting near him. Another boy near Aiden, Angelo, who spoke limited English chimed in, "I'm a boy!" Carlos shook his head in agreement with Angelo. "It makes no sense."

I had read research articles and books about how children maintain the rigid gender binary by doing category maintenance work (Davies 1989), but it had never unfolded so apparently in front of my eyes. Carlos's straight face indicated he did not outwardly appear to find the story humorous, yet he was verbally stating that he did. In doing so, Carlos was affirming his own correct masculinity while labeling any boy who likes dresses as incorrect and therefore worthy of ridicule, thus reifying the gender binary through gender category maintenance work.

The other boys followed his lead when they asserted they don't like dresses and they too were real boys.

Gender category maintenance continued in both the narration of the book and in my classroom. At one point in the text, Bailey's brother threatens to kick her. The students' reactions were mixed. Some sat straight-faced when her brother threatens physical violence. While there are multiple possible interpretations of their deadpan reaction, I was disturbed by their indifference, and I would argue that their lack of a reaction shows how accepted physical violence toward individuals who incorrectly enact their gender is for these students. Even more horrifying, perhaps their lack of a response was a sign of their agreement with the threat of aggression. Thankfully, several students' eyes widened in surprise and horror at this threat, and many were quick to offer solutions to Bailey's problem such as running away or kicking his brother.

It was reassuring to see that some of my sensitive students were trying to come to Bailey's aid, but they only did so by offering traditionally masculine solutions to his problems. One student noticed the soccer ball in an illustration and suggested, "I think he is going to kick the ball and his brother will kick the ball back." Another student said, "He should just play soccer and stop thinking about dresses."

When I finished the book, I asked the class what they thought. Several students said the book was funny, silly, or weird. Aiden simply said, "Bad." When asked why, he stated emphatically, "'Cause I don't like dresses. And Angelo doesn't like dresses." A third male student in the group, Carlos, called "I like dresses!" The group broke out into a chorus of laughter mixed with, "Ewwwww." Aiden started screeching and pointing at Carlos, "You're a girl! You're a girl, Carlos! You like dresses!" Carlos's whole body shook and his eyes sparkled mischievously as he laughed hysterically.

Knowing Carlos's personality and the dynamics of the group I know the "I like dresses" comment was not a heartfelt confession, but instead a way for Carlos to get attention from his peers. He was successful. I tried to bring the children back to a calm conversation about gender by asking Aiden, "So, is it okay if I like dresses?" He said yes. I then asked if it was okay for Mr. S., our male instructional assistant, to like dresses. Aiden's eyes got wide, his mouth dropped open and he shrieked "NO!" Again, he and the group burst into laughter. At this point, Carlos drew the attention back to himself by again stating, "I like dresses."

Aiden was now nearly wild. He grabbed Carlos's arm and started shaking him while shouting, "You're a girl! You're still a girl, Carlos? Carlos,

you're still a girl!" It seemed like Aiden was trying to "shake the girl" out of Carlos in an attempt to save him from doing his gender incorrectly and realign him with his masculinity. At this point I intervened by reminding Aiden of our classroom rule of keeping our hands to ourselves, but he persisted in screaming, "You're still a girl? You're going! NO girls allowed." Although I wanted to press the gender issue further, and discuss how individuals who do not conform to gender norms deserve respect and attention, the gender category maintenance work of Aiden had become too dominant, aggressive, and loud to allow for a calm rational discussion. The smile I had worn prior to the reading had completely been erased. My shoulders slumped as I transitioned the students back to their seats to begin our packing up routine to end our day.

Questions

1. If you were the teacher in this scenario, how would you respond to the students' reactions to the *10,000 Dresses* book?
2. What are some flashpoint moments related to the gender binary from your experiences as a student and/or a teacher?
3. What are some curricular strategies that you could use for teaching young children to view gender as a flexible continuum instead of a fixed binary?

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Chapter 15 header

(Dis)orienting Laughter

Sarah Travis

Growing up in the tensely racialized climate of New Orleans, I often sought a disidentification with my whiteness. Despite being oriented around (and called toward) whiteness through family, through educational institutions, and through social expectations, I remain inclined away from (rather than toward) whiteness. This disidentification and orientation away from whiteness does not mean that I am not a recipient of white privilege. I acknowledge my positioning, even as I seek to disinherit whiteness. I state this background information to situate my own orientation within the racialized teaching experience that I recount in this chapter. Herein, I offer a description of a moment when racism came to the foreground in a seemingly ordinary experience in a school art classroom. As Sara Ahmed (2006) writes, "sometimes, disorientation is an ordinary feeling, or even a feeling that comes and goes as we move around during the day" (p. 157), and there is much to uncover through such ordinary moments. This momentary phenomenon of disorienting laughter revealed underlying racial structures at work within a school art classroom.

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My first school art teaching experiences were as an itinerant art teacher who traveled among five different public schools in pre-Katrina New Orleans where nearly all of my students were Black. After Katrina, like many New Orleanians, I relocated to Texas. After completing a master's program in art education at the University of Texas, I found a job as an art teacher in a public school in a semirural Texas town where nearly all of my students were white. In this school, I entered a clearly demarcated white space. Teaching in this setting proved to be a (dis)orienting experience.

One day, in this new teaching space, I decided to teach a lesson where students were to make story quilts based on the work of the African American artist, Faith Ringgold. Creating story quilts based upon the work of Ringgold's *Tar Beach*, a Caldecott honor-winning children's book based upon a story quilt of the same name, is a common elementary art activity. Because the main character of *Tar Beach*, Cassie, is an eight-year-old girl, I thought that my students would readily connect to the work of Faith Ringgold through this story. To start the lesson, I showed a portion of a "Reading Rainbow" (1992) episode in which the African American actress, Ruby Dee, reads *Tar Beach*. Ruby Dee's reading, coupled with the imagery of *Tar Beach*, a work of art and a book populated by Black characters, proved to be rather disconcerting to my mostly white students. My students began to laugh. I noted that this particular laughter was not the kind of good-natured laughter that one might express in response to a humorous event, but rather, a laughter that seemed to indicate ridicule. I shuddered to myself when I recognized this particular type of laughter as an insidiously hostile form of racism. I realized that the students were laughing because the Blackness apparent in the telling of *Tar Beach* made them uncomfortable. In this moment, I froze, observant that this laughter was a manifestation of racialized tension, but unsure as to how to confront it.

The body reacts in ways that the mind might not want it to act or in ways that are beyond the mind's conscious control; bodies bring microaggressive actions of bias into the classroom that can indicate racism, sexism, homophobia, or other discriminatory attitudes. This moment of laughter is significant because it was an embodied expression of discomfort on the part of the students, a disorienting "funny feeling" that erupted as laughter. In this fleshpoint, racist attitudes were reinscribed through the preconscious bodily responses of young white children. Even without the use of words,

this momentary transgression served to confirm racialized boundaries and solidified the burgeoning self-identifications with "being white" on the part of the students.

Laughter served as a way to convey distance, a bodily reaction that expressed difference and a positioning away from the characters in the story of *Tar Beach*. This disorienting laughter was a means for the group of students to indicate, in a social way, their collective difference from the Black culture that they saw expressed in *Tar Beach*. Through their mean-spirited laughter, the students engaged in a preconscious, embodied expression that distanced them from Blackness and confirmed an othering relationship between themselves and the Black people that were represented through listening to and viewing *Tar Beach*. Their laughter thus served as an action by which they demarcated their difference and their distance from the Blackness they were confronted with through Ringgold's work and built a sense of solidarity with whiteness among the students. Behind these actions was a preconscious protection from things that were offensive or disruptive to the maintenance of their white orientation.

Ahmed (2006) discusses whiteness as "a social inheritance," (p. 125) that is handed down through generations as parents often expect their offspring to maintain and protect the privilege associated with whiteness. Whiteness is not necessarily something that one should take pride in inheriting and reproducing, and Ahmed (2006) refers to "whiteness as a bad habit: a series of actions that are repeated, forgotten, and that allow some bodies to take up space, by restricting the mobility of others" (p. 129), a habit that ought to be disrupted. Just as it did in my classroom, strife over the maintenance of this inherited privilege manifests within the text of *Tar Beach*. The main character and narrator of *Tar Beach*, eight-year-old Cassie, describes injustice related to the fact that her father, a construction worker who is building a new union building, could not join the union because her grandfather had not been a member. She says:

> Well, Daddy is going to own that building, 'cause I'm gonna fly over it and give it to him. Then it won't matter that he's not in their old union, or whether he's colored or a half-breed Indian, like they say. (Ringgold 1991, pp. 13–14)

In response to this race-based injustice, Cassie personifies a sense of agency and power through flight. Ahmed (2006) entreats us to "consider racism

an ongoing and unfinished history, which orients bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space" (p. 111), a restriction that Cassie resists in the story.

While Ahmed (like Cassie from *Tar Beach*) is referring to racialized limitations on the Black body and "how the invention of race as if it were 'in' bodies shapes what bodies 'can do'" (p. 112), this concept can also apply to how whiteness is enacted in spaces such as schools. To my students, their school and my classroom were white spaces where Blackness was foreign, and they sought to disidentify with Cassie from *Tar Beach* through their laughter. Further, the students identified me as a figure that shared in their Whiteness. Thus, even though I did not see myself as oriented around whiteness to the same degree as my students, I became complicit in their exercise of whiteness because of my bodily presence as a white woman in the institutional white space of the school. This could have been a "teachable moment," wherein I could have broken down the reaction of laughter by discussing it with my students, exposing the racism behind it. However, I, myself was a bit too disoriented by this laughter, too inexperienced as a teacher, and too intimidated by the politics of the local community as it was expressed through my students to take a bold stand against this racist microagression.

Through *Tar Beach* as an interventionist object, my students became disoriented. This moment could have been productive had I been more attuned to these undercurrents. As Ahmed (2006) writes, "an effect of being 'out of place' is also to create disorientation in others: the body of color might disturb the picture—and do so simply as a result of being in spaces that are lived as white" (p. 160), and this was the case in this classroom. Yet, I was surprised and disoriented by their discomfort, as expressed through their laughter. Ahmed discusses how objects can act as orienting as well as disorienting agents, that help us to disrupt the "taken for granted" as the "norm." Thus, such moments are prime opportunities for learning, as Ahmed (2006) writes: "The point is what we do with such moments of disorientation, as well as what such moments can do—whether they can offer us the hope of new directions, and whether new directions are reason enough for hope" (p. 158). Artworks can act as interventionist objects that help to disrupt the "taken for granted" or the "norm." In the case of *Tar Beach*, this artwork interrupted the whiteness of the classroom space, resulting in an unexpected reaction from my students. I often think back and ask myself what I might have done differently to confront this (dis)orienting laughter.

Questions

1. In what ways did the racial identities of the students and the teacher influence the outcomes of this lesson?
2. What are some different ways that the teacher could have handled the laughter of the students?
3. What experiences have you had as a teacher or a student where pre-conscious and embodied racialized tensions impacted your teaching and/or learning?

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Getting Down, Feeling White? The Pedagogy of the Internet for Dancing Race

Jesse Phillips-Fein

In Maine, a state where 95% of the population is white, I watch my pre-teen godson demonstrate his prowess at the latest popular dances, force-fully punching the air for the "Whip" and smoothly waving his arm in the "NaeNae."[1] These moves are considered part of current Hip-Hop dance culture and they embody a physicality associated with blackness in the white imagination: coolness, sensuousness, and powerful aggression.[2] Enjoying this potent combination of sensations, he rides the contrast of punctuated gesture against grounded stance. As he is the child of a white mother and a black father, I wonder if his peers look at his dancing with curiosity for his blackness to "show." Yet, like all black bodies, his body does not hold an innate ability to perform blackness. This is underscored by how his knowledge of these dances came from his white friends, who had learned them through videos posted on the Internet. This new medium is now a potent vector for dances signifying blackness to appear in the bodies of white youth in rural Maine and elsewhere.

As a white dance educator, I am curious about the pedagogy of dancing through cyberspace and how it affects racial performance and embodiment. Given the dearth of funding for dance programs in the public school sys-tem, and the general lack of social dancing practices in contemporary

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white culture, Internet videos are likely the primary platform for learning dance of any kind that most young white people in the United States encounter.[3] While video-sharing platforms on the Internet are emblematic of twenty-first-century digital culture, they are predicated on twentieth-century technologies of radio, film, television, and video that previously expanded the breadth and speed by which dancing could circulate. All of these communication modes unmoor the sharing of dances from the necessity for spatial and temporal proximity, such that black people can remain distant from white bodies while the dances associated with blackness can be learned.

Before this moment of my godson's dancing, I first noticed the "Internet Dancing" phenomenon in 2007 at a small New York City private school where I taught middle and high school. One class after another of mostly white students came into the dance studio obsessed with the choreography to teenage rapper Soulja Boy's song "Crank That."[4] They jumped, leaned, snapped, and tapped with vigor and pleasure. I was inquisitive about their fierce embodiment of the dance, an unusual confidence in their physicality that I suspected came from how they had learned it through the Internet. Posted on YouTube, Soulja Boy's music video narrated the story of how his own Internet circulation exploded into a dance craze, with the quick popularity of his choreography garnering him a record deal. Coupled with instructional videos to dissect the dance into digestible segments of movement, his dancing was mimicked by millions of bodies eager to replicate his movements.

I began to imagine white youth watching these videos over and over to learn the choreography as the Internet now allowed them to do. My own experience of viewing footage to recreate a particular movement is usually frustrating. The screen's images offer me no personalized feedback, no mutual interaction. I feel strained between how my vision is drawn into the seduction of the screen and the dense effort of making my body conform to its images. Instead of the screen's lulling effect that dissolves awareness of my own physicality, the process of translating digital information into action renders me both *more of* and *more than* my body. I spread out as I take in through WiFi signals, cable wires, computers, tablets, cellphones, and the luminous optics emerging from them. This enmeshment in digital worlds is the constant sensation of a split phenomenology, "feeling here while seeing there."[5]

For white people, this splayed-out sensorium expands the manner by which their bodies can reach and extend into space.[6] Internet Dancing

videos enable white desires and fantasies of "getting down," where "dancing black" allows white people to "feel free: physically powerful, sexually provocative, rhythmically aggressive, and preternaturally cool."[7] These appealing feelings can best be achieved if their white body feels skillful at doing the dances. Yet the moves evade easy replication—a failure implicated by the need to study the videos at all. Eyes squinting, scrutinizing the flickering screen light to absorb the moves, their bodies feel alarmingly awkward. In this blundering, it is not simply their body, but its *whiteness* that suddenly becomes disturbingly palpable as they try to replicate the blackness (they think) they see. Fumbling through the movement fulfills the prophecy of the commonplace notion that "white people can't dance," thus drawing their whiteness into consciousness. It shatters the usual comfort that comes from inhabiting the racial category of "normal," a (dis)embodiment that makes the white body fade out of its own awareness.[8] Anxiety bubbles up: what if there is something that their body cannot possess, something that remains outside their reach?

However, with Internet Dancing, this potently dissonant moment is curtailed through their access to digital tools to help practice their way out of it. Click and reload, they repeat and try again and again, until the moves are well worn in the muscles and the nervous tension is smoothed over. Luckily, no one has to see this rehearsal. This shielding from the eyes of others/the Other, paired with the ability for at-will repetition, enables white bodies to safely overcome the discomfort that frequently occurs when first embodying another's movement. The videos are portals to transcending, if only momentarily, the stiff respectability that is sutured to white (dis)embodiment.[9] Cast outside the white habitus coded as "proper," these dances are mined as something wild and free, which white bodies can access momentarily and embody, without consequence.[10]

As the participant-generated content of the Internet fosters a purportedly "more authentic" blackness captured in amateur raw footage, blackness appears increasingly knowable in white people's imaginations. The moving images are small slices of (O)ther's lives, severed from their context and woven into the fabric of white spaces. They are made intimate through repetition and mimicry, yet the "people who are called black" simultaneously remain removed, anonymous, distant, and different.[11] Simply watching another person moving generates a neuromuscular mirror response in the observer's body, which serves as the underpinning of empathetic connection. In Internet Dancing, this process of "movement contagion"[12] and incorporation into white bodies forges an embodied

sense of (false) familiarity with blackness, which is both averred and desired by whites.[13] It is not simply that these videos further enable cultural appropriation that makes them upgraded vessels of white dominance; they concoct a sense of closeness to Otherness that disavows and thus upholds the distances comprised of the political, social, and economic inequalities between white and black people.

For black youth, dancing through the Internet performs differently.[14] Their need to study these dance videos could undermine the racist presumption that black people are naturally talented dancers, the flipside of "whites can't dance." Yet I was anxious that my black students would believe in Soulja Boy's representation of blackness as *the* singular route toward performing their own racial identities, and that they would learn his choreography instead of generating their own, thus limiting the ways they could be themselves. In this way, Internet Dancing threatens to replace the physical traditions shared in vernacular contexts among peers and to usurp their generative and resistant power.[15] Yet mass consumption never completely obliterates the possibility for "creative recontextualizations" of itself.[16] The Internet can also operate as another vehicle for creating a collectivity among black youth, circumventing or manipulating the dictates of corporate media channels. Dance trends which coalesce on the Internet have at times amplified shared movement practices often created spontaneously with each other, while allowing authorship to remain traceable to its source.[17] Thus, Internet Dancing can form bonds of identification and collectivity between marginalized people, similar to the ones that dancing has always been able to build and sustain. While the nature of the Internet means the sharing of embodied knowledge is always open to the gaze of white eyes and imitation by white bodies, these white renderings are also always under the gaze of black people, who through the Internet can comment on, approve, disapprove, or imitate white dancing bodies.

The circulation of dance through the Internet extends the reach of bodies and forms a new medium through which they can connect and share movements, with different consequences and significances depending on who is dancing and what is being danced. In the highly segregated landscape of the United States, the videos more frequently render racial difference into something that white people can experience as a style and be entertained by, an attribute of embodied expression which they can more voyeuristically watch, and with diminished risk of "feeling white," learn to dance.

Questions

1. The author does not use the rubrics of "blackface" or "minstrelsy" to describe the performance of dances associated with blackness by white people. Would these terms be useful for further understanding the circulation of dance through the Internet? Why or why not?
2. This analysis of Internet Dancing focuses through the lens of a black/white binary of power. How would considering the role of other marginalized racial and ethnic groups change this analysis?
3. As a medium in which users can become entrepreneurs of their selves, Internet Dancing manifests neoliberalism's market ideology at a micro-level. How does neoliberal capitalism more broadly affect the performance and embodiment of race, and can this analysis be a useful lens for understanding Internet Dancing?

Notes

1. "Census Viewer" http://censusviewer.com/state/ME, accessed August 25, 2015. SilentoVEVO, "Silento Watch Me (Whip/NaeNae) (Official)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjW8wmF5VWc, accessed August 25, 2015.
2. While I claim these are attributes of a black habitus prescribed by white people, dance theorist Brenda Dixon-Gottschild argues that there is cultural retention and extension of an "Africanist Presence" in various black social and concert dance forms that cannot be reduced solely to the perception of white people. She identifies the following characteristics as constituent of this aesthetic: contrariety and high-affect juxtaposition, polyrhythm and polycentrism, and an embrace of conflict. While these are not always strongly present in the dance trends discussed here, I suggest that these dances continue to represent blackness because of the black bodies that perform them in their source videos and the association with blackness of the Hip-Hop styled music that accompanies them. See Brenda Dixon-Gottschild (1996) *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Greenwood Press).
3. Only 7% of all students in K12 receive dance instruction. "Statistics: General US Education and Dance Education" http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=55774, accessed August 25, 2015.
4. Soulja Boy TellEmVEVO, "Soulja Boy Tellem Crank That (Soulja Boy)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UFIYGkROII, accessed August 25, 2015.

5. Lambert-Beatty, C. (2008). *Being watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s.* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, p. 152.

6. Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, objects, others.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p. 111.

7. DeFrantz, T. (2012). Unchecked popularity: Neoliberal circulations of black social dances. In L. D. Nielsen & P. A. Ybarra (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and global theatres performance permutations* (pp. 128–140). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 140.

8. Carter, J. B. (2007). *The heart of whiteness: Normal sexuality and race in America, 1880–1940.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press. I use the term "(dis)embodiment" to articulate the phenomenology of inhabiting a body whose construction as racially normal generates a sensation of absence. For more on the concept of the absent body see Drew Leder's (1990) *The Absent Body* (University of Chicago Press).

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10. Desmond, J. C. (Winter 1993–1994). Embodying difference: Issues in dance and cultural studies. *Cultural Critique, 26*, p. 43.

11. "The people who are called black" is a form of (re)naming proposed by Fred Moten. See "Wyklad prof. Fred Motena: performans and 'czarnosc'" https://vimeo.com/100330139, accessed December 30, 2015.

12. Lott, E. (1993). White like me: Racial cross-dressing the construction of American whiteness. In A. Kaplan & D. E. Pease (Eds.), *Cultures of United States imperialism* (pp. 474–495) Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993. Sharpe, C. (2010). *Monstrous intimacies: Making post-slavery subjects* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

13. Foster, S. L. (2008). Movement's contagion: The kinesthetic impact of performance. In T. C. Davis (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to performance studies* (46–56). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

14. I recognize that this dichotomy of white/black makes invisible other racial and ethnic identities. While "brown" bodies access and embody performances of blackness for their own entertainment and/or to construct hybrid dance forms, the notion that "white people cannot dance" is the ground on which Internet Dancing has the most forceful intervention.

15. DeFrantz, 2012, p. 135.

16. Rymes, B. (2012). Recontextualizing YouTube: From macro—micro to mass-mediated communicative repertoires. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 43*(2), 214–227.

17. For example, see "Harlem Reacts to the Harlem Shake." Schlepp Films, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGH2HEgWppc, accessed August 25, 2015.

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Unheimlichkeit: Recollections of the Gaze

SunInn Yun

What is it that we see in museums? The collections? How is the museum designed to make us see the collections? What are we expected to see? A straightforward answer is that museums are there to preserve knowledge that has been collected from around the world and to share this for the purpose of public education and the advancement of knowledge and understanding. What the museum offers us is not merely a matter of exhibits, but a complex record of knowledge discovery, storage, and development.

Postcolonialists often argue, however, that such a conception of museums neglects the political and historical power and influence gathered there. What we see, all too often, is the victor's pride. Museums are spaces of multilayered political and historical meanings. This focus of postcolonial accounts derives in part from the physicality of the political and historical meanings incarnated in the museum. This sensuous physicality is experienced not through the tangibility of the objects in the collections but, specifically, through their visibility. This accessibility to historical and political meanings is made possible typically through the experience of seeing behind glass. The event of history

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is reified, stabilized, and then refracted through glass. Process is subordinated to the static and the visual.

I do not propose to contest postcolonial understandings, but rather to submit them to a phenomenological reduction. Within this phenomenological "bracketing" (*epochē*), I take up Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenological understanding. This approach embraces the horizontal understanding of human experience in its temporality, historicity, and thrownness in the world. In so doing, I try to track down each moment of what I see in the museum.

What is it, I asked, that we see in the museum? I attempt to describe my experience of visiting the Korea Room (known as The Korean Foundation Gallery, or Room 67) at the British Museum. The experience involves a double-edged distancing, even a repeated doubling of distance. I recall marginalized aspects of Korean history in relation both to British colonialism and to my personal history. The temporal distance between the past and present of Korea that is objectified in the Korea Room also marginalizes a sense of myself in relation to the represented nation of Korea. As a Korean woman, studying in London, and coming from a working-class family background, what do I see in the Korea Room? And in any case, how far does the string of epithets in the previous sentence help to explain the experience?

Behind the glass entrance door, the first section of the room introduces a brief history and geography of Korea: "This gallery explores the rich material and visual culture that tells of the peninsula's long and enduring history." After the brief introduction to the room, the guide panel indicates the six main collections of the room: the Moon Jar, the Box of Buddhist scripture (sutras), the Bottle named Maebyeong, and a painting of the heavenly King.

As soon as I enter the room, I notice that some exhibits have changed since my last visit. I have come to this room often during my stay in London as I used to live near the museum. My visits are sometimes quite casual: perhaps there is a sudden shower in the street, and as I am passing by, I pop into the museum. And, once, when I forgot my keys and knew I would have to wait for my flatmate to come home, I went to the museum to kill time. On such occasions, my purpose was obviously not the same as that of the other visitors. But I still enjoyed the cool dry air, the protective calm atmosphere—calm even though there were lots of people. With a kind of secret joy at being out of step with the others, I savored these occasions: I was pleased even at entering the museum and this room, which was, after all, "my place" or so it seemed. Perhaps on those occasions I walked more

quickly through the corridors and up the steps of the museum than other visitors. I had no need to consult the floorplans around which people were often gathered. My feet knew exactly where they were going. I was not going to linger in each room on the way. But besides these casual visits, perhaps sometimes silly in their way, I have become used to the atmosphere in the Korea Room. So, now the familiar air of the room welcomes me, or stays still, stays the same, waiting for me, as it were. My body responds to this air in a double sense. I walk there with no hesitation. And then I wander like the others, wondering what to see. If my steps left an imprint in the room, there would be patterns of circles on the floor.

The collection in the room covers the historical objects from ancient to contemporary art. The exhibit is informative for the purpose of public education, to promote a general knowledge about Korea. Of course the display already includes the curator's interpretation. The way that the collection and descriptions are displayed seems somehow politically or historically neutral, as if presented by way of a third person's perception. Perhaps this is a suitable way to learn about Korea. As a Korean, however, I see the objects differently. I find myself with mixed feelings toward such objects.

While walking around the room, I hear a group of Korean tourists coming in. Their guide gives a short talk about the room and then leaves his party to wander about. A few minutes later, the man gathers the group with the words: "Let's move to the next room and see them at home!" The group burst out laughing and moves on. But, can they just move on? Perhaps the guide means that the objects in the room are hardly new to them. Indeed, I too had seen such historical Korean artifacts in history books or in Korean museums.

But then, why do I make a visit to the Korea Room? Perhaps I am curious about how my country is explained in the British Museum—in terms of what kinds of features and what kinds of descriptions of this country are interpreted in the eyes of the "non-Korean," as it were. Or am I thinking about a matter of English?

Indeed, I have come to wonder how such things are explained in English. I recall the strange experience of understanding things explained in a foreign language (in English, in my case): at times this presents me with a moment of freshness, when I attend to each expression rather than using it habitually as I would in my mother tongue. As I cautiously attend to the foreign language, something looks clearer or fresher. Or is this claim just a means of disguising my lack of knowledge of Korean history? In any case, I wander

around the room and check the English translations, matching them with my knowledge of Korean history. And, sometimes the gap in my knowledge is filled in me, silently.

I notice the names of the donors of the objects on each panel. One of the major donors of the room is Mr. Hahn Kwang-ho (of the Hahn Kwang-ho purchase fund), an entrepreneur devoted to collecting Korean historical artifacts. But why did he donate them all to this museum and not to one in Korea? How did he and these objects land in this country in the first place?

I am prompted to think about Korean history, and I am reminded of its colonial period. Korea was colonized by Japan between 1910 and 1945. The collections in the Korea Room are not the kinds of the historical objects that were the product of the colonization by the British Empire. The British Empire and Korea (by then the Joseon Dynasty) had no direct colonial relation. The cultural or political legacies of colonialism are often carried on and displayed in forms of historical objects in this museum. But this seems not to be the case for the Korea Room.

I notice the indirect relation with other colonial countries. I imagine Korean historical artifacts arriving in the British Museum, during the colonial period. They are housed in this safe place, where, ironically, here in the heart of the British empire they survive the severities of colonial action abroad. The Korea Room reveals the indirect relation of colonialism via Japan that is present in this room. The series of collections shows the way that Korea is seen and introduced under the colonial gaze.

I start to think about the unnoticed memory or, legitimately, within the indirect relation of colonialism, the neglected memory of the nation. And it reminds me of my personal history, my ruined hometown. The buildings where I grew up were demolished in a city development plan. I left my hometown a long time ago, but a sentimental nostalgia sweeps me away as if capitalism has eaten up my past. Silly! In personal terms, the house and the entire village looked like the last material proof of my past, as I have already lost most of my childhood belongings, pictures, and persons for various reasons. Looking at the objects in the museum, I feel a resonance between the colonial story of Korea and my own story.

I see a tinted image on the glass, an indistinct reflection of myself. The objects and I have a similar destiny. We travel abroad and finally come together in this room. I recall the first time when I heard the news that my hometown was eventually demolished. I then came to this room, I saw

this model of a traditional Korean dwelling, and I cried. Was I thinking of this common destiny? Or did I think of my hometown through this traditional house (*Sarangbang*)?

My eyes follow the information panel.

> **A Gentleman's Room**
> House in the Joseon Period (1392–1910) had different areas reserved for men and women reflecting Confucian principles. This room, known as a *Sarangbang*, and its adjacent floor area were a central part of the outer quarter of a house complex. In this multi-functional space a man studied, greeted guests, dined, and slept. The furniture and utensils adorning the room showcase taste, knowledge, and wealth.

But wait. I find it absurd to have feelings of attachment to such objects. It is not with these objects that I can identify myself, not through them that I find myself represented. Encountering the traditional house in the museum, I recall the time when I first saw one, in a history book at school, and I recall the time I visited traditional houses on a school trip. But what I saw was not the object itself. My personal memory was somehow reified in the object for this flashpoint moment. By seeing, I take a view of the objects (without knowing or willing), a view that might serve in a number of ways—sometimes to comfort me, sometimes to disturb. Or perhaps have I lost my focus?

With a bit of annoyance, I notice again my own reflection in the glass. My vision of the objects is now untidy. I realize that none of these views are mine: the understanding of a foreign language, the Korean history, the collections, or the personal history. By seeing, I take a view that is not mine. I am reminded, then, of Jacques Derrida's apparently enigmatic remark: "I speak one language, and it is not my own."[1] The enigma is dispelled, however, when I realize that there is no tidy limit to this Korean that I speak, nor to the English that I write here, nor any ultimate definition to the boundary in me between these two; and that there is no limit to the identity that calls itself "Korean," which works serviceably as a relational, contextual term but deludes us deeply when it is protected behind glass. The Korea Room reminds me of this.

What we experience in the museum is not only the artifacts, classified and presented as the museum intends, and not simply a politico-historical

space of colonialism, as the critic would contend, but also the mood of, what Heidegger calls, *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness), a disturbance of the familiar. Let us consider for a moment how Heidegger himself puts this:

> As we have said earlier, a state-of-mind makes manifest 'how one is.' In anxiety one feels '*uncanny*.' Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that which Dasein[2] finds itself alongside in anxiety, comes proximally to expression: the "nothing and nowhere." But here "uncanniness" also means "not-being-at-home" [das Nicht-zuhause-sein]. ..., Being-in was defined as "residing alongside ...", "being-familiar with ...". This character of Being-in was then brought to view more concretely through the everyday publicness of the "they," which brings tranquillized self-assurance—'Being-at-home,' with all its obviousness—into the average everydayness of Dasein. On the other hand, as Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world.' Everyday familiarity collapses. Dasein has been individualized, but individualized *as* Being-in-the-world. Being-in enters into the existential 'mode' of the "*not-at-home*." Nothing else is meant by our talk about 'uncanniness.'[3]

This passage is laced with many terms that are pivotal in Heidegger's thought, and it is not possible to elaborate on these here. Yet the crucial way in which it focuses the interweaving of the familiar and the unfamiliar in experience and uncanniness in the ordinary should be clear. The difference between "being-at-home" and "not-being-at-home" is not simply a matter of what is good and what is bad. As Katherine Withy expresses this, it is a matter of "the play of presencing and absencing, or what we might call the play of familiarity and unfamiliarity," that is the finite human being's way of understanding being.[4] This by no means implies a correlation between what is present and what is familiar: on the contrary, both familiar and unfamiliar are structured by presence *and* absence. My account expresses my sense of being expected to find myself in a family or kinship relation to the artifacts on display, objects from my own country displayed here under the roof of this museum. Yet what should be most familiar becomes uncanny. What we experience in seeing, what emerges under our gaze, is not the artifacts or the incarnated space of the nation, with its sad memories, so much as the uncanniness of our own being: we become our own museum space.

Yet it is ironically through this experience, through seeing these artifacts in their glass cases, seeing them even with my postcolonial sophistication, that I realize something: I realize my disconnection, my finitude. It is a fleeting

experience of *Unheimlichkeit*, fleeting because, just as each recollection coalesces, it dissipates in the sense of its not being mine. This not-being-mine is who and where I am.

If this is so, is it possible that the role of museum education is not only to advance knowledge and understanding but also to make apparent the uncanniness of our condition? The uncanniness of the museum is double-edged. The visitor is confronted by strange things from foreign lands or from a past alleged to be their own; but then there is this further, surreptitious strangeness that is the experience of the uncanny itself. The curator collects and displays the artifacts to view; but then this display effects a defamiliarization, imparting strangeness itself.

QUESTIONS

1. What is it that we see in museums?
2. How is the museum designed to make us see the collections?
3. How do we come to understand who we are?

NOTES

1. Derrida, J. (1998). *Monolingualism of the other: Or, the prosthesis of origin* (P. Mensah, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
2. "Dasein" (literally "being-there" or "there-being") is the term that Heidegger adopts in preference to "man" or "human being" on the grounds that the latter terms are burdened with a history of connotations redolent of the metaphysics he seeks to undo.
3. Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie, & E. Robinson, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell, p. 233. (Original work published 1927)
4. Withy, K. (2014). Authenticity and Heidegger's Antigone, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, 45*(3), p. 244; Withy, K. (2015) *Heidegger on being uncanny*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 121.

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Friction

Crossing the Chiasm: Sutured Care in Medical Education

Martina Kelly and Tim Dornan

Medicine, "the science and art of diagnosing and treating disease or injury and maintaining health," (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) is a contested field. In the Western world, science is dominant. While its contribution to patient care is indisputable, its dominance too easily excludes artful ways of knowing. This piece highlights an alternative way in which a doctor's and a patient's co-participation in an act of healing led them to appreciate and understand each other. My narrative focuses on the body, not as a scientific object but as a sensate perceptual tool, which mediates human connection. I describe how suturing, in the technical medical sense of the word, sutured together, metaphorically, two embodied individuals. In doing so, it bridged the privileged sociocultural world of medicine and the fragile world of a person who frequently harms herself. This narrative illustrates how teaching and learning about our bodies—so-called body pedagogics—allows embodied experience to bridge distance and inequality between physician and patient.

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We have seen each other almost every month for over 10 years. In 15 minute aliquots, we discuss day-to-day events and family life. Occasionally I carry out a physical examination. Routine doctor-patient visits. Time is planned and documented, and care is managed. A professional relationship. Over the years, Mary and I exchanged many birthdays, Christmases, and family events; significant relationships have come and gone in our lives, but our time together is constant. Life has not been kind to her; she struggles with mental and physical health issues. Diagnostic codes, prognostic indicators, and management steps. In more recent times, Mary's grapples have turned inwards and she cuts her body. Her white soft skin is traced with a lattice of fine scars from razor blades and knives.

Mary sits in her chair beside my desk and I settle back in my chair. My eye is drawn to a dark stain on her jeans. The slices on her thigh are deep and need closure. What has Mary done? How can she inflict such pain on herself? We do not talk. I set about my job. Gently I peel the soaked denim from her skin, the blood has clotted and my actions cause fresh blood to ooze forth. I clean the wound, it stings. Mary sits stoically, unflinching. Then I inject local anesthetic by aligning the needle parallel with her lacerations and watch it flood the gouges. I hold the exposed edge of flesh and insert the curved suture to draw the thread through her skin and tie the knot tightly with precision. It is I who feels the pain; my powerlessness to change her situation. It is almost unbearable. My vision blurs and a salty tear drips, fills the gash, and runs uncontrolled down the curve of her thigh. I gulp and struggle for breath. My strangled sound breaks the silence. I feel a gentle hand on the back of my neck, through my hair. 'It's OK' she says. In that slow motion moment, proprieties dissolve and our relationship is transfixed; who is healer and who is the wounded? Our eyes meet.

Why has this experience niggled? What was it about my stifled breath, and Mary's touch that made me feel so vulnerable? That split second has challenged me, stimulated me to question my practice and led me to explore the idea of *body pedagogics* (Shilling & Mellor, 2007) in medicine—how we transmit corporeal techniques, and the embodied experiences associated with learning. My initial reaction to my tears and Mary's comfort was distress—"How could I be so unprofessional?" I ask myself. I broke a cardinal rule, displayed emotion and, even worse, infected a sterile field. It felt very strange to be touched with such care by a patient. Again, I worried. Had I transgressed another rule, gotten too close, crossed a boundary? The professional voice of my training challenged my *humanitas*. My sense of belonging to something bigger than myself knew that something amazing had occurred; our

sociocultural worlds had collided. There was no power differential, no pseudo language of 'gnosis;' we were sutured together. In that instant, Mary and Martina experienced each other in a deeply humane way. It was a healing moment. And that moment was embodied.

Merleau-Ponty wrote about the body as the constant means by which we experience the world. It is impossible to separate our bodies from who we are and what we do; the body opens up new points of view. To experience a structure is "not to receive it into oneself passively: it is to live it, to take it up, assume it and discover its immanent significance" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 258). Using the metaphor of chiasm, Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) described a process of intertwining, where the porous boundaries of two people crisscross and merge to "function as one unique body" (p. 215). Mind and body become an indivisible, therapeutic whole. These ideas are reminiscent of a more descriptively embodied version of Buber's (1970) I-Thou relationship, where the uniqueness of the Other is fully appreciated. For both philosophers, things happen in the 'inter;' a space in between two beings that is, of itself, creative.

As a physician, these ideas are extremely challenging. Formal learning espouses scientific principles of empiricism and objectivity. Medicine could be considered a practice of distance—rather than a chiasma, there is a chasm. Some of this is historical—physicians were typically male, often from a higher social class. Scientific thinking required learners to dissociate themselves from the physical and emotional turmoil of practice and develop an 'objective gaze.' Distance is also physical—perhaps initially practical, to guard against the hazards of infection, but it remains. Physicians do their rounds protected by white coats. Patients' vulnerability is made apparent as they lie in bed, in night attire. Taken together, these factors reenforce a power differential between doctor and patient. Recent attempts to suture this gap have resulted in a reconsideration of professionalism in medicine, but boundaries remain.

Yet medicine is also a practice of contiguity. As I examine patients, I probe and access parts of their bodies rarely revealed to other human beings. I share deeply emotional journeys of sickness and health; there is a sanctity to the doctor-patient relationship that can only be disclosed by law. Such closeness tends to be cloaked by a language of competence and professionalism. A discourse of care is less vocal. Ironically, a call to care, an idea of *connecting* with others, is what motivates many of us to become physicians. Caring is a physical process—think, for example, of nurturing a child.

There is a pedagogical paradox. Central to the study and practice of medicine is the body. Students learn the what, where, and how of bodily (dys)function. They also learn *with* their bodies. Physical examination techniques and procedural skills rely on detection of physical sensations, reactions, sights, and sounds. Over time, these skills become almost automatic and tacit. Proficiency requires familiarity with normality and abnormality—and the subtle differentiation between both is recognized and rewarded as the skill of an expert. The body as competent. What about the body as care? Poirier (2006) suggested that medicine is a pedagogy of disembodiment. Long hours, sleep deprivation, and physical hunger become embodied as part of a learning process, which facilitates the practice of distance. Learners are trained to ignore their physical needs and responses. In learning to become 'objective,' students suppress, become more guarded to express, and pay less attention to 'gut instinct' or the physical sensations induced by the emotional reaction of a distressed person in pain; they learn how to embody the chasm. Yet, is it possible that alternatives exist?

*The term *empathy* originates from the German term *Einfühlung,* which means 'feeling into'

Questions

1. In a well-meaning pursuit of professionalism in medicine, to what extent have we relegated the importance of 'feeling into'* the other, using an embodied form of empathy?
2. What alternative methods of teaching could enable medical students to become more physically self-aware, to attune, respond to, emotions and bodily reactions?
3. How might touch, explored through the metaphor of the chiasma, suture sociocultural differences in health care?

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Compulsory Heterosexuality
and the Queering of Southern Lines

David Herman Jr.

The body is a site of knowledge and potentiality and therefore must be implicated when addressing issues of teaching and learning. Our bodies represent our most personal and intimate means of self-expression, authenticity, and democracy. How bodies become associated/disassociated, even represented as abled/un-abled bodies, help to highlight nuanced aspects of our sociocultural, political, and educational endeavors. According to Ahmed (2006) "bodies take the shape of norms that are repeated over time and with force" (p. 91). Ahmed's theoretical framework of compulsory heterosexuality helps us to understand how "through repeating some gestures and not others, or through being oriented in some directions and not others, bodies become contorted: they get twisted into shapes that enable some action only insofar as they restrict the capacity for other kinds of action." (p. 91). The concept of compulsory heterosexuality also impacts the ways in which societies, cities, and even families maintain normative ways of being and becoming in the world. Simply put, our bodies are bodies that become "educated" through the kinds of associations we have with/in the world.

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In this description, I am most interested in exploring the phenomenological concept of compulsory heterosexuality from the perspective of Southern Black culture and traditions and what occurs when traditions, family values, or what Ahmed (2006) calls "straightlines" (p. 91) are disrupted and queered. Although this description concerns a specific analysis that on the surface may appear to be outside of the scope of any aspect of formal education, it is important to note that educational spaces extend well beyond the brick and mortar of a school building. Ahmed's claim that compulsory heterosexuality "shapes what bodies can do" (p. 91) sheds important light on how the body is caught up in the pedagogical processes of everyday relations such as those found inside our most intimate sphere: the family.

A few years ago, while visiting with a high school friend, I learned of a story that has remained with me. His story resonated with me because it was steeped in a tradition that I, too, was intimately familiar with—the deep American South. My friend's brother, who is three years younger, grew up in a typical southern family. Until the age of 16, he lived in a two-parent home, had lots of male cousin playmates, played all the traditional sports, and lived in a heteronormative church-going household. After graduating from high school, he joined the Navy, married his high school sweetheart, and they had four children—two boys, then two girls. When his youngest daughter was 12 years old, she told her parents that she was sexually attracted to girls and that she was a lesbian. This news was not well received by her parents and his brother's initial response was particularly indifferent. His brother became restrictive of the kinds of friends his daughter could have visit her at their home. He began to limit her after school activities, and there was an instance in which the parents suggested that perhaps "this passing phase" could be "worked out" through a third party. This story occurred over 10 years ago; however, his brother still remains uneasy about his daughter's sexuality and has continued to maintain that it is not an acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated in his presence.

What's most interesting about my friend's story is the direct link to Ahmed's concept of compulsory heterosexuality. Southern beliefs run deep and are pressed upon bodies in very specific ways. For Ahmed, the body is set in a type of "horizon." This represents a spatial construct in which bodies are orientated toward certain identities, (encouraged to identify in certain ways), while discouraged from other identities. In other words, bodies become objects that are willfully directed by the force of other

bodies and sociocultural practices (Ahmed, 2006). My friend's brother had created a horizon for his daughter that worked to shape her identity as being heteronormative despite her self-expression of being a lesbian. The coercion of her body was, in part, because of "a congealed history of past approaches" (p. 91). In other words, the "work" that was required to constrain her body to be a certain type of body was weighted in traditions that were passed from generation to generation. It represented a norm or a "straightline" on which my friend's brother centralized the ways in which he chose to rear his children and particularly the ways in which he restricted the lifestyle choices of his daughter.

The idea of horizons, and straightlines, are not unintentional devices. Reinscribing straightlines and directing bodies is indeed hard work. It involves the subjective and objective body. It involves implicit and explicit actions. As I think about my friend's story, I am inclined to wonder about the set of inscriptions that were passed down to his brother through various sociocultural and familiar influences: his father and uncles and the adult men that raised him, the media he encountered throughout his life, and all the traditional norms associated with the lifestyle of a Southern Black male.

Again, my friend's story has always remained with me because I can remember a particular moment in my life when I realized what it was like to be "of " deep Southern traditions, particularly as a Black male. Just a month after I completed my undergraduate degree, I began working for a Fortune 500 company. I was the first in my family to graduate with a college degree, which made my mother and siblings very proud. However, after 4 years into the job, I realized that it was time to resign and pursue other goals. I recall the day I decided to let my mother know that I had planned to resign. The conversation occurred over the phone.

It was on a Sunday afternoon just after my mother got home from church services. This was a time that I would usually call because I knew she would be in her "I just heard the good word" mood. We chatted for a while. We talked about the people at her church, the weather, and what she was preparing for dinner before I eased into letting her know that I was planning to resign from my job. There was an oddly long pause as if she was scanning the world before responding. It felt as though all of a sudden I was talking to her through a long dark mining tunnel. I could feel a certain kind of anxiety and distance through the silence. My body became confined by the weight of her delayed response. As I pressed my ear closer to the phone, as though I would hear her thoughts, I tried to

remain hopeful. Hopeful that she would immediately be encouraging and offer some useful insight on how I could move forward with my plans. Although her pause was probably not as long as it seemed at the time, it was the implications of her nonresponsiveness that made the time seem to drag on forever. Then she asked, "What do you mean you're quitting?" in a manner that was direct but curious. I attempted to shape my voice with confidence as I provided her with a litany of reasons, and then she asked, "Do you have another job lined up?" I knew that question would appear at some point, which was a source of my anxiety. I did not have another job lined up because I had saved enough money so that I would have some time to consider my options. My mother could not understand the fact that for days, even weeks, her "degreed" male son could be unemployed, and of his own volition. Although my mother tried to understand she was not willing to concede to the fact that I would be without a job for any length of time and was unyielding in her opinion that I not quit.

After the conversation ended, I sat at the kitchen table deflated, feeling as though in some way I was disappointing my mother and family by deciding to leave my job. I went into the conversation feeling self-assured, but soon found myself pensively reflective. My body felt injured and insecure as I considered my mother's concerns—they were important. Why wasn't it good enough that I was not satisfied with the job and wanted to move on? What was wrong with being "in between" jobs? Was I a failure for wanting to leave? On that day, I realized that my mother was essentially holding me to the standards of a tradition that was familiar to her. She did not fully understand my perspective, and instead of trying to understand, she chose to direct my "bodily horizon" around an ideal: responsible Black men have jobs. As a child, I grew up around Black men who worked. They were the "breadwinners" who provided for their families. For a couple of weeks afterwards, I tried to reconcile how I felt about the situation against my mother's concerns. I finally decided that I needed to resign and move forward. The moment I decided to turn in my resignation letter, I felt relieved and my body seemed to awaken as if it was released from a long slumber. At the end of the day, what is most important is one's willingness to be open and receptive to the ways in which we engage the world and others. Critical observation of the encounters and experiences we have with each other can help us to better understand how ideologies are formed and expressed—implicitly and explicitly through our corporeal schema.

When my friend's niece disclosed her queerness, it disrupted the flow of his brother's work to create a heteronormative family. In many ways, my mother was acting in the same way. She was not willing to consider other possibilities for her son outside of the typical working Black male body. As I listened to my friend's story, I could not help but wish that his brother and wife had embraced the fact that their daughter turned to them for support. The daughter's disclosure signaled a profound opportunity to explore a different way of being in the world as a Southern Black father—as parents. A moment in which the normative or essentialized narrative about how bodies are "supposed to be" could have been (re)marked with new ways of being in the world. I wished that at that tender moment, new possibilities for the body would have been given permission to burst into its own with the care, love, and guidance that we expect from parents. According to Gatens (1996), these new possibilities for how bodies can be encouraged is "one where difference could not be decided a priori but rather recognized in the unfolding of shared aims and objectives of groups of bodies" (p. 56). So, it seems, we should be encouraged to use our individual experiences to explore and direct the ways in which we live and learn. We should always lean toward ways that we can "queer" or free our bodies from the work of normativity, particularly if it constrains our sensibilities and our sense of personhood.

Questions

1. What can we learn about race and history through examining the ways in which the Black male body has been occupied through visual media such as photography and cinema?
2. How can queer theory such as Ahmed's compulsory heterosexuality be useful for an anti-racist anti-marginalist agenda?
3. How do we begin to understand the role of collective performativity in the quest to queer bodies as a site for protest and democracy?

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Literature, the White Gaze, and the Possibility of Conversation

Tim Jung

"Why is it," I wondered aloud, "that we have a lack of Arab Muslim and American Muslim authors not only in our library, but in our culture's literary canon?" This question came up after talking with some of my Muslim students after school, when our conversations naturally began to gravitate toward literature. Being a teacher of English at our school, I have found that a discussion with students about books occurs spontaneously and frequently. The topic of diversity in literature came up as Elsadig, Shamaal, and Summer[1] explained that they had not experienced any positive representation of Muslims in literature. To prove this, they showed me what our library had: *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, a book by Randa Abdel-Fattah. The book, written by an Australian-Muslim woman, had given Shamaal some hope when she was 12. "I saw that the cover showed a *hijabi*,[2] and I got excited." That excitement ended, as Elsadig and Shamaal joked—with a little too much honesty—when the book was described as "crushing their childhood dreams."

The book's cover asks, "Who Am I? Jamie or Jamilah?" The book's image on the front featured shots of the same girl: one shot showing her white and blonde, and the other showing her wearing a hijab. Shaal described the book as "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" with "Mr. Hyde being

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the Muslim part of her that she's ashamed of." Shamaal's summary seems even more apt when one reads on the back: "At school I'm Aussie-blonde Jamie—one of the crowd. At home I'm Muslim Jamilah—driven mad by my Stone Age dad. I should win an Oscar for my acting skills. But I can't keep it up for much longer…"

The White Gaze In and Out of the Classroom

While Elsadig hadn't read *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, he had borrowed his sister's copy of *Does My Head Look Big In This?*, a book by the same author. Summer also found the books to be problematic. Summer's first time wearing the hijab to high school was upsetting—not because of her personal choice—but because of the critical gaze that others had toward her. Being a sophomore and having not yet worn the hijab, Summer came to school one day looking different. Her fellow classmates had mixed reactions. Fellow Muslim students were overjoyed that Summer had made this decision to visibly represent her Muslim faith by wearing hijab, but Summer's decision wasn't celebrated by everyone—acquaintances who previously talked to her now ignored her in the hallway, and some asked questions about whether or not Summer was subjugating herself. To other young women, the idea of wearing the hijab is instantaneously one of oppression.

Randa Abdel-Fattah's books do not seem to side with Summer's experiences—instead, they point toward the other young women at the school, who identify the hijab as a tool in the subjugation of women. Therefore, it is important to examine what it is like to be a Muslim American teenager, and to do so through a phenomenological investigation of *being-with-others*, to attempt to understand the complex experiences that a Muslim American teenager has with their non-Muslim peers.

Jean Paul-Sartre, describing the experience of being perceived by others, writes it as an alienating experience in which one recognizes, with shame, that they are the object of someone else's perception. It is no surprise, given the focus of alienation and shame, that Sartre concludes in *No Exit* that "hell is other people." Summer, the new object of everyone's gaze due to her hijab, felt this enormous pressure.

Indeed, Franz Fanon (1952) writes that this pressure can cause people of color to see themselves as the white Other sees them. This causes a person of color to possibly become critical of one's own ethnicity:

Disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other, the white man, who had no scruples about imprisoning me, I transported myself on that particular day far, very far, from my self, and gave myself up as an object. What did this mean to me? Peeling, stripping my skin, causing a hemorrhage that left congealed black blood all over my body. Yet this reconsideration of myself, this thematization, was not my idea. I wanted simply to be a man among men. (p. 92)

Fanon's writings resonated with my students—who asked me to include the quote in the chapter—for it allowed our conversation to more adeptly capture the idea of the white gaze, and what happens with the temptation to internalize whiteness and wear a "white mask" by being a "man among men."[3]

This is, in fact, the reason that Summer, Shamaal, and Elsadig hated the works of Randa Abdel-Fattah: her characters always internalize the white gaze—or, as Elsadig puts it, "In the book, as time went on, the girl seemed to care more about what mattered to the average [white] Australian, and not her cultural heritage." Indeed, Summer, Shamaal, and Elsadig create a space for Muslim Americans by participating in Jama'ah Club, the Muslim Student Association at Northside College Prep. But I would be doing violence to the Jama'ah Club in saying that it is a space only for Muslim Students, as the group is open to everyone at the school.

Abdel-Fattah's works show the rejection of one's difference, and an acceptance and an internalization of the white gaze. The perpetuation of "backwardness" or "barbarism" is promoted ("my Stone Age dad"), and one must either disavow these attributes that the white Other imposes, or accept oneself as different. Jamilah, the main character of *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, struggles with wearing the hijab and seeks acceptance from her white peers, including having an e-mail correspondence with the popular white boy in her class, who, when asked by Jamilah, "What would you do if I told you I wanted to be a pilot?" rejoins with the joke: "I would call intelligence services."[4] This "joke" highlights an open wound for Summer, Shamaal, and Elsadig—namely that "Islam" has negative connotations in many Americans' minds since 2001.

The resilience of Summer, Shamaal, and Elsadig is commendable, if not only for the fact that they have such incredible integrity, but also for the fact that in a high school setting, they have suffered the questions and gazes of some of their so-called progressive peers. Many of their fellow students do not understand that is not only women who wear the hijab, since a hijab is a symbol of the immanence of one's relationship with God. Or, to put it in the words of Shamaal, "Everyone Muslim wears a hijab."

But this also raises another question in educating these critical students who do not understand Islam: why aren't there more (popular) books written by and for Muslim Americans? The authors we read in high school are predominantly of Christian heritage, and many more authors do not have a Muslim background. This could be because the idea of the white gaze goes beyond mere perception; this segregating gaze has systemic roots in American society.

The danger, I think, in sticking to a white literary canon is that it reinforces a certain (white) perspective. Charles Mills (1997), writing about the racial bias of social contracts, says,

> It could be said, one has an agreement to misinterpret the world. One has to learn to see the world wrongly, but with the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated by white epistemic authority, whether religious or secular. (p. 18)

This "validation" of perceptions is the reach of the white gaze. We must only see the world and experience it through the "right" mediators, namely canonical European or white Christian authors. Shamaal put this succinctly when she joked, "When we read books, we all begin white, as we all did in the womb." Through this joke, Shamaal points out that the subject of all literature in an American high school classroom is a "white" Christian experience.

The Impossibility of Solipsism and the Other

My students were very cautious about how to remedy the problem of a lack of representation. Elsadig and Shamaal told me that, in British and American literature, white people have had a wealth of experiences that could be shared: class differences, psychological differences, and so on. Muslim Americans also have a wealth of different experiences that they would have to share. There's no single narrative that's satisfying. Shamaal explained this, "There's no one answer you can write down. There's no 'seven steps to a flat belly'—you don't have the guide. We have to make the guide, and it begins with conversations like this one."

Elsadig furthered this point. "You have to define what it means to be a 'Muslim,' and that's why we are being critical of all of the books she wrote, but I don't think it's fair to say impossible." So, where do we, as teachers, step in, given the weight of the white gaze, and the existence and impact of the racial contract?

Phenomenologically, there is an answer to this, and it's something that my students touched on: "conversations like this one." Peperzak (2006) writes that a conversation demands "attention, respect for the other's words even if they are not fully adequate, patience in letting the other speak and finish speaking, humility in recognizing one's own need for instruction, and so on." If one is arrogant or impatient, Peperzak continues, the conversation is destroyed. This destruction of a conversation does not respect the Other—consider, again, Summer's treatment by her peers once they had seen her wearing a hijab. Instead of asking Summer questions about her faith and, more importantly, *listening* to her, they instead *told* Summer what they believed to be the case. This was arrogance: the association Summer's classmates made with patriarchy and the hijab was patronizing, since it assumed Summer did not know enough about *her own religion* to make a "correct" decision. For Peperzak, a conversation presupposes moral action. This moral action takes place with *listening* and therefore treating the Other as they wish to be treated.

Without a conversation, without addressing the Other, we are stuck in a sort of solipsism, where we only recognize the importance of ourselves. But this is a false sort of solipsism. As Merleau-Ponty (1945) points out, one can "turn away from the social world" but one cannot "cease to be situated in relation to it." We will always exist with the Other. Although we may turn our backs on the Other for a variety of reasons, we cannot deny that the Other is a central part of our existential constitution. So, if we are to exist in the social world with the Other, why not listen to what the Other has to say?

Questions

1. How does the racial contract affect the construction and dynamics of our classrooms?
2. How does the white gaze play within specific disciplines and curricula?
3. How does the white gaze affect our own representation of students and how might it affect how students represent themselves?
4. How are we, as educators, going to instill the value of a conversation as Peperzak conceives of it?

Notes

1. I would like to dedicate this chapter to Shamaal Shahzad, Elsadig Abdallah, and Summer Damra, who have taught me what integrity, wisdom, and courage look like through our conversations. Without them, these thoughts about pedagogy and religious ethnicity would not be possible, and I am forever indebted to them.
2. That is, another young woman who wears the hijab.
3. I should note that, being white, I do not have a primary experience of being subjected to the white gaze.
4. To be fair to the book, the main character does find a way to resolve and accept her religious identity. Others have written that they have identified with the struggle that Jamilah goes through. That being said, the book does problematize the issue of identity, and the students I've talked to were unhappy with the author's works.

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Stumbling

Tyson E. Lewis

A recent event at a national education conference struck me as disturbing and significant. I was attending a panel on the famous African American intellectual W.E.B. DuBois and his relevance for understanding contemporary forms of racism and classism in American schooling. The presenters were predominantly scholars of color, and the room was full of African Americans and Latinxs. There were probably fewer than a handful of white attendants, including myself. At the very start of the question and answer session, one of the few white men in the audience immediately raised his hand and was the first to be called upon. He then proceeded to tell a story from his youth. Apparently, he was raised by an African American nannie who taught him the "real meaning" of love and soulfulness. The story was riddled with stereotypes that have a problematic history in the white imagination—an imagination which does not have to think about what whiteness is or how it impacts others (Leonardo, 2009). Tensions in the room seemed to increase as the story continued to eat up more and more time. In the end, the chair of the panel (a notable African American scholar) was able to move the session forward by redirecting attention

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away from this uncomfortable and unfortunate incident, but I couldn't let it go, and for the rest of the Q&A (and long after), I continued to mull the incident over.

This case illustrates what Jones refers to as "goodwill whites" (2004) who have the best intentions and want to side with the "Other" or the "oppressed" but in this very gesture undermine their intentions by reinscribing troubling stereotypes, clichés, and deficit forms of thinking. Such cases are well documented and, I am sure, are nothing new to people who attend conferences that dare to discuss race, class, and gender. How many times have we witnessed white men in a minority situation still struggle to remain dominant/central by positioning themselves as "mansplainers" or "whitesplainers" and who end up speaking *for* people of color? Over the last couple of years, I have experienced this phenomenon over and over at conferences where white men begin their presentations with any number of caveats concerning the importance of "decolonizing" the academy or "problematizing race and gender" only to proceed to reiterate racial and/or gender stereotypes without any conscious awareness of the ensuing dissonance.

My intention here is not to discuss the flaws of particular individuals so much as describe my own, personal response (or lack thereof) as a white man sitting in the audience. I do so recognizing that I could be accused of nothing more than white, male navel-gazing or of reinscribing the centrality of whiteness (even in its deconstructed form). Yet I feel I need to proceed in order to describe a certain phenomenology of whiteness that is not often exposed for commentary or reflection. This is a phenomenology of my own aporias as a white man who fully understands that speaking of his own whiteness in order to expose it to criticism inevitably is a mark of white privilege itself. Such an aporia is not a reason to ignore the issue or remain silent but rather offers an opportunity to take responsibility for such aporias. There is much theorizing about whiteness in the critical white studies literature, but in some ways I feel that this theorizing does not expose whiteness enough. In certain instances, the theory seems to shield the whiteness of the authors from taking responsibility for the ways they live whiteness in their day-to-day encounters with others (including students and other faculty members). Don't get me wrong. Theory is essential, but it can be misused: it can create a shield for one's white privilege even while critiquing whiteness in general. In my view, there is a difference between describing one's whiteness as it is lived versus distancing one's self from whiteness through the veil of theoretical

sophistication. Here I want to simply present a phenomenology of what it is like for me—as a white man who is dedicated to critical theory and critical self-reflection—to sit in a conference presentation and hear other white men discuss race in highly problematic yet (I assume) well-intentioned ways.

My initial reaction to this situation was embarrassment followed by aporetic perplexity. I was embarrassed to be associated with this good will white by my gender and race. I felt guilty by association. And guilt fueled my embarrassment. I could hardly bear sitting in my seat, and the only thing worse than looking at the white man speak was looking at the faces of others in the audience. Thus I sat on my hands and stared at the floor. But this initial embarrassment turned into perplexity. I found myself wanting to do something without knowing what exactly to do. I felt myself stumbling around for a way out of the experience, or a way to distance myself from my own whiteness and maleness, or a way to call this guy into question. And as I stewed in my seat, a number of aporias ran through my head which I will recount here as a series of questions (which, as you will see, become increasingly circular):

1. What are my real intentions? Am I really angry because this guy is a well-intentioned racist or because I am inadvertently contaminated by his racism (guilty by association)? Thus is my reaction really about social justice or is it a selfish and self-centered emotional response? In short, is my motivation to prevent me from losing face in front of colleagues I respect or is it to be vigilant against racism that hurts others?

2. Isn't my desire to intervene merely a reinscription of white privilege? All the world needs is to hear two white guys criticizing each other. My gesture of solidarity and support of ethnic and racial minorities in the academy would turn into nothing less than two angry white guys yelling at each other, thus taking time away from other (non-white and non-male) voices.

3. Why do I feel I need to intervene? Doesn't this presuppose that the other people in the audience or other panelists can't handle the situation? Isn't there something paternalistic about this move? Why does the white guy need to save the day by pointing out what everyone already implicitly knows?

4. But isn't doing nothing at all a form of complacency? If I really do just sit by and not use my white, male privilege to call this guy out then I am not really part of the solution at all but rather part of the problem. If Kareem Abdul-Jabbar once urged all Americans to

"be inspired to vigilantly seek out, expose, and eliminate racism at its first signs" surely he would not say I just have to sit by and silently stew in my own ethical and political paradoxes.

5. But isn't doing something self-serving? Isn't my real desire here to leave feeling morally superior because I did the right thing? That it was brave of me? That I now have public evidence that I am on the "right side" fighting the "good fight"?

In any case, I did nothing. But I have been haunted by my (in)action ever since. And I have sought out council from my friends and colleagues in the academy who are ethnic or racial minorities and who actively think and publish in the realm of critical race theory or critical pedagogy. They have dialogued with me and discussed this issue at great length with me (sometimes on more than one occasion). But as I write this phenomenology, it occurs to me that my desire to talk to these friends and colleagues is itself troubling on two accounts. First, my desire to turn to ethnic and racial minorities to have them tell me what to do puts the burden back on them to come up with solutions to *my* dilemmas as a white man struggling with my privileges. Thus I shirk off responsibility for thinking through these aporias. Second, talking to my critical race theory friends has had a strangely reassuring effect on me, that although I did nothing and said nothing in the moment, I am somehow redeemed and thus saved from being lumped in with the other "good will whites." Again, I have the sneaky suspicion that these conversations somehow absolve me of responsibility for feeling culpable.

In the end, I have to face certain facts: As of this moment, I am a white man even though I am suspicious of my whiteness and my maleness. I can't not be white. It is something I *stumble over* repeatedly and without end. I mean this very literally. First, one never sees what one stumbles over (hence the stumble). My privileges (even when I am paying attention) often come as a surprise, causing me to trip up, stutter, fumble around, and lose my cool. It is as if I live my whiteness and maleness as external to my identity. Moments of discomfort as I experienced in this conference session remind me that what I am stumbling over is not external so much as that which is so internal that it remains largely invisible. Second, my actions are therefore always *reactions* to the stumble—my attempts to interrupt my whiteness and maleness seem to come *too late*; they are untimely. Third, it is important to note that when one stumbles, one does not fall completely off track. Rather the initial movement is recuperated,

and an equilibrium is restabilized. Granted, one is somewhat shaken, yet one's stride quickly returns, and if one is lucky, no one else even notices the stumble in the first place.

But perhaps the certainties, clarity, and solidarity I seek are not the way. Maybe I need to stumble more, to stumble perpetually, and thus expose myself to the danger of *falling* off balance, disorienting myself, and thus suspending any ease with which my white, male body can extend into space. Indeed, what is most disturbing to me about the incident recounted above is precisely the lack of stumbling around. The man in my example was too confident in his social justice agenda, his good intentions, and his solidarity with African Americans. There was too much ease in his gestures. What was lacking was the stumble, which always indicates a faltering of some kind. But if one is only aware of what one stumbles over in retrospect, then how can continuing to accidentally trip over one's whiteness and maleness possibly offer a solution? To stumble is one thing, but to fall is another.... To fall means one does not have a strategy to recoup from damage done (damage which might result in exposing one's self to ridicule, or even worse, to sustain the damage that might result from staying in the anxiety of *being a problem* without rehabilitation or assurances or guarantees [Applebaum, 2016]). Such a position would mean that whiteness and maleness cannot be preserved as some kind of "progressive" political identity, cleansed of any tainted relation to a violent past. At the same time, the mere abolition of whiteness and maleness would seem to move away too quickly from the phenomenological experience of living a condition that cannot be *absolutely* overcome through actions oriented toward institutional transformation (Ignatiev, 1998). Whiteness and maleness can only be lived as a problem, and thus always as a threat—even if that threat is mitigated by anti-white or anti-male alliances.

Perpetually falling away from whiteness and maleness would mean that individuals cannot ever take self-satisfaction in resisting white supremacy or male privileges. It would also mean that there would never be definitive "proof" that one is free from prejudice, discriminatory practices, or racist behaviors. What seems to remain would be a permanently unstable

and uncertain whiteness, or a whiteness that is always already falling away from what it nevertheless is inexorably boundup with: the violence of racism. Self-possession/self-certainty would necessarily give way to existential self-problematization.

At the same time, falling away is also a falling toward. Unlike stumbling, where one returns to where one was (perhaps a little wiser), to fall is to *change locations* and thus to change one's positionality (in relation to others and in relation to one's self). Falling away from whiteness and maleness means that one is falling toward the very differences that were once guarded against. Thus, falling is not merely negative (living life as a problem) but also positive (living life in a radical openness toward others). The question is how such a condition can lead to action (even if that action is never guaranteed) instead of paralysis (in the form of prolonged navel-gazing or self-doubt). Herein lies the aporia but also the promise of an inoperative whiteness/maleness.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you witnessed examples of "goodwill whites" in schools and/or universities? Describe.
2. Describe an experience of stumbling around one's own identity. What would it mean to stumble around versus fall off balance in relation to one's race, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation?
3. Would you have acted differently at this conference if you were in the audience? How does your race, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation condition your possible range of actions?

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"So, Are You a Feminist Epistemologist?" Holistic Pedagogy for Conversations on Indigeneity, Love, and Crossing Borders

Kelsey Dayle John

My dad is the kind of man who eats jalapeño peppers raw for a snack. He chops wood when he is angry; as a hobby, he breaks wild Mustangs from the Navajo reservation. He is silent in most ways but never absent, ever present yet mostly silent. He is assured to a fault and stubborn like a bull, but from his stubborn nature spills out unbreakable strength, reliability, and a love deeply embedded in his actions rather than his words. I never named his disposition as Native, but I guess I interpreted his quiet strength as so because it embodies stereotypical images of stoic, noble Native masculinity like the kind portrayed in movies. I'd later learn the complexities of Navajo gender expression in a settler colonial society. Then there's me, a half-Navajo woman, raised in the comfort of his accomplishments. I never had to choke down government cheese, but he described the taste to us once when we gathered to eat fresh broccoli at our comfortable dinner table in our Oklahoma home. I sometimes felt guilty for living my privilege out of his work; I often felt not Native *enough* and too stereotypically feminine to connect with his indomitable personality.

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As a Native woman, you feel your flesh always but in different ways. It's apparent in the way everyone envies your winter "tan" and with the constant questions of "am I dressed modestly enough for this meeting with my male professor?" I feel it in the difference between my skin tone and my dad's skin tone; the way he can run forever without getting injured like a *real Navajo*. I guess I was always under the impression that Native people could and should be able to run forever.

On an afternoon drive to the airport, when we normally would have drove in silence, he asked me: "So… are you a feminist epistemologist?" The question hit me in a funny way. He is a microbiologist by training, and a stoicist by gender orientation, but for Christmas I'd given him Kim TallBear's (2013) book *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. I selected a topic that intersected with his research area—genetic science—and my research area—Native identity—hoping it would create a connection. It had been a particularly tense Christmas break because I was in the heart of my graduate program with barely any words to describe my daily existential crises. I felt like I could only talk in theory, which none of my family understood. I didn't know it at the time, but I was beginning to practice integrative education. Giving him this book was my way of teaching him how I was connecting theory to life. I was amused that, from the entire text, the idea which resonated with him most was *feminist epistemology*.

I giggled at the enigma of hearing those words come from his mouth before trying to concisely state my position on the text, but I noticed the point was not about *theory*. My giggle formed the sound of both delight and discomfort from an unlikely connection. I often laugh uncomfortably at the paradoxical moments which take me by surprise, yet this giggle also sounded with my delight. The high-pitched sound stops, juxtaposed to his deep, monotone syllabary as it formed sounds unfamiliar to him. At the same time, a part of me didn't know if he was joking or trying, because he often starts sarcastic jokes with "so…," but the deep trumpet of his vocals caught my attention. His voice goes an octave lower when he's serious. I never imagined these words would exit his mouth, but the theoretical jargon wasn't the point of our conversation at all.

I was glad to have this conversation about education outside of my own education, with someone I needed to hear from. I'd given my dad a book that captured my intellectual existence, and he picked it up the next day and began to read, to ask questions, and try to understand *me*. I thought, "What successful male microbiologist delves into feminist literature?" except one

that wants to be able to know his daughter. It's not about me being found in any full way through a text, but about the genuine love of a father to his daughter. Moreover, this conversation opened up a way for us to talk about something we'd never touched on before: the contradictory place of our family's Christian spiritual beliefs and our Native heritage. My father and I have always shared spirituality, Nativeness, and academia but never uttered more than a few words about these connections in over twenty-three years.

His reach exemplifies fatherly love, but it's more than that; for me, it connects all things. As the first to teach me, I learned love from my parents before starting schooling as a mode of education. I'd recently started to reach back into the depths of my childhood during my graduate school experience and felt like my dad needed to know this work to really know me. I shared his high cheekbones and black hair, but not his style of thinking or communicating. Theory, emotion, and contemplation script my world; his world is silent work, hypothesis, and experiments. At that moment, all that represented me were these theories I'd learned. I needed to make amends with this part of my being before I could be myself—a Navajo woman in the research university. I longed to be brutally honest with myself before I could write for anybody else, and this meant having these conversations with my family and breaking down these barriers in communication to navigate the contradictions in my own life. It also included confronting gender as an Indigenous woman and including my family in that journey.

Parker Palmer (2010) writes about transformative conversations as a way to foster integrative education, meaning education that is holistic (body, spirit, mind, family, institution, spiritual tradition, race, culture, etc.). Additionally, Indigenous scholars assert that pedagogy can only be done emphasizing the relationality and connectedness of all parts of life. Pedagogy is a holistic endeavor that allows our stories, conversations, and contexts to mold into the work we do. Life never stops for academia, and finding connections to understand myself, my family, and my people is a key to understand meaningful and transformative pedagogy. One thing that calms my anxieties about my contradictory identity is when my family, specifically my dad, affirms me in all these intersections—Diné, woman, Christian, and theorist. To me, this is true education that spans into all aspects of life, helping people become whole through love and connection.

Oftentimes, academic research under-theorizes family love or love from those near us that function like family members. It seems anti-academic, but I think the deep spiritual connectedness gained through relationships is something every human deserves to have and forms a foundation to knowledge. In the world of theory, there are unique discourses to represent

human experiences, but academic theory does not embody nonacademic education. Genuine love inspires us to truly see another person. Such love cannot be learned through theory alone but must precede learning another's theory. Connecting family relationships with theory is tough because one must choose to remember love rather than the hurt intertwined with family. Familial love has the power to help us build connections between the deepest contradictions. I knew this love by example with my father's attempt to reach out across his discipline, his language, his gender norms, his culture, and his comfort zone in order to unite these opposite poles through gesture and conversation. I thought: wasn't this the purest introduction to epistemology there could ever be? This education started with family love and a commitment to know somebody, to trudge through the density of unfamiliar languages, self examination, and uncomfortable conversations just to know them a little better.

Questions

1. What is the purpose, method, and danger of connecting any knowledge which has remained outside academic work in pedagogy?
2. Describe a moment with your identity or family that you thought you'd never write about. Free write about it to find any natural connections between theoretical work and your personal experience.
3. Indigenous and feminist scholars have tackled divisions in epistemology. What are a few epistemological divisions in pedagogy, and how are people tackling these divisions in the current moment?

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Assault

Learning to Use the Switch

Charles Bingham

SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

As I sit down to write these pages, I have just taken a moment to check in on international news. University students are protesting high tuition rates in South Africa. They are protesting because poor Black students are being forced to drop out of university at rates disproportionate to their wealthier white counterparts.

   Times have changed since the ugly years of Apartheid. These are students of the "born free" generation, born after Apartheid ended. White university students are forming a "human shield" around the Black protestors to show solidarity. One Twitter account reads: "We have called for the white allies to make a human shield to protect us. They have obliged. High white discipline." In other words, whites are disciplined enough to protect their Black allies physically even at risk to themselves. The same author is also critical: "Comrades let us not fall into tendencies of valorizing whites as heroes. Their unjust privilege protects them, nothing else." Years after Apartheid has officially ended, there is still a sense that white students have more voice and more presence than their Black counterparts.

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My memory races to theory. And also to South Africa in the 1980s. The theory I'm thinking of is Gayatri Spivak's (1988) famous postcolonialist tract, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak reminds us that the very structure of oppression silences the oppressed even if they are allowed to speak. Or in terms of the tweet, "Their unjust privilege protects them." The protesters can only speak through the human shield of the privileged. Their speech is not quite their own. So much for being born free. I will return to Spivak after I tell a story.

It was my second year as a teacher, in a tiny village in South Africa, just outside a small town called Bizana. The village didn't have a name but it could be identified by the name of the school. If you were heading by bus toward the Indian Ocean, coming from Bizana, you needed to only ask the bus driver to pull over at the "Lukolo" bus stop. He would let you out at our village, our village without a name but given a name after its proximity to our school, Lukolo school. Here you would find me teaching English and mathematics, the only white person in the village, in our school.

I Will Never Write

I remember being confronted by a local elder. We were walking on the same dirt footpath, I with shoes, he without. As we approached each other, he wobbled a bit, perhaps drunk. I did not know him. He hailed me as we got closer. "You. You are the white teacher at our school."

"Yes," I said, "That's me." I was indeed that white teacher. No other white people ever got off the bus at Lukolo.

"You, white man," he continued in Xhosa, the language we spoke in our village, "you are going to write a book about us when you go home."

I was taken aback by this claim. Indignant, I replied. "No, I will never write about Lukolo. That is not why I am here. I am here to teach, not to write."

I was not there to write. I wasn't there to do the work of an anthropologist, not there to scrutinize or betray secrets. I was sure I wouldn't write about my experience because I considered myself *a part of* this African village. I was not an outsider.

But Here I Am Writing

Thirty years later, by writing this, I am going back on my word. I have broken my promise to that Xhosa elder. And the story I tell here relates yet another broken promise. Let me explain.

Our village school had unfinished concrete walls with corrugated iron for a roof. The school's windows were all broken out. The doors had long since vanished from their hinges. No electricity. The water tanks were rusted through. I taught Shakespeare, essay composition, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry.

Soon after I started teaching in Bizana, I learned about something called "the switch," something I had never thought of before in connection with teaching. It all began when other teachers started to ask me, "Are you using the switch?"

Curious about this question, I decided to peer, unobserved, into what used to be classroom windows, to glimpse how other teachers used this object called the switch, this object so foreign to me. What I saw was students holding out their completed exercise books for scrutiny by the teacher. In the right hand, a student would hold his or her homework, showing that it was complete. If the homework was not complete, the student would hold out the same hand, empty. A quick flick of the switch would follow. The student would let out a sharp breath of pain. Others would wince in empathy.

"Are you using the switch?" "No," I replied. To use a switch on students was against my principles. That was not how I wanted to teach English and mathematics. I thought I would rise above such a practice. I promised myself when I found out about this practice that I, myself, would never use the switch.

Weeks went by quickly after I began teaching in Bizana. My days were full of cajoling students to complete their homework on time, weeks of frustration that my students were showing up empty-handed. In the staffroom, other teachers had piles of homework to correct. I had time to spare as my students refused to do the homework I assigned. Out of frustration, I yelled at my students one day, "Why do you not complete the homework I assign?"

Xholani, a student of mine, stood up and answered for the entire class. "We do not do our homework, Sir, because you do not use the switch on us."

In Time, I Conformed

Soon, I too, was wielding the switch whenever my students came to class empty-handed. And I was not just wielding it. I was wielding it better than the other teachers I had spied through broken windows. And my students excelled. Their marks on examinations were high. I was more busy in the

staffroom, by far, than the other teachers. My students worked precisely because of my broken promise. My diligent use of the switch.

My classroom became like the other classrooms. Every morning, a boy would be chosen to walk a few hundred meters along a footpath to a stand of trees. He would be charged with cutting down three or four limber branches. He would show the branches to me, ask if they were suitable. If so, he would whittle them down with a knife until they were smooth enough to be switches. I would thank the boy for fetching the day's switches. Sometimes that same boy would be on the receiving end of the very switch he had whittled—that is, if his hands were empty of the homework he owed me that day.

Liberation and Colonialism: Hand in Hand

Teaching in Bizana, I was dedicated to the struggle to end Apartheid. I lived in a Black South African village because I wanted to reside in symbolic opposition to Apartheid. I would wake up in the morning, tune my short-wave radio to Radio Moscow, and listen to African National Congress broadcasts advocating the armed overthrow of the South African government. The Apartheid government banned all communication by the African National Congress. But they could not, I suppose, block short wave communication from other countries.

During holidays, my white friends and I would travel to neighboring countries to buy books banned by the South African government. I would pass on these banned books to my students: Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, Stephen Biko's *I Write What I Like*, and others. I would give these books of political awakening and liberation to the very same students I was hitting with a switch. At the time, I did not fully conceive of the irony. I was partaking in a violent, colonial act against my students at the same time that I considered myself an ally on the side of liberation. A broken promise to myself unintentionally redoubling the pain of an Apartheid system I loathed so deeply.

Some 30 years ago, I made a second promise, a promise to an old man who wore no shoes as we met on a dirt footpath. Now I have broken that promise too. I have written about our village just as he predicted I would. I have written about our village because when you are a professor and you have such stories, people want to read about them. People want them written down, as that old man knew so well.

I wonder now if things haven't come full circle, which is to say they perhaps haven't changed much. I think of those white students forming a "human shield" for the Black students demanding less tuition. I wonder if, 30 years ago, I was a version of these white students, distributing banned books in the name of liberation yet unable to avoid colonial practice and colonial privilege. I wonder if Spivak's question "Can the subaltern speak?" is not echoed perfectly in the chapter that I am writing right now. I am now writing about my experience during the 1980s in Apartheid South Africa. That I would do so, an old Xhosa man knew only too well. He knew the colonial world operates in such a way. He knew that the subaltern is not the one who gets to speak.

QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can a teacher resist the harmful educational practices of an oppressive society?
2. How do race and privilege inform this story?
3. What can be said about the insight of the local elder in this story?

RELATED FURTHER READING

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Adjusting One's Self: An Educator's Experience in a Peruvian Community

Amanda Alexander

Fleshpoint

Walking on a beautiful spring day with blue, sunny skies, I am excited to have lunch with my friend. Amazonas, a major avenue, one block from the town center, is crowded and the sidewalks are narrow. I step on and off of the sidewalk into the street many times because there isn't enough space for everyone to pass side by side. It's an ordinary day near the market—noisy, crowded, people selling goods, and talking. However, something seems amiss. I am focusing on the conversation with my friend, but a commotion is breaking my concentration. Stopping on the corner of Amazonas and Del Batán to cross the street, we see and hear the madness more clearly. People are visibly frightened. Many are pushing and yelling at one another—working to get away from the police, away from the chaos. I quickly abandon our conversation as the scene looks as if it could devolve into a stampede of people.

Amid the confusion, I look up to see many small canisters arching toward us through the air. At first, the canisters look like black grenades. Not fully comprehending what they are, my friend and I look at each other in bewilderment. Just then, one of the canisters lands within three feet of us. As soon as it lands,

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an odor, which I cannot identify, fills the air. Then, it hits me. Pain! I cannot see anything, and panic begins to mount. I hear shouting, screaming, and people crying. My friend grabs my arm, so we don't lose each other in the mass of people.

Through the shouting, I begin to hear a solitary voice. I can't quite make out what he's saying, but it becomes louder and clearer the more he says it. He's repeating something. The pain I'm in is unbearable. I'm thinking, "I can't breathe!" The voice continues to shout. It's coming from my left. My friend is holding my right arm, and I pull him in the direction of the man shouting. It is like a beacon. I finally realize what he's saying: "Entra aqui! No puede quedarse afuera. ENTRA AQUI!" Despite my lack of vision, excruciating pain, and feeling like a pinball bumping into people from all directions, we make our way to the voice. He hastily pulls us inside and slams the door behind us. I can hear others outside struggling to flee the streets. The man guides us to the back of his photo shop store. He says, "Aquí está el fregadero. Salpique su cara con agua. Esta no es la primera vez que nos han gaseados." All of my senses are overloaded. My eyes are burning fiercely, and I'm unable to open them. Tears, mucus, and saliva are emerging from all orifices of my face as the tear gas has taken full effect. I am confused, scared, and in great pain. I barely know up from down, left from right. My friend chokingly struggles to ask if I'm okay. There's only one sink. We have to take turns splashing water on our faces. I am so scared! Barely able to see, I notice there are others in the shop with us also suffering from the gas. They must have entered before us.

After nearly 20 minutes, the shop owner looks outside and says, "Está despejado." We exit and run down the street in the opposite direction from the riots in the town center. I'm only able to keep my eyes open for brief periods of time while I run as the effects of the gas seemingly last forever. I'm afraid of tripping and losing my friend, but I don't. We turn a corner and make it to safety.

Grappling with the pain. *I'm sitting in my room looking out the back window into the family garden. It's so beautiful. My host mom, Gaby, has planted avocados, fruit trees, and colorful flowers. I am having a difficult time calming myself down. My mind is racing with questions: What have I gotten myself into? Is this really what I want to endure for two years? What is happening in this community to cause such backlash? I say to myself, "I guess I'm not going to Porcón Bajo today. I hope the artists aren't upset with me for not visiting them this afternoon." As an educator, how will I ever accomplish my goals in this community with intense tension and clashing of people? I'm feeling scared, lonely, and confused. My face still burns from the gas, and I calm myself by focusing on the garden. So many questions remain.*

This fleshpoint took place while working as an educator with *campesino* artists in the Andes Mountains of Cajamarca, Peru. As a white female from rural Indiana, I volunteered with the Peace Corps in 2002 to live and work with an artist community in Cajamarca. My blissful state of (un)consciousness and mind-body senses came from years of solely knowing Indiana country life—a life that now seemed too simplistic. I was quite sheltered. Admittedly, I was naïve about the sociocultural history, context, and power dynamics of Peru and my position as an outsider entering a foreign community. I had not been in Cajamarca more than three months before this incident.

A Continuing Saga

Awakened by the neighbor's rooster, I hear the morning chirping of birds in the garden. I make my way to the kitchen and see my host dad, Julio, making me breakfast. He says, "Good morning! You probably shouldn't leave the house today. There are bad demonstrations outside." I think to myself, "Oh Julio, you're so dramatic." Gaby enters the kitchen and says, "Julio is right. You should not leave the house." She tells me that burning tires, cut trees, and debris are blocking the road to the Yanacocha mine. She says, "People are demonstrating against the mine because they are working to exploit more land." I listen to my family and stay inside the house.

Two days go by, and I am still inside the house. I am flooded with emotions— mostly feeling scared. Gaby is insistent that I DO NOT LEAVE. She says, "If you leave, people may associate you with the mine, and they might harm you." The demonstrations are getting worse as they are now the major headline for national news and beginning to make international news. I see helicopters flying over the house carrying large mining equipment.

Later that evening, Gaby tells me that I have a telephone call from Peace Corps. I pick up the phone. It's a staff member from the Lima office asking me if I am okay. "Do you want us to evacuate you? We can send a helicopter from the American Embassy if you feel that you are in danger. The U.S. managers of Yanacocha have all been evacuated." I respond, "No. I am okay. My family is taking good care of me." "Well, if anything changes, let us know ASAP," says the staffer. I head to my bedroom and cry, upset by the ordeal, thinking about the words: "if you feel that you are in danger." Am I really in danger? Who do these people think they are to disrupt an entire community and way of life? If the people of Cajamarca do not want exploitation of minerals and mining, then why aren't others listening? Did the capitalist managers who run the mine get airlifted out? Why? They should be punished. Five days later, I remain inside waiting for the chaos to subside.

In my naiveté, I knew Yanacocha was an issue, but I had no idea of the level of anger that surrounded it. The demonstrations lasted several days of which many people were killed in violent clashes. The tension and conflict with Yanacocha and other mines had been underway for over a decade and was a constant struggle in the lives of the Cajamarcan people. Indirectly, I felt as if I was part of the problem. I was a white, US citizen coming to "educate" or "help" through living and working with people who were "poor." Any Cajamarcan could have rightfully aligned me with the mine that was causing their strife. The mine was majority owned by a US company, and the systematic overarching structures of global power, of which I was a part, were ruining people's environment and way of life.

Fleshpoint Effects

Living and working in Cajamarca provided me a clearer understanding of the sociocultural dynamics of power for which I had to adjust. There was never a way to escape or hide from the historical power relations that engulfed Cajamarca and its people. In thinking about these experiences, I invite other educators to ponder and consider their own experiences in international spaces or live vicariously through mine and ask:

- If one travels to another location to visit, volunteer with, or study others, could the person be (unknowingly) viewed or perceived as an imperialist or modern day colonialist? Why or why not?
- How might Westerners consider their role and/or impact in the global marketplace when purchasing goods (or minerals and substances that make up the goods) from other countries?
- How does history play a role in understanding present-day power structures, that is Western/non-Western, geopolitical north/south, haves/have nots, and neoliberal capitalism/traditional ways of life?

Related Further Reading

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The Myth That Brands

Towani Duchscher

> The doctor touches the soft, doughy, unscathed skin on my daughter's belly with her bony, withered hands and says, "See this, we don't want this."
>   I trusted her.

My daughter's first adventure away from my softly lit, well protected home was to this downtown pediatrician's office. Each time we come here I remember that first trip. I remember scampering nervously from my car through the busy parking garage. The street, a raging river of traffic, felt too harsh, too loud, and too dangerous for my new, fragile being. I kept her protected in her car seat covered by grandma's homemade blankets. I was proud to take my daughter to a real pediatrician; not just a "general" practitioner, but an expert in children's health.

Now, nine years later, we are accustomed to the noise and bustle, and we sit in the little room, waiting for the doctor. The strong, investigative, fluorescent lights expose each dot, each wrinkle, and set the stage for the examination. I always find myself sitting on the edge of the chair, pen and paper in hand, as the doctor performs my daughter's yearly check-up. It is clear that she is performing an assessment of not only her health, but my parenting as well. I had best take notes.

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The examination table is covered with a temporary, replaceable paper used to protect us from past patients. It is easily disposed of at the end of each appointment, whisking away any memory of us. If we rip off a piece of this tissue paper, we can place it over the vent by the window and it will become a tiny paper ballerina. The tissue will perform a magical ballet of flitting, twirling, falling, and then leaping again into the air. We spend each appointment audiences of this performance; a special ritual that makes this small, disinfected room special.

The doctor enters. My daughter sits up on the protected table, self-conscious of her changing, nine-year-old body. Breasts budding, waist line developing, I see a softening and filling out of features that will eventually define her as a woman. She lifts her shirt at the doctor's request. The doctor touches the soft, doughy, unscathed skin on my daughter's belly with her bony, withered hands and says, "See this, we don't want this."

We have failed the exam.

The framed degrees on the wall allow the doctor to pass these judgments of beauty disguised as health. She has not once asked about how active my daughter is or her vigorous appetite for vegetables. She is not concerned with health. She is concerned with looks. She speaks as though they are one in the same. Her version of beauty and health combine and rule over us with her royal "We." In this "We" she means, "I speak for the world, and We don't want this. We don't want you." She stands as a sentry of the *beauty myth*,[1] keeping us in line, *disciplining with observation, judgment, and examination*.[2] The doctor then adjusts her own stylish skirt, takes a step back in her designer shoes, and begins her lecture about health[3] and food choice. As her eyes quickly flash to my own mid-section, my daughter and I both hold our breath. Slowly sucking in our stomachs, we hope to suck in enough that we might disappear completely from this room.

I look to my daughter and I see her diminish, a little. A slow leak, deflating like a helium balloon slowly sinking to the ground, withering up, lying motionless. Now I see an imprint of a doctor's hand, a woman's hand, on my beautiful daughter. An imprint that she will spend the rest of her life trying to resist, but which has already branded her body: "not good enough." She pulls her shirt down, covering up her stomach. The delicate skin on her stomach is pale from not being exposed to the world. The rounded skin on her stomach is still tight from its newness in the world. It has no stretch marks or wrinkles from adjusting to the world. She pulls her shirt down, covering it up, protecting it, and hiding it.

At home I will place my warm hand on my daughter's tender belly and kiss it and tell her, "You are beautiful. You are perfect." I will repeat this ritual a hundred times, trying to undo what has been done, trying to heal the brand. I will apologize for not screaming and lashing out in the office. I will beg forgiveness for standing by as the doctor seared her skin. I have great hope for her because she is so much stronger than me. She has a confidence that I am still trying to develop; she is comfortable in her own skin. However, one day she will tell me that she spent the sleepover party sucking in her stomach because her friend informed her, "My mom thinks you're chubby," and I will see this powerful force of beauty, strength, and confidence pierced by a single word. A single word uttered from a female mouth via a female mouth via a female mouth via a female mouth. The *beauty myth* does not care about how we look, only that we feel insufficient. It scrambles its way over female tongues, media depictions, male gazes, expert opinions, and eventually my own thoughts. It chases us with sharpened pin, slashing viciously at any confidences that have the potential to float us up into the air.

At home I will force myself to stand naked in the full light of the bathroom mirror, confronting my body. With my fingertips, I trace my own belly, reading it like braille, each stretch mark a line in a creation story. Three creation stories, my son's, my daughter's, and my own. Simultaneously puffy and saggy, my stomach looks tired, withered from the act of creation. Really looking, I see a timeline that goes back as well as forward into the future. My belly button is a memory of connection to my own mother, my own life line. This expansive skin houses the power to create and identifies me as a woman, ovaries and uterus hidden under layers of muscle and fat, protected. Standing there, I will remember the disdainful look in the flash of the doctor's eyes, suck in my stomach, and wonder, "How old was I when I learned to hate the most powerful part of my body?"

This myth of beauty has been passed down through umbilical cords, mixing in among the amniotic fluid. The branded handprint reaches through generations of well-developed insecurities. I watched my mother limit her dinner portions in an effort to smooth her own mid-section. Now, I see my daughter strive to replicate me in familiar phrases that escape from her mouth, or the way she stands when she's trying to make a point. I worry, "What if she turns out like me?" In hearing this thought, I see my own self-loathing. Looking down, I see my body covered in

scarred and callused hand prints reinforced by each cringed look into the mirror. Each dance of awkward shifting of clothes and positions, to find a mirrored view that hides myself, reveals the scarred imprints of the myth. How old was I when I received my branding of insufficiency?

Here in the doctor's office under the light of expertise, we sit obediently, and listen as she orders, "Don't let her have juice! Don't let her have milk! Watch what she eats!" I stand, fire raging in my eyes but disappointed in my own weakness (why didn't I fight back?), and wait for her to leave. As she adjusts her skirt, I catch a glimpse of the branding she hides as well. I help my daughter off the table, collect my purse and we walk out. As we exit the room, I look back through the slowly closing door and see that the tissue dancer has lost the air current. She listlessly sinks to the ground, now simply garbage on the floor to be swept up and forgotten.

"See this, we don't want this."

QUESTIONS

1. How do your own personal experiences support or dispute the statement, "The beauty myth engages women as both sentries and prisoners that self-monitor and regulate, undermining their own power"?
2. Wolf challenges society's notion of objective beauty, calling it a myth used to control and undermine women. If this is true, what is beauty and what importance does it hold in our lives?
3. Try to remember a tacit experience that taught you to love or loathe your body. What did you learn? How did you learn it? Who taught you?
4. What role do experts, such as medical professionals or educators, play in educating about beauty?

NOTES

1. Wolf, N. (1990). *The beauty myth*. Toronto, ON: Vintage Books. Naomi Wolf identifies the concept of "The Beauty Myth" in her book of the same title. The myth revolves around the belief that beauty is an objective fact that exists universally (p. 12). Beauty has been sold to women as a quality that is inherent to success and health. Wolf challenges this notion and argues that "the beauty myth" is designed as a control mechanism to undermine women's success in careers, society, relationships, and health.

2. Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison (2nd Vintage Books Edition)* (A. Sheridan, trans., 1977). New York, NY: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975). Foucault's analysis of changes in prison systems identifies methods to control and discipline masses that utilize "hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination" (p. 170). These instruments of control are evident within the beauty myth as well. The beauty myth places women in a hierarchy according to societal beauty standards, encourages the normalization of judgment of ourselves and others, and engages women in a constant examination of self and others. In this way the beauty myth engages women as both sentries and prisoners that self-monitor and regulate, controlling and undermining our own power.

3. One fear inducing instrument of the beauty myth is the notion that female fat is related directly to illness; thin beauty equals health. Studies show that "female fat is not in itself unhealthy" (Wolf, 1990, p. 187) but rather illness may arise from the effects of dieting and the stress of self-hatred. See also, Wray, S. and Deery, R. (2008). The medicalization of body size and women's healthcare. *Health Care for Women International, 29,* 227–243.

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Related Further Reading

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Hair Pulling in the Art Classroom: A Phenomenology of Un/marked Bodies

Emily J. Hood

As we discussed our art project for the day, I sat slumped atop a low counter at the back of the room. Students peered at me from tables and chairs lining either side of the space. As teaching instructions rolled off my tongue and floated through the air, I felt a small sting on the back of my scalp. A student had pulled a few strands of my hair. Then, I heard a whisper—"It's real," she said, to the student perched next to her on the counter. I was confused, but quickly made sense of the interaction based on the bodies, and specifically the hair, that was involved in the exchange.

That moment resides in my memory as a rupture in the everyday familiarity of classroom interaction: the extension of another body toward mine in such an unexpected way, the grasping of my hair as an object of curiosity, the lines that were crossed, and the invasion of proximity that called my being into awareness. My hair, an object that is an extension of my being, suddenly became a point of difference. In this chapter, I dig further into this notion of bodies and difference in the classroom. I attempt to uncover the structures that facilitated hair pulling in my junior high art classroom and the implications of these structures in relation to bodily comportment in multiracial classrooms.

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When we think about students in the classroom, we often discuss matters of intellect and the mind. But, bodies are the reality of the classroom. As an educator, I am expected to manage these bodies and to teach them how to be productive in society. I am a white body, with atypical white person's hair. My hair extends into space in a particular way, as it is naturally curly. On the day of the hair pulling, my usually curly hair was straightened. The smooth silky texture—a great contrast to the large untamed curls that ordinarily framed my face. Through my own effort, I changed the way my hair extended into that space. I created a visual and kinesthetic difference in my body. I can easily manipulate the natural curly appearance of my hair to mimic hegemonic and normative beauty standards that uphold smooth silky hair as the definitive. This change sparked the curiosity of the student who pulled my hair that day.

My white body was not the only body in the classroom that day—many of the bodies in the classroom were black, as was the student who pulled my hair. Based on her action of pulling and her comment, "It's real," it seems that she was curious about the difference in my hair. She was trying to make sense of the difference in my hair through her experiences with her own hair. She employed touch, a form of perception, to investigate the difference that she perceived. As a person who has never worn a wig or had extensions, I could not initially understand why she would wonder if my hair was real or not. I simply used a blow drier and brush to create a physical change in the texture of my hair. For me, creating these differences in my hair is a normal way of extending my body into space. However, this change sparked her curiosity. She wondered if my hair was a wig, a weave, or as she stated, "real."

Generally speaking, hair pulling is not a form of touch that is condoned in the classroom. We often advise young children to keep their hands to themselves. So, what else was I doing with my body that day that might have invited the student to pull my hair? I think it is important to acknowledge the orientation of my white body in that space, and to further define exactly what I mean by the term whiteness. Sara Ahmed (2006) frames whiteness as an orientation. She explains,

> We can consider how whiteness takes shape through orientations toward others. Whiteness may even be oriented 'around' itself, whereby 'itself' only emerges as an effect of the 'around.' As many have argued, whiteness is invisible and unmarked, as the absent center against which others appear only as deviants or as lines of deviation. (p. 121)

Ahmed further theorizes whiteness as a starting point for orientation. And so, whiteness is the anchor point by which all other things are oriented and come into being. Whiteness here refers to many things: my peach colored skin tone that is covered with little brown spots, the soft texture of my hair, the way I articulate my words, my vernacular. But, it is much more than that. It is also my ethnic and racial heritage, and the sociocultural status this lineage lends me. It is my access to education, financial resources, freedom from surveillance, and often protection by authority.

My whiteness allowed me to come into that space and extend my body in whichever way I pleased. I could have claimed any other number of postures and spaces within the classroom. This is the case because of my authority as the teacher, but also because of the invisibility of my white body. White bodies are not monitored. They are not called into question based on their assumed racial orientation. This unmarkedness of my body affords me the freedom to navigate space as I please.

That day, I was sitting on a low counter. Two female students mimicked my posture. They left their assigned seats and perched themselves along the counter behind me. The proximity of my body to the bodies of the students in this scenario is important. Ahmed elaborates the relationship between proximity and orientation in the following ways: (a) she establishes orientation as a state of being that allows an individual to access certain objects in space and not others, and (b) she explains that orientation and close proximity to specific objects (in this case racialized bodies) allow for "likeness" to happen. This means that whiteness is established through a proximity to itself. So, the fact that I am white is not simply enacted through the appearance of my skin or my racial lineage. It is the outcome of my living among family members who are white. My white orientation emerges from this proximity to whiteness. It is not, therefore, normal for me as a white person to be in such close proximity to black bodies—though my white orientation still affords me the ability to reach out into non-white spaces through the unmarkedness of my body. Furthermore, perhaps my own orientation as a white person is slightly nuanced because of my upbringing in the context of a mixed race community, where most of the people were either Latina/o or Native American. It is not that I was above this notion of proximity and "likeness," but rather that my white orientation was already accustomed to close proximity with different bodies.

Ahmed (2006) and Alcoff (1999) explain orientation as preconscious and deeply embedded in the body. In this way, I was not aware of my use of proximity as an attempt to create "likeness" between my body and the

bodies of my students. Looking back, and considering my comportment through a phenomenological lens, I can see that I was using my body and proximity to open up new possibilities for the interaction of different racial bodies in the classroom. Sitting rather than standing, and allowing students to sit near me, created the opportunity for my student to reach out and pull my hair. What is more interesting is that the pulling of my hair threw my whiteness into the foreground. What was at one point, for me, invisible and unmarked came into view, and I became aware of my own racial orientation. This racial awareness was new for me, and reinforces the idea that for me, race is not an embodied phenomenon. It is purely conceptual and does not mediate my moving about in everyday life. The student assumed that I might be wearing a wig, or extensions. Perhaps for her, hair that appears the way my hair appeared that day meant that I had altered (or extended) my body in a very specific way, by adding artificial hair to it. Perhaps the proximity that I engaged with her allowed her to make this assumption about me and my body. Perhaps she detected a "likeness" between us because of our close proximity, and therefore to her the idea that I might wear a wig to school was possible.

Whatever the case, my proximity to my students empowered this individual to engage in inquiry through touch. It allowed her to extend her body into space to seek out knowledge. Ahmed (2006) explains this use of proximity as queer genealogy, "A queer genealogy would take the very 'affects' of mixing, or coming into contact with things that reside on different lines, as opening up new kinds of connection" (p. 155). In this way, my proximity to the other bodies in my classroom allowed for deviation of lines and thus my hair was pulled. Ahmed might describe the pulling as a phenomenological "slip" that allows new possibilities for orientation and proximity. She argues, "a queer phenomenology would function as a disorientation device; it would not overcome the 'disalignment' of the horizontal and vertical axes, allowing the oblique to open up another angle on the world" (p. 172). For me, the hair pulling marked a moment of disalignment. It forced a shift in my consciousness. It caused my perception to slow down, and thus an awareness of my own racial body, and its difference from the other bodies in the classroom, came into being. For a moment, my body, which somehow through my own perception transcends the idea of race, became marked.

Alcoff (1999) might say that the consciousness I experienced as a white educator in the moment my hair was pulled is an example of how we might "make visible the practices of visibility itself, to outline the background

from which our knowledge of others and ourselves appears in relief. From there we may be able to alter the associated meanings ascribed to visible difference" (p. 25). Though I would argue that my own orientation as a white person is nuanced by my upbringing in a racially mixed environment, I was unconscious of the access I have to the world around me via my whiteness. I was unaware of the implications of my own racialized body in that space. This moment of disruption created a momentary shift in the way that I conceptualize my own body in relationship to other bodies, and the complex nature of navigating a racialized world. But, the shift in itself does not necessarily translate to deep understanding and lasting change in terms of navigating racial difference. More steps must be taken beyond this flashpoint in order to create new opportunities for racialized bodies in the context of the multiracial classroom.

Therefore, in order to promote acknowledgement and understanding of difference in the classroom, and to open up new possibilities for different bodies in the world, educators should be willing to consider the comportment of their own bodies as a tool for promoting close racial proximity. More importantly, educators must find ways to allow for "hair pulling" to happen. By this I mean, the way that we position our own bodies in our classrooms should take into consideration the power dynamic that is performed through comportment, and consider the messages that our bodies might express to our students about race and other aspects of difference.

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have you experienced difference through bodily interaction in educational spaces?
2. How might the notion of bodily proximity be radical for educators? What risks might be involved?
3. How might vulnerability on the part of the educator be a requirement for transformative pedagogy?

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They Put It in the Yearbook, but with a Smiling White Kid: Encoding the Weakness of Children and Native Americans, and the Whitewashing of the Message

Cathrine Ryther

Prologue

This chapter describes a moment in a classroom filled with small children. The children are in the United States, in a small, sleepy, strong, suburban community. It is the late twentieth century but not yet the era of Harry Potter or even Junie B. Jones. The children are most likely six, as they are first graders, but some may yet be five and a couple may already have turned seven. It is their first year as full-day school-goers, as students. They are small, so small that some still have stuffed animals that are taller than they are (we know this from a yearbook photo that captures them with their favorite plush toys). All of the children are fluent, if not necessarily native, English speakers; most of them are only just learning to read. Nearly all

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of the children are white, though they may not yet have realized that this is a significant distinction. One of the boys, Jake, is among the smallest. He is relatively quiet, funny, and has a big smile. He is also the boy in the classroom with the longest hair, raven black, to his shoulders, skin browner than the rest. There is a famous Native American site not too far from the community, and in the coming years the children will take field trips there. For now, though, the others are most likely ignorant of the cultural history that marks Jake. And this is their story, not his. I cannot tell Jake's story. I can only tell you the story of the white children.[1] This is a story about their horror. This is a story about their powerlessness. This is a story about erasing Jake.

Act One

As first graders, the children spend time learning rules. Reading rules. Arithmetic rules. School rules. Classroom rules. You must obey the teacher. You must… finish your work before you play outside. Line up in a single file line to leave the classroom. Be quiet in the hallway. Count to three at the drinking fountain, and then give the next person their turn. Ask before using the bathroom. Raise your hand. It is hard to remember the rules sometimes, and the children get excited and bunch up or speak loudly or forget to raise their hands, but the children try. Sometimes it is not their classroom teacher they must obey, sometimes they walk in single file lines to other rooms with other teachers.

In one of these other rooms they sit at round, blue tables instead of desks. It is a science class. The teacher teaches the children catch phrases for right behavior. She teaches them about moderation, about the nastiness of germs and the goodness of hygiene, about taking care of materials, and the importance of staying inside the lines. Jake falls asleep in this class. It happens a lot that he falls asleep in this class. He lays his head on the hard surface of the table—he is small enough that it is about the right height if he leans forward just a bit—sometimes resting on his arms, sometimes using them to block the fluorescent lighting. Jake must be very tired. He has fallen asleep again.

The teacher does not like that Jake falls asleep. She walks around the classroom, talking about the day's project, checking the children's work. Standing, she towers over them as they sit at their tables. Jake sits at the table closest to the door. The teacher notices that he is asleep again. She walks over to him. She looks at the other children, and the children look

back at her. She brings her finger to her lips, signaling that they should be quiet, so quiet. The children are pin-drop quiet. The teacher lifts Jake up out of his seat, cradling him against her chest, supporting his head, other arm at the bend in his knees. He must be very tired. He does not wake up. The children are still, frozen in their seats. They are about to see what happens if you are very tired, if you fall asleep. Their eyes are glued to the teacher and Jake. Their breathing becomes shallower as their chests constrict. The teacher carries him toward the door, but does not open it. She bends down with Jake and places him carefully, gently so that he does not wake, in the gray metal trash can by the door. The trash can is small by adult standards, but taller than the children's knees. She places him in the trash can rear-end first. The children ache in the pits of their stomachs. Their eyes remain wide; they do not squirm.[2] The metal rim presses against Jake's back near his shoulder blades and at the backs of his knees. His feet dangle a few inches from the floor. His head leans toward one shoulder as he continues to sleep. Jake must be very tired.

The teacher steps away from Jake. She turns back to the class. She continues talking about the day's project, signaling that nothing has happened. The children glance at each other, at her, at Jake's sleeping body. They remain silent in their seats.

The teacher lifts her hands and claps loudly. Once, twice, in staccato. It makes the children jump in their seats. It startles Jake awake. He squirms. He lifts his head and looks around him. The children watch him. His feet dangle inches above the floor. The metal rim is too thin for him to get a grip with his hands and push himself out. The children are silent. He cannot get himself out of the trash can. *Hey* he says. He laughs a bit, awkwardly? The teacher smiles. Some of the children laugh back, relieved? The teacher walks over to Jake and bends down with her arms out. He obediently puts his arms around her neck and she lifts him from the trash can. He is awake now. She lets him return to his seat. The children's bodies relax, but not all the way.

Act Two

It is later in the school year. The children are in science class again. There is free time and the children are playing. Jake is not playing. He is not there today. The metal trash can is not by the door but in the middle of the room on the rug. The children are taking turns. They are sitting in the trash can one by one. Rear-end first, the hard metal digs into their backs and the backs of their knees. The metal is not cold and it is not hot,

but it makes their hands sweaty if they try to grip it at the rim to get out. It leaves red marks on their bodies if they try for too long. If they do not try for too long it does not really hurt. They lean back when they sit. They swing their legs. They squirm, playing the game of trying to escape. They giggle and grin as their legs dangle. The children help each other in and out of the trash can. A boy sits in the trash can. He is wearing glasses, long sleeves and pants. His hair is brown. His skin is not brown. He stretches his arms wide. He grins. An adult (is it the teacher?) snaps a photo. The children help the boy out of the trash can. Someone develops the photo. We know this because it appears in the yearbook. The smiling boy is not named. Jake is not there.

Epilogue

Our science teacher does not retire for many more years. Jake, small, quiet, funny Jake, stays in school with us for a long time. I do not know if he seems quieter because he speaks less often or because I stop talking to him. At some point, he disappears from our class and our school. I do not notice when. He does not graduate with us. Sometimes I search online for Jake. I do not find him. I do not know what happened to him. I feel my chest constrict when he enters my thoughts. I no longer have any chance of knowing who he is.

Questions

1. How would you describe the violence done to Jake? How is it similar to, and how is it different from, the violence done to the other children in the classroom?
2. How likely or unlikely is it that what happened to Jake and his classmates in this chapter could happen today? What are your reasons for your opinion?
3. What might make it harder for this type of violence to occur again? What kinds of actors and/or policies might need to be involved and at what levels within and outside the school?

Notes

1. Brayboy (2005) gives a powerful indication of why it matters whose stories are and are not told, encapsulated in a question describing indigenous ways of knowing, "doesn't she know that our stories are our theories?" (426). Thompson (2009) adds an important reminder concerning why I cannot tell Jake's story—as an outsider I may have no context for comprehending what starting point would adequately give meaning to it (196).
2. Cavarero's (2009) *Horrorism* offers a thought-provoking discussion of the paralytic effects of horror on bystanders.

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Resistance

The Ugly and Violent Removal of the Cecil Rhodes Statue at a South African University: A Critical Posthumanist Reading

Karin Murris

On March 9, 2015, black South African student Chumani Maxwele threw human feces at the statue of British colonialist Cecil Rhodes on the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus. Maxwele took offense at this visual sign and material expression of colonialism and its overwhelming presence in a prime geopolitical position at the university—more than 20 years 'post' apartheid. Frustrated by the lack of transformation at this historically white university, he went to a township, scooped the excrement from a portable flush toilet and smeared it on the statue. His actions led to a series of protests, such as the occupation of university buildings, as well as on-going debates and profound changes at UCT and other universities across South Africa. The event started the #Rhodesmustfall (RMF) movement, resulting in the statue's forceful removal exactly one month later.

My own embodied experience of the knowledge I had of the statue's pending removal by crane and truck was deeply discomforting. I could not bear to watch the event itself—in the same way, I would struggle to witness the demolition of a house, the uprooting of a tree, the eating of the flesh

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of a nonhuman animal, or the execution of a human animal. In the early afternoon of the day of its removal, I felt drawn to have a last look at the statue. I felt curious, excited, but also nervous as everyday news communicated materially and discursively through the university's website, the national news, and social media such as #RMF. Twitter had put pressure on staff to respond, to take up a position, for or against. Emotions were palpable beyond the organs of my body—forever shifting through the uncertainty and in/determinacy of the event. On arrival, I noticed fine arts student Sethembile Msezane standing on a plinth becoming a statue herself. It was only later that I discovered that she had already stood there in that position for many hours.

Having positioned herself just behind the statue (Fig. 28.1), she shows much of her black skin, with feathered wings attached to her arms, creating powerful pedagogical moments or 'flashpoints' resisting hierarchies of difference. This human statue is discursively and materially entangled with the Rhodes statue, as well as the crane that is about to remove it, the truck and the people around it and me with my camera. Neither then, nor now, am I at an ontological distance from the act of re-membering this event 'in' the past.

Because of my interest in critical posthumanism, I 'made' the photo of Msezane sub/consciously with the machines in the background. What drew me to take the photo was the flesh of her gracious body and her beautiful youthful black skin in the context of the statue's imminent violent removal by the machines in the background. Her flesh stood in stark contrast to the machines that were about to remove the body of old bronze behind her with such brute force. These (never pure) perceptions express themselves in the embodied act of what is better expressed as 'making' the photo, rather than 'taking' it. To say that I was taking the photo would suggest that I positioned myself as a distanced observer using my tablet as a mere tool. However, photos are material and discursive constructions and I cannot analyze the event as if it were an objective moment separate from my own subjective mark making. The photo was inspired by my lived experience of hierarchies of difference supported by the binaries of humanism such as young/old, white/black, real/appearance, male/female, and art/science. The 'fully human' is middle-aged, white, masculine, able-bodied, and European—humanism's yardstick with which we measure the worth of the 'Other' as the norm. Binaries reinforce hierarchical thinking, since each part of the binary otherizes the other in fixed positions. Msezane's race, youth, and

Fig. 28.1 During the removal of the statue of colonialist Cecil Rhodes, black South African fine arts student Sethembile Msezane stands like a statue atop a nearby plinth

gender stand in stark contrast with the white older male Cecil Rhodes. It is this juxtaposition that provokes a response, to take response-ability for the a/effects of power-producing binaries and the marks they make on human and nonhuman bodies.

I see her black skin, her eyes covered, and feathered wings attached to her arms. She has positioned her art installation courageously facing the campus, the buildings, the people, and all the socioeconomic, political, and ethical problems resulting from the deep inequalities exacerbated by *apartheid* capitalism. Resisting the hierarchies of difference that are manifested in South African institutions, Msezane's back is turned against the Rhodes statue. In contrast, Cecil Rhodes's body, leaning slightly forward, is turned away from the campus regally looking down. His pensive gaze extends beyond the Cape Flats with its enforced relocated inhabitants, townships, and informal settlements toward the North-East as though to map the route of his colonial dream, the Cape-to-Cairo railway. The entanglement of all human and nonhuman phenomena 'intra-acting' with one another means that it is impossible to say where the boundaries are of each person, or the crane, or the truck, or my camera. This complex assemblage also includes me as the person who took the photo.

In an interview, Sethembile described how standing in this position four hours made her legs hurt, her arms to become sore, her feet to turn blue, and her skin to become sunburned. Reading this, I felt admiration and compassion for her extraordinary commitment to the #Rhodesmustfall cause, but I also felt sorry for the statue. It is/was a powerful sculpture made by Marian Wallgate—one of the few women ever commissioned to sculpt a public monument, and its extraordinary color, texture, and fine detail have aesthetic power and agency. I do not want the statue to die. All discourses surrounding this historical event of the removal of the statue from campus ignore its aesthetic quality and the deeply discomforting emotions provoked when paying attention to that which is more than human.

Through a humanist lens—for example, from a postcolonial, poststructural lens focusing on power, identity, and human agency—the discomfort can be interpreted as an expression of white privilege or even white guilt. But I was (also) deeply troubled by the destruction, violence, and ugliness toward the nonhuman. I wondered what these popular theoretical lenses were missing in their exclusionary focus on the social sciences.

In quantum physics, as understood by feminist philosopher Karen Barad (2003, 2007, 2012), I find an explanation for my dislocated emotions other than the psychological or the psychoanalytical. In this view,

a body is seen not as a property or entity, but as a field or force and such an orientation troubles all distinct identity theories. My reading of the photo disrupts the prevailing anthropocentrism that dominates discussions about transformation, also in 'post' colonial South Africa. The ironically western humanist metaphysics that is assumed in these attempts to decolonize education threatens to divide our communities even further because of the binary lenses that are used. An alternative positive philosophical orientation to postcolonial theorizing sees difference as always e/merging as an a/effect of connections and relations within and between bodies (human and nonhuman).

The meanings produced do not exist prior to the making of the photo, but materialize as an effect of their mutual engagement and quantum entanglement. The material also had agency in what was said and done and how the photo worked. Ontological relationships bring meanings into existence, not the other way around. Disrupting a privileged human perspective could involve understanding both statues from the perspective of the nonhuman, for example, the sounds of the crane, the smell of the diesel spilled from the truck, the texture of the ropes around the statue, the chirping of the birds, the shine of the bronze, the beating of Msezane's heart, and the tickling sensation of the feathers of her wings. The human and nonhuman bodies are doing something to each other. The bronze statue offers certain possibilities to the human statue and the other way around. For example, Rhodes' position facing away from UCT affords Msezane to position hers toward the campus and face the audience. The human and the nonhuman statue, the camera, the students watching, and the photographer (me) are all overlapping forces: the cold bronze, its aged color, Msezane's still body and silence, the steps, the force of gravity, her sweat, the plinth, her wings, and her rumbling tummy. Neither has agency on its own and new meanings materialize as an effect of their mutual engagement and quantum entanglement. There are no stable identities, but a continuous becoming of bodies that transform as an effect of the intra-actions between them. The material has agency. Cameras are usually regarded as subordinate to humans' agency, yet the material-discursive is pulling to have the photo made.

Now, why does this latter reading matter in terms of justice? Critical posthumanism profoundly democratizes relationships within the one species (e.g., child/adult, black/white, male/female) and between humans and other earth dwellers. Nothing is considered to stand outside, above, or take a true privileged transcendental position. The decolonizing effect is

that humans are viewed relationally and always already entangled with non-human others, which prevents complexity and reduction in diversity, respects otherness, and includes other corporeal and embodied knowledges. My posthumanist reading opens possibilities for paying careful attention to how the material in our lives also has power and agency, and realizing that bodies (including our own) always intra-act with the discursive, thereby making room for empathy and care for differences-in-the-making.

QUESTIONS

1. What is involved in re-membering an event?
2. What could a humanist reading of the event/photo be like and how does it differ?
3. In what way does a posthumanist reading make a difference in terms of ethics and justice?

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Sirens of Remembrance

Ido Gideon

This fleshpoint explores a unique Israeli practice, the remembrance sirens. It describes the ways in which the annual siren serves as a physical realization of sociopolitical classifications in Israeli society, and their educational-instructional meaning. The siren as a sensual experience is considered, bearing on the meaning of standing to attention, as a formalized breach in normal functioning. This flashpoint aims to describe the siren as a symbol to its resonance in human bodies, and invite reassessment of the way the body is ordered in modern political life.

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Two Israeli national days of remembrance begin with a nationwide siren. Every Spring, the Holocaust day (Yom HaShoah) and Remembrance Day (Yom HaZikaron) (two days) are commemorated a week apart. The closing of the national Remembrance Day marks the start of Independence Day festivities. These sirens represent a dual impulse—a chance for personal introspection as well as a symbol of national solidarity. This duality is expressed powerfully in a verse by Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai:

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> What is the correct way to stand at a memorial ceremony? Erect or stooped, pulled taut as a tent or in the slumped posture of mourning, head bowed like the guilty or held high in a collective protest against death, eyes gaping frozen like the eyes of the dead or shut tight, to see stars inside. (Amichai, 2015, p. 523)

In a school yard, a gathering of young performers stands in pause as the remembrance siren sounds (Fig. 29.1). Once the siren dies out, they will perform a well-rehearsed ceremony, reciting, singing, and dancing to texts about the fallen Jews exterminated in the Holocaust or Israeli soldiers killed in action.

Around 3000 sirens are spread throughout Israel, alternating between their duty as instruments of national remembrance and a nationwide alarm system in case of missile attacks (last used in the violent months of the summer of 2014). Each year the sirens are activated three times

Fig. 29.1   Young performers stand during an Israeli remembrance siren

ceremoniously: once in the morning of Yom HaShoah and on the eve and morning of Yom HaZikaron. Their simultaneous wail halts life in Israel; drivers stop and exit their cars to stand beside their cars on the highway; all everyday activity stands still for the duration of a one-minute, monotonous siren.

By framing the ceremony as ritual time, the state manifests its prerogative as the sovereign. The national ceremonial siren intercedes the frame of present time by ritually reminding of a shared common history. For Schmitt (2008), the capacity of distinguishing between the normal and the exceptional, between those who are warranted a part in the normalcy of the everyday, and those who are not. This is evident firstly in the separation between those who perform the ritual, and those who do not, a testament to their accepting the authority of the state over their body. The question of who stands during the sirens is a well-rehearsed staple of Israeli media and cultural life, representing an anxiety concerning the "line in the sand" between members of the collective and Others. Palestinian citizens, as well as some non-Zionist, ultra-Orthodox communities do not share in the narratives that constitute the national meaning of the siren and therefore do not usually stand to attention during the sirens. A European observer commented on the apparent socio-political fault line the siren marks: "This is a moment where the bodies which belong to the nation answer its call and produce, if only for two minutes, the body of the nation." The standing to attention provides an embodiment of belonging to the collective, disciplining bodies by constructing a panoptic moment in which standing (or refusing to stand) with the Israelis demarcates Others in Israeli society including Palestinians, ultra-Orthodox Jews, African refugees, and migrant workers. This fleshpoint explores the educational meaning of the siren for those who do stand to attention by analyzing the role of body in the ritual.

Within the Jewish-Zionist educational mainstream, the sirens and the remembrance ceremonies are very significant events in the process of schooling. The practice of holding remembrance ceremonies dates to the early days of twentieth-century Jewish settlement in Palestine and its many variations over the decades reflect the constant ideological and political repositioning of the meaning of war and loss (Ben-Amos & Bet-El, 1999). Over the years, school remembrance ceremonies have come to rely on texts such as poems, songs, and speeches from the Zionist literary and political "canon." Lomsky-Feder (2004) studied the textual content and pedagogic practices in these ceremonies to understand the operative rationale in the choice of texts. Texts chosen by many high

schools in recent years stir away from the canon, increasingly representing individual grief and personal loss, for example, by reading the names of school graduates who died. The ceremonies in elementary schools and in educational settings for immigrants, however, still tend to rely heavily on the canon, highlighting the way these ceremonies act as a socialization agent, generating the national "we" narrative. Accordingly, the study also found that these more canonical ceremonies tend to be more instructional, with teachers explaining to (and disciplining) the students as to what is expected from them, literally answering Amichai's poetic question above.

The official national schedule for the days of remembrance includes a set timeframe for ceremonies, beginning immediately after the sirens. Schools follow this timeframe and conduct the ceremonies concordantly. The remembrance days are held according to the Jewish calendar, falling between late April and early May, well into the Israeli summer. Before the ceremony can begin, the students, faculty and staff all stand facing the ceremonial stage, in anticipation of the sirens. Standing under the harsh summer sun, waiting for the siren to begin and die out, is therefore a defining school experience for most Israelis. The etymology of the Hebrew word for ceremony, "tekes," also uncovers disciplinary undertones in the experience of the sirens in schools. The Hebrew word is derived from the ancient Greek táksis (τάξις), a word with strong military connotations that describes the action of putting in order, arranging. The ordering of bodies into a quasi-military ordinance represents a change in the function of the school.

For the duration of the siren, at least, the school becomes fully an instrument of the state, regulated by the demands of the ceremony rather than any educational aims. Lewis (2006) has pointed out how contemporary schools can be "easily transformed from a space of learning into the space that gestures toward the exceptional space of the fascist concentration camp" (p. 159). The camp, according to Agamben (2000), is the spatial embodiment of the "state of exception (p. ix)." The inhabitants of the camp are stripped of "every political status," and become "bare life" (Agamben, 2000, pp. 38–39). Similarly, the siren turns schools, as well as other "social locations," into camps, commanding the bodies of the inhabitants and constructing the otherness of those who do not halt (as an act of ordering through exclusion-from).

Israel is the only country in the world that still uses sirens for purpose of remembrance. In some ways, the sirens resemble the ringing of church bells in remembrance of the fallen, practiced in parts of the United Kingdom.

However, church bells carry in such places echoes of deep ceremonial religiosity, emanating from connections between church and state, as well as familiarity in its different context of life in the local community. In Israel, the wailing siren has only two purposes: the annual remembrance ceremonies and as a part of the National Alarm System in the case of missile attacks. This distinction reflects the vastly different sensual experience of listening to the tolling of a bell and the drone of an electric siren. The mechanical siren is inherently modern, an electric contraption engineered for effectivity and unanimity while the bell is not only also known as an incidental musical instrument, but has itself become a symbol bearing a plethora of metaphors. The siren, however, is anonymous—its two possible meanings are as binary as they are primordial: ordering the body to stand still (in remembrance) or run for cover (in war). Both uses of the siren constitute biopolitical moments, in the sense that they present us with "life exposed to death" (Agamben, 1998, p. 55).

Questions

1. In what ways are the remembrance ceremonies educational?
2. What is the role of the body in the remembrance ceremonies?
3. What are some other events or experiences that are comparable to the remembrance ceremonies and how are they similar or different?

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Black Body Being-in-Weirdness
in the Academy

Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr
and Charity Funfe Tatah Mentan

The atmosphere in the room is very tense. The conversation is about equity. The question at the center of the conversation: should the two-day retreat that we were planning focus on equity, or should people bring what they are researching? The conversation is heated. Voices are rising. Alison, a White PhD student, poses a question to the entire class: "Why did you all decide to get PhDs?" Her tone implies what she wants our answers to be: "To research and write about how to save all minority children." For some responses, she gets the answer she wants to hear. For other responses, she lowers her head and scribbles on her notepad.

As we all quietly shuffle in our seats, Alison lectures that equity should be the basis of everyone's research, and if equity is not the basis of the research, we should not be getting a PhD in curriculum and instruction. I feel tension in my head; I want to scream: "Alison, stop acting as if you are the only one doing equity work in this room. Stop behaving as if you are the only one who cares about minority students. You are only using your work with minority students to make yourself look good. You are doing it

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for you; you are not doing it for them! You only behave this way because you want to prove that you are doing the best 'equity-mindedness' work here!" I want to shout, "Are you doing equity work only to earn a PhD? Will you continue to do it after?" I want to scream that equity work is not for a two-day retreat. Equity work is life work! It is what you do every day!

Based on how this conversation is unfolding, it seems as if equity work is hierarchical. I start thinking to myself: if being equity-minded is on a hierarchy, some people will be higher on the equity hierarchy than others because of institutionalized White privilege and power dynamics that go with it. The whole conversation is very disturbing to me. A weird feeling is taking over my being. My body feels heavy. Although there is a lot of talking in the room, the silences are equally loud. Some people are actively monopolizing the conversation while others actively desire silence. I sit across from Alison, the one who is talking the most to show that she is the most 'equity-minded' thinker in the room. I sit beside Rachel, the one who stays silent throughout the entire conversation. Alison stares at Rachel. Rachel holds her head down staring at the table. There is an uncomfortable tension in the room. Trying to ease the tension, I ask, "What is our objective for the two-day retreat?" I look over at Alison knowing that she will be willing to state her objective. She does. We go around the table explaining our goal for the retreat. Alison makes a statement to the group, "If your work does not align with equity, should you attend this retreat?" My ears are on fire. I roll my left fist into a ball and grip my pen with my right hand as I furiously write gibberish on my notepad—my attempt to control my body, but I cannot.

My body screams. The more I perform intellectually in this space, the more my body disengages from the conversation. My brain is pushing me to engage in an academic conversation as a performance for being in a doctoral seminar. In a doctoral seminar, the expectation is that the language uses come from the mind and not from the body. Language carries bodily thoughts; however, those who use language as an intellectual performance do not understand this (Butler, 1990). My energy slowly leaves my body. The conversation wears me down. But, I also feel myself getting angry. My Black body wants to scream, you cannot force equity work on people! Equity work cannot be placed on a checklist for you to check off that your research meets the equity criteria! My face starts feeling hot. My legs start shaking uncontrollably. My body is expelling heat. The academy forces students and faculty to separate the mind from the body; many times, I find myself trying to actualize this impossibility. My body knows that it cannot separate from my mind.

I breathe in through one nostril and out through the other, trying to relax my body. At this point, I wish we could come to a consensus and finish this conversation, but Alison is still talking. She is relentless. I look at her and say, "Stop! Just stop for a moment and think about how you are using your whiteness to push this conversation where you want it to go!" At this moment, I feel the heavy gaze of the White folks' eyes on my overheated Black flesh. It is only now I realize that I am the only Black person in this space. At this moment, my body is telling me what to do. My body is aware of the White staring at me. I try to control my body. The only way I can hold down the thrashing that is about to leap from my limbs is to keep silent and bear the weight of the eight White gazes on my Black body.

I want to say a lot more. I want to talk about what it means to be in solidarity with people who are oppressed. I want to shout, equity work is not only work that you do in a PhD seminar, and at the end of semester equity work is over! I want to scream, equity work has nothing to do with performance; it has to do with commitment! However, my mouth refuses to utter a word. I fight hard to compose my body. I am well aware of how my body needs to behave in a doctoral seminar. If I utter the words, I will not be able to contain my Black body in this weird space. The silence engulfs me. I am afraid to say another word. I force a smile on my face; I need to do this. I cannot afford to be the angry Black woman.

As I continue to engage in the conversation, I feel the heaviness between my shoulders and my neck. The heaviness moves to the base of my neck. I dig my fingertips in my neck. I try to relax. It is my body talking to me. To philosophize this bodily phenomenon, I draw on the work of Frantz Fanon. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1986) writes about his Black body being distanced from itself under the White gaze. Objectification is the process of distancing the body from itself. Fanon (1986) explained:

> And then we were given the occasion to confront the white-gaze. An unusual weight descended on us. The real world robs us of our share. In the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his body schema. The consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. An atmosphere of certain uncertainty surrounds the body. (p. 90)

The Black body can discern when it is being historized: viscerally remembering that it is black. Fanon explained the Black body carries legends, stories, and myths of its ancestors. The Black body stores knowledge. It operates in

the subconscious, and can be felt in the flesh. Philosopher Merleau-Ponty (as cited in van Manen, 2014) explained that our knowledge of the world is corporeal rather than intellectual. The corporeal manifestation of this unsettling moment creates a rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) eruption of emotions that leaves my body in a state of weirdness.

Questions

1. How can equity-mindedness be framed to serve social justice?
2. Can equity work lead to inequities? If so, name examples of where this has happened.
3. Why do people need to engage in a productive-tension around equity, equity mindedness, and equity work?

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Activism and Love: Loving White People Through the Struggle

Kimberly N. Williams Brown

Today, I am sitting once again in a circle with my students. The class is cross-listed between sociology and women's and gender studies and is a class about race and ethnicity. We sit in a circle because it is important to flatten the power hierarchy between students and facilitators and students with each other. We have a class of 16 students. Eight students self-identify as white and eight students self-identify as students of color. Four black women, seven white women, one gender queer Thai student, one Vietnamese woman, one Japanese man, one white man, and one black man. On this day, we are discussing white privilege. As I look around at their anxious faces, I can tell they are bracing for what will come. The students of color sit back and look ready for what I assume they are thinking will be "the stuff white people say when we start talking about privilege and they are uncomfortable," and the white students look as if they are "on edge." I chuckle to myself because in the ten years I have taught from a social justice perspective, these expressions are common and this is a moment I relive often. My co-facilitator and I have prepared for this moment. We know this

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topic will make them uncomfortable because privilege is not an everyday conversation for most of our students, and we have prepared to sit in that discomfort with them and work through it.

The conversation is going better than expected. Hands are raised around the room and one white woman in particular asks a question for clarification. This student, Margaret, often pushes the envelope with her questions by asking what others may think of as taboo. She is very open to learning and often pushes the other white students in the room to be more open to the conversations that are difficult. She tells us a story about coming to see her privilege when she reads Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* because it was the first time she had ever read anything written by a black woman, and she loved it. Robert, my co-teacher, and I look at each other and are pleased this is going so well. More hands shoot up. We look around the room and call on the only white man in the room aside from my co-facilitator. He is worried that if the world were more equitable (and to clarify, he wants it to be), he would have to give up some of his privilege and that seems unfair to him. Several students of color raise their hands and respond to him. I look around at their faces. They are patient with him as they explain that is not how this works. All the students look intently as the conversation unfolds. Everyone is enraptured in this moment.

My co-facilitator at this moment gives an example of a time he became even more aware of his privileges. I am still looking around the room gauging the level of participation and looking to see who might look confused or distracted so I miss the example he has given, but tune-in in time to hear him say "and Kim would have to work twice as hard as me to get that opportunity." I was really confused by his statement and said "or probably not" almost reflexively. My breath stops. I feel really hot suddenly and feel my ears burn. I am usually more composed and would not usually challenge him in such an open way in front of our students, but he just used his white and male privilege in a conversation about white privilege. I am in shock. I can hear my heart pounding loudly in my ears. I realize I am also disappointed because I expected him to know better. I expected him to have my back and so I feel betrayed. To say I was stunned would be an understatement. I felt like the world stopped. I try to pull myself together but it's difficult because in this moment I am again othered, and I am othered by someone with whom I thought I had a great relationship.

He apologizes, profusely, and I just sit there. I sit there in stunned silence still trying to figure out what went wrong so quickly. He uses it as an example for our students of the prevalence and ease with which white

dominance is enacted everyday—but what had it done to me? It made me sad and disappointed that our friendship and teaching relationship had not done enough to prevent this moment. After one year of teaching together, it was disheartening to think that he would verbalize those thoughts. Yet, I am grateful he did because in that moment I knew without doubt that what I had felt in other moments and could not name over the course of a year was indeed racism and sexism. It left me deeply disturbed.

I had to dig deep to find a place for love in my heart to continue to work with him. It was not the first time, and it certainly was not going to be the last that his work with racism and sexism was at my expense, so how did I go on? I reminded myself of the greater good. The students were the greater good I told myself. Although after class he continued to apologize, I had very little to say. I stared at him in silence as he explained himself. In that moment, I realized it was more about him, and where he was in his journey as a social justice educator than it was about me. The hidden powers of whiteness and misogyny had reared their ugly heads and it was difficult for me to name them as such because we are often taught to be grateful for white men who engage in social justice work. Wrongfully, we sometimes are too responsive to the difficulty inherent in working with and through power taught over time that is difficult to unlearn.

To name his behaviors as sexist and racist is to engage in my own ability to love myself. It is true that I had positioned what happened between us that day in class as contributing to the greater good. And, as a teachable moment, it worked. However, my decision to write about what happened elucidates my own desire to make visible what can easily stay invisible even in those who teach social justice. To not name the ways in which those who engage in social justice work wield their unearned privileges and power is to continue to reinscribe the power hierarchy.

Gibson-Graham (2006) asserts, "Affect is crucial to ethical practice and cultivating oneself" (p. xxviii). It is this effect that I want to explore in its revolutionary form that according to hooks (2001) creates a "love ethic" (p. xix) that is not foolishly romantic or simplistic but profoundly radical. The definition of love hooks (2001) uses, and one that I find revolutionary is, "The will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth. Love is as love does. Love is an act of will-namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love" (p. 4). What is profound about this quote is its ability to remind us that we choose to love in every situation. Therefore, our classrooms are spaces to employ our choice for loving freedom and

justice for all. This, I think hooks would argue, is radical and profound in its ability to move others to take action on behalf of themselves and others.

Whitney (1998) contends that love is a spiritual and moral movement. She argues, like hooks, that love is action but that it also has components that are spiritual and moral. These characteristics I think are necessary to fight against injustices like neoliberal practices, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and so on because they are much bigger than us, and so to keep the hope alive of one day eradicating these injustices and stepping into our utopian future, we must love morally, spiritually, and deeply.

Complex ideas of love are important in the revolutionary struggles of social justice pedagogy. The ability to surrender to the bigger ideals of love and compassion when we are fooled and once again hurt by racism and sexism is a revolutionary act that Sandoval (2000) describes as hermeneutical. Sandoval (2000) asserts,

> Together, these processes and procedures comprise a hermeneutic for defining and enacting oppositional social action as a mode of 'love' in the postmodern world. This is a complex, multidimensional flow that creates upper and lower bounds. The domains of differential consciousness, that of 'reality', and that of the methodology of the oppressed are involved in fluid dynamics, each of which turns to affect the others. (p. 146)

Sandoval's (2000) understanding of a differentially consciousness counternarrative, a utopia/no-place, is important in shifting hegemonic power as we know it to something more transformative. The counternarrative I share here is that teaching and living for social justice is difficult, and that it is often the oppressed who must daily face the stings of hegemonic power in this struggle.

Robert's multiple privileges demonstrated primarily through whiteness and patriarchy were oppressive, and I often left our space feeling traumatized. The truth is that he tried to be a good ally and he tried to be a good social justice educator, but *it was often at my expense*. There were many moments when he not only spoke on my behalf, but essentialized who I am. It made me question whether white people could really be engaged in antiracist activist work with people of color without reinscribing the ideals of entrenched racist and sexist behavior. As white people work with people of color and work through their fears, insecurities, and privileges, people of color often get caught in the cross-hairs.

The experience has left me weary. He keeps thanking me for the ways in which I have pushed him to grow, and I can simply smile and nod. Before my faculties were enriched with critical decolonizing and transnational texts and ways of being, I had a much higher tolerance for foolishness. Today, the foolishness distresses me because I do not want to continue to be the black woman on whose back learning occurs.

To love white people who engage in social justice work has become difficult for me. Writing this admission is difficult for me. Beyond surface level understandings of social justice, how do I forgive and have grace in moments that are really difficult, such as those described above with my co-facilitator? I think a part of the solution may be in creating relationships where honesty is at the center—here I can say, you hurt me deeply and be heard. I have done that and now believe that silence is a powerful part of that honesty. My silence after the incident perhaps bothered him more than the most eloquently written speech I could have made or worse, my letting him off the hook and pretending it did not cut deeply. I am still struggling, however, with how not to be wounded in this process. Racial battle fatigue becomes real when I work with white people in intimate, vulnerable spaces. Somehow with students in the classroom, I am much more compassionate with their ignorance. I continue to work on finding the love that Sandoval (2000), Whitney (1998), and hooks (2001) discuss that will revolutionize my thinking as I sit in community with "activist" white people and those I find it difficult to love.

Questions

1. As you sit at the axes of multiple privileges, what do you do to not only acknowledge your privileges but to work on eradicating them daily?
2. What examples can you share about your social justice journey that were difficult?
3. How do you love through very difficult moments in your social justice journey?
4. What examples do you have about wielding your privilege and power in ways that reinscribed a power hierarchy? What advice do you have for working through these positions of power?

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Splash Violence and Other-Than-Human Bodies as Sites of Power, Resistance, and Pedagogical Possibility

Sean Blenkinsop and Laura Piersol

This chapter brings to attention an historical oppression often completely ignored by the modern western public educational project. Using an example from our research, we investigate a type of "splash violence" impacting both the nonhuman and human world. Through a seemingly minor act of violence done to a tiny insect, we outline troubling shadows of patriarchal power, deeply embodied reactions for all the actors, and a clear posthuman response to the inequity and the implicit hierarchizing of our unexamined anthropocentrism and latent speciesism. This has profound implications for how we understand bodies as not only socially and culturally constructed but also ecologically created and located.

Vignette[1]:

Liam[2] (a boy of six) is crouched down looking at something on the concrete so I (Laura) kneel down and ask him what he is looking at. "I'm watching these ants," he tells me. There are two close by him and he points to another section of the ground where there are more. "What have you noticed?" I ask. "They are so big! Watch them. They are carrying

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something …" David (another boy of six) walks over at this moment and bends down to see what we are looking at. "They are so neat," Liam says. David, with a knowing glance toward me, quickly puts his thumb down and squishes one. "Why did you do that?!" Liam shouts out, upset. "David, there was no reason for that. Please don't kill things. That hurt me," I tell him. Then, looking straight at me, he steps on another. Liam is enraged, "Stop it! Stop it, David!" he reaches out to push David away. I stop him from doing so and usher David away, "I'll talk to him," I tell Liam.

Liam's response: Liam waves his arms, getting frustrated, angry, and upset, and he desperately searches for solutions (including ultimately violence). After the incident, he scurries around to "rescue" other ants drawn to the situation as a result of the pheromonal message of danger sent by their dead and dying kin. We understand that this is a body in shock. For Liam, the crushing of a single ant under his inquiring gaze lands physically as if he too is experiencing the weight of that enormous shoe pressing down upon him. He is bewildered as to why David would take such a violent action, frustrated by how senseless it seemed. Intriguingly, like the body of the colony, he is drawn into the fray, seeking to protect and respond to the danger so clearly presented. This gentle soul, in light of this incredibly callous act, is even willing to resort to violence in response and, it should be noted, is stopped by Laura not only, we would argue, to keep a fight from occurring but to allow Liam space to foster and nurture his nascent care and integrity. Liam has a chance to grow into someone who cares and walloping David is a compromise that Laura is unwilling to have Liam make.

Laura's response: *The crushing of the ant blindsided both Liam and me. I was hurt because of the senseless killing, worried for Liam and how it might be hurting him and also quickly scanning my brain for ways forward pedagogically so that David wouldn't solidify his identity for himself and for others as the 'ant crusher'.*

And so, we witness a reeling adult who cares deeply about the other-than-human world try to negotiate the scene in the way any teacher would try to resolve a situation of bullying: Protect Liam and the ants from David (and from what David's acts might make them do in response) and remove the perpetrator from the scene. And yet, there is a layer of complexity here for the target is not Liam, nor is it the ants for they are inconsequential in David's worldview. It is obviously Laura. This is a deliberate assassination carried out on the body of another, the body of one cared for, in order to affect the carer. Thus, we have an example of what we have

termed "splash violence" where the small male student can do harm to, and possibly establish power over, the body and psyche of Laura, through the body of the ant. Both Laura and Liam are bodies entwined in relationship which experience the ant as having inherent worth; they are not independent organisms who have positioned themselves as more significant. In fact, Laura comments that they were very much in a learner role with the ants acting as "a teacher of sorts" at the time of the killing. As a result, like the ants, both Liam and Laura do not experience these deaths as what eco-feminist Deborah Bird Rose (2011) would call "mere death."[3] With Laura and Liam on one side and David on the other we are catching a glimpse of two powerfully different ways of relating to the world (and to other humans for that matter) that are dangerously and often painfully incommensurable. For David, the crushing of the ant was an insignificant mere death in an ethical and ontological structure that has hyper-separated (Plumwood, 1994, 2002) humans and nature such that they don't even fall on the same continuum of life or importance. This mirrors the colonial and patriarchal histories and current realities of racism, sexism, culturism, and the litany of separations explicitly drawn dualistically and then sustained through violence or threat thereof. David has located and is quietly (possibly callously) exploiting the underbelly of Laura's way of being. In crushing the ant, David thinks that he loses nothing, for that is exactly how much the ant matters in his schema, while he attempts to gain power through the ability to hurt. In the meantime, Laura and Liam lose a relationship, a teacher, and are confused, frustrated, and galvanized by the act. They experience the death of these ants as "a loss in the fabric of life, a loss that reverberates across other living beings, human and others," (Rose, 2011, p. 23) but they are also energized, through righteous anger to respond and resist (Coulthard, 2014).

Ant response: In efforts to avoid continuing what eco-feminist Val Plumwood (1994, 2002) calls the constant "backgrounding" of the natural world we must notice how the ants respond. While two individuals have their bodies crushed and thus their response is muted, it is the immediate response of the larger body of colony that is revealing; a community of kinship called, through deep relational and sensorial communication, to act. Mirroring in many ways the physical responses of Liam, bodies hurry to the scene with some appearing to assume defensive positions prepared to act if necessary, while others focus on the dead by gathering the corpses and returning their sisters, genetically their twin for some, to their shared home. It is difficult to name entomological emotions as such but the

actions of these tiny bodies mirror those of humans when loved ones are senselessly taken from them.

Educational response: So what are the points of fleshy learning, where are the possibilities for resistance to patriarchy, to violence, and the marginalization of the natural world and those who care for it in this story of death? How might we begin to place "our Earth others" (Plumwood, 1994, 2002) onto the radar of the justice and care conversations?[4] We believe that this can challenge educators into taking the environments in and with which they teach seriously. Then, given the resistances explored above, how might educators find ways to re-conceptualize the role of the nonhuman world in their practice? If our bodies arise from and are embedded in earthly relations then what choices are we are making with regard to what these bodies are encountering? Why continue to simply educate within the four walls of a structure that implies that the natural world is not only completely unimportant but that it is to be avoided? The classroom reinforces that the more-than-human world is at the very best a distraction[5] and likely a danger.[6] How might teachers develop thoughtful ways to get outside classroom and engage in less oppressive and violent ways of interacting therein? This also involves finding ways to notice and support relationships arising between students and earth others in spite of how the culture might perceive them and responding seriously when the kind of culturally sanctioned bullying David exhibited appears. Lastly, how might we all begin to actively resist our own negative assumptions or acts of indifference toward the planet, to build opportunities to foreground the natural world within our own lives and practices, and to construct discourses that align with an orientation, even an ontological one, that can understand and feel ants as having agency, voice, and significance?

Questions

1. If we take this idea of "splash violence" seriously, what implications does this have for educators? How might those who find themselves in Laura's position, or witness other moments of eco-bullying, respond? Both immediately and pro-actively?

2. Our suggestion above is that the relationships modern public schooling has with the natural world are those of violence, paralleling the patriarchy, and littered with metaphors and orientations that are destructive and degrading not only toward the natural world but also

toward those who have deep relational affiliations with it. If this is correct then how do educators and the system as a whole first come to know this and then begin to change this cultural way of being?

3. One of the key challenges for eco-justice educators has always been responding to, and considering, the issues of social justice at the same time. Many thinkers, including the three listed here, see the same roots for both forms of inequities and oppression. In fact, all three, in various ways, suggest that one cannot be responded to without the other. What are the implications of this for social justice education and critical theory?

Notes

1. This vignette is taken directly from Laura's research notes. She has been working at an innovative K-4 public school in BC, Canada, where learning often happens outdoors. The school has a clear mandate towards issues of sustainability where the natural world emerges as active participant (even co-teacher) in the educational project. This is not an isolated incident!
2. Pseudonyms to protect anonymity.
3. Bird Rose is responding to what she sees as the western separation of human and nature such that the death of the nonhuman is insignificant. She does this through extending later Derrida and actively responding to what she calls Heidegger's "unfathomably callous" conversations about slaughter-houses and animals as food. See: Wild Dog Dreaming, Chap. 2.
4. It should be noted that we are not attempting to place the environment ahead of social justice issues so much as get it on the radar. We agree with many scholars who see social and ecological injustices as having the same root problems and thus believe it is important, even necessary, for the resistors to communicate and collaborate.
5. For those of us who tended to gaze longingly out the window as a teacher droned on, this concept of distraction was forced into our ears on a regular basis.
6. At short tour of some medieval Christian art might confirm this as a culturally assumed position.

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Praxis

Sarah Travis, Amelia M. Kraehe, Emily J. Hood,
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CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical theory and critical pedagogy have often charged that phenomenology is too focused on the immediate nature of experience without situating this experience in relation to larger social, economic, and political forces, structures, and practices. While this might be a concern with certain forms of phenomenological description, flashpoints offer students unique opportunities to enter into these broader topics through the simple question, "What does the body feel like when its raced, classed, sexed, gendered, anthropomorphized, and classed dimensions suddenly flare up and take center stage in our conscious experience of ourselves with others?" In this sense, the immediacy of the flashpoint lends itself to a discussion of how bodies are mediated through forces, structures, and practices without being reducible to such forces, structures, and practices. If one is interested in pursuing a critical pedagogical approach to the flashpoints offered in this book, we suggest asking students a variety of questions:

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Questions/Activities

1. What do you think the historical causes of this phenomenon are? What are the economic, political, and/or social causes?
2. What kinds of resistance—to economic, political, and social forms of oppression, discrimination, marginalization, and/or subjugation—do we find in the gestures of the body? What kinds of ambivalences do we find in the flesh?
3. How do we live oppression and privilege through our bodies and our gestures without recognizing it? How can we trouble our own bodies, and how bodies connect with the flesh of the world we inhabit?
4. Find current events that expose how an individual flashpoint is actually a much broader political, economic, and/or social issue. This will help ground personal flashpoints within broader contexts.
5. Write a description of what it has felt like to have your own class, race, gender, sexual orientation, or species-being flash before you in unexpected ways.

Arts-Based Pedagogy

An arts-based approach to teaching flashpoints would focus on how we can translate linguistic descriptions into other artistic modes. Flashpoints are excellent springboards for these artistic experiments because of their vividness and because of their evocative ability to conjure up a mood, an affect, a scene, and so forth. We suggest the following use of flashpoints for arts-based education:

Questions/Activities

1. Choose a flashpoint that is particularly gripping and draw it, paint it, or sculpt it. Try to capture what the flashpoint feels like. How can you represent feelings through color, texture, scale, composition, and so forth? This depiction of the flashpoint need not be literal or representational. Indeed, it might very well be expressionistic or abstract.
2. What are some examples of contemporary works of art that could be considered flashpoints (here you might look at the works of Anna Deavere Smith, Adrian Piper, Kara Walker, Glenn Ligon, Carrie Mae Weems, Cindy Sherman, or James Luna)? Can you write a phenomenological description of your embodied/embedded response to these works?

3. Read novels such as Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, or excerpts from Studs Terkel's *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. Such books offer many examples of evocative flashpoints. Key questions that can be discussed include the following: What is the difference between literature and phenomenological description? How are they similar and different? What can literature reveal about lived experience? How can literature help us reflect critically on our own embodied positionality?

Pedagogies of the Body

Human bodies are fragile, and as such humans often seek to protect them. Several chapters in this text explore the vulnerability of the body and the human inclination to protect itself through proximity/distance or suppression/altering of particular ways of being. We suggest the following questions/activities for addressing aspects of human vulnerability in flashpoints around sociocultural difference:

Questions/Activities

Part One: Specific chapters can be assigned to small groups to explore the following questions:

1. How does this chapter address the vulnerability of the human body?
2. Are some bodies in the chapter written as more vulnerable than others? How so?
3. Discuss the relationship between embracing embodied vulnerability and facing sociocultural difference.

Part Two: After the small groups discuss their questions, the groups can collaborate for a larger discussion of all of the assigned chapters. Each group should present a summary of their chapter. Then, the entire group should consider the following questions:

1. How is the vulnerability portrayed in these chapters the same and how is it different?
2. What role does power play in vulnerability? What is the difference between choosing to be vulnerable and being made vulnerable?

3. Is vulnerability good or bad, or both, and why? How might an educator facilitate student learning about embodied vulnerability? What lessons might be useful in teaching equity and diversity with an emphasis on human vulnerability?

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