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13. NIAL-A-PEND-DE-QUACY-IN

Teacher-Becomings and the Micropolitics of Self-Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Once there exists, in a culture, a true discourse on the subject, what experience does the subject have of his [or her] self?

– Michel Foucault, *Subjectivité et vérité* (translated in Parras, 2006, p. 124)

An endless cacophony insists that teachers *be* this or that. Parents, administrators, bureaucrats, politicians, and academics insist that teachers *be*: proficient, accountable, effective, involved, caring, fair, efficient, responsible, reflective, knowledgeable, collegial, and so on. Teachers, themselves, insist that they *be*: helped, encouraged, supported, prepared, educated, compensated, included, facilitated, etc. As I have noted elsewhere¹, I am struck not so much by the fact that educators are subject to so many desires about their selves, but by the assumption that these selves are malleable, synthetic, plastic – that they can *become* so many things. The apparently endless desires about teaching selves rest on the notable assumption that teachers can *become* in the first place.

What does it mean for teachers to become? What do teachers experience when becoming? Is it even possible, as Michel Foucault noted, to answer such questions in ways other than the ways established by the ‘true’ discourses of teacher preparation, curriculum, and policy? My use of the terms *plastic*, *synthetic*, and *malleable* signal teacher-becomings within a large (and at times, competing) range of subjectivities that teachers are expected to inhabit. With the use of these terms, I am not suggesting that teachers do not want to experience and perform specific subjectivities, or that these desires are somehow not important. I am, however, drawing attention to the large number of groups invested in the teaching body – what I refer to as *subject desirings*. And, with these terms, I am signaling that teachers are implicated in their own becomings as *desiring subjects*. Subject desirings and desiring subjects are found throughout the work of teaching in curricula and policies. The idea of teacher-becomings, then, raises a number of questions about who authors and experiences teacher-becomings.

Chapter organization

Within, I review three examples of how teachers write, and are written by, desires about their work. The idea of teacher-becomings – opposed to teacher-beings – is theorized as a *micropolitics of self-semiotics* that raises a number of objections to a preferred discourse about ‘teacher identity’ often found within the literatures on teacher preparation, teacher education, and teacher professionalism. While I am sympathetic to attempts to professionalize teaching, I am not convinced that such forms of regulation should rest on essentializations of teacher identity. Part of my sympathies rest with my own experiences teaching elementary school for several years. During this time, I experienced a number of becomings but I’m not sure if I ever became ‘professional’.

Instead, I argue that teachers are constantly in the process of becoming – always in the middle – and that they cannot achieve a presumed state of identity because of the immanence of subject desirings. For the purposes of this chapter, subject desirings are those semiotics found in curriculum policy; semiotics that are intimately assembled within the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of teachers. I conclude by suggesting that any form of professionalization needs to account for teacher-becomings rather than, and only than, teacher-beings.

The chapter proceeds by reviewing examples of teachers engaged in a *micropolitics of self-semiotics* within the smooth and striated spaces of curriculum policy. The examples of teaching selected for this review all framed their analyses with the theoretical framework of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. My chapter pauses at various points to map four conceptual plateaus associated with teacher-becomings: multiplicity, difference, assemblage, and rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). My goal for this chapter is to provide a map of teacher-becomings that illustrate these four conceptual plateaus. I conclude by discussing how MLT (Multiple Literacies Theory) assists teachers to ‘read’ the desires circulating throughout their work and their selves (Masny, 2006; Masny and Cole, 2009; Masny, 2011).

BECOMING AND BEING IN TEACHING

On one hand, it is fairly straightforward to identify teacher-becomings. They are everywhere. As I will explain shortly, teacher-becomings are the *affective lines between multiplicities*. For instance, teachers experience anger, confusion, hostility, frustration, indignation, joy, pleasure. Teachers encounter these affects everyday. Sometimes they experience several of these affects in an hour. Affective lines, then, are the creative trajectories the self traverses as it attempts to move among, sometimes escape, a myriad of different affects. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explained that

a line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle...a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end,

departure nor arrival, origin nor destination.... Becoming is the movement by which the line frees itself from the point, and renders points indiscernible: the rhizome, the opposite of arborescence; break away from arborescence. (pp. 293–294)

On the other hand, it is impossible to identify teacher-beings even though the professionalization literature continues to drill down into the supposed genetics of these beings in anticipation of extracting ‘best practices,’ endemic teacher knowledges, and the prototypical expert (Smagorinsky, 2009; Webb, 2007).

May (2005) distinguished between the ideas of being and becoming when he stated,

In traditional philosophy, being is contrasted with becoming. Being is that which endures, that which underlies, that which remains constant. Being is the source and the foundation, fixed and unchanging. God is being; Nature is being.... On the other hand, becoming is ephemeral, changing, inconstant, and therefore less substantial than being. (p. 59)

The search for ‘teaching gods’ is motivated, partly, to identify the enduring teaching constants that will hopefully substantiate a quasi-profession. Often, these gods are referred to as ‘best practices.’ In my experience, the only enduring aspect of teaching elementary school was that it constantly changed. Unfortunately, the search for these ‘best practices’ has not produced what it seeks because teacher-becomings are immanent.

What is immanent? Immanence is an idea that signals the endless connections between relationships and contrasts sharply with ideas of transcendence. Transcendence is an idea that seeks to rise above the endless connections - best practices, the solution, the silver bullet, the right way. Transcendence is a major purpose, and assumed goal, of curriculum and policy. Often the word and practices of ‘standardization’ are used to signal attempts at educational transcendence. Curriculum and policy attempt to provide some kind of order to what is delightfully unpredictable and immanent. However, as I will argue, teachers are constantly thrown into the differences between immanence and transcendence regarding their work. How can they not? Even after an hour-long lesson, the immanence of contradictory feelings - joy, disappointment, reflection, intuition - leave many teachers wanting to rise above the immanence of affects. However, it is in these micropolitical spaces, that teachers are fully aware that there is no transcendent position to teach. There is only immanent becomings, followed by another lesson to be taught in the next hour.

TEACHING GODS ARE DEAD

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers?

– Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, #125 (p. 181)

I have positioned the ideas of *being* and *becoming* as a binary. I have done so as a way to illustrate the persistence of teacher preparation research and activities that supposedly exhume ‘best practices’. This foil is a way to illustrate the folds of teacher-becomings but certainly limits the kinds of teacher becomings that I discuss in this chapter. Nevertheless, I believe that the binary adequately represents certain practices - ‘transcendent truths’ - explicated in teacher preparation literatures and evidenced in teacher preparation that utilize, and seek, ‘best practices’. More importantly, these transcendent truths circulate within curriculum and policy.

In what follows, I selected three research vignettes that serve as examples of teacher-becomings. I selected these vignettes because they illustrate how teachers make sense of, and enact, curriculum and policy – prevalent objects in teachers’ work that is imbued with semiotic desires about that work. I also selected these vignettes because they pay attention to how curriculum policy “is written onto bodies and produces particular subject positions” (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 3). In other words, I selected these examples because they illustrate how teachers ‘read’ subject desirings, and, subsequently, read desiring subjects.² I also selected these examples for their explanatory import of the concepts multiplicity, difference, assemblage, and rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). These concepts were selected to illustrate the central idea of *becoming* which is the theme of this volume.

FIRST PLATEAU: MULTIPLICITY

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) discussed the idea of multiplicities that are not prefigured, pre-coded, or genetic (i.e. innate) precursors to being. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) emphatically stated that multiplicities are “neither subject nor object...”; instead, multiplicities are “determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions...” (p. 8). Becomings are positioned between multiplicities and emerge as affects. In this sense, multiplicities help us better understand the assumptions inherent in subject desirings: a single teacher can *become* many – and perhaps, can *be* actualized into many beings. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) humorously noted the multiplicities in their own work when they stated, “Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd” (p. 3).

Honan (2004) noted how teacher-becomings were manifest through the coding and decoding of governmental curriculum policy. Honan described how teachers interpreted and adapted curriculum policy to classroom practice – what the author described as a “rhizo-textual” process. Through this process, teacher-becomings sought smooth space – lines of flight – within the striated space of curriculum policy that attempted to reterritorialize them into “effective” teachers, or effective beings (Honan, 2004, pp. 273–275). These subject desirings, however, produced a multiplicity of (at least) three other teacher-becomings: (a) teacher-in-dependence, (b) teacher-in-adequate, and (c) teacher-in-denial (p. 276). It may be the case that the teachers in Honan’s work were

reterritorialized as “effective” teachers, but in so doing, these teachers were also in-dependence, in-adequate, and in-denial. Honan (2004) demonstrated how attempts to code a particular teacher-body – effective – also coded teacher bodies in other ways. Multiplicities are always a site of micropolitics; as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) noted, “a rhizome or multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded” (p. 9).

Semetsky (2006) noted the ways the curriculum policy – or subject desires – contributed to the micropolitics of teacher-becomings when she stated,

Subjectivity, when understood as a process of becoming, differs from the traditional notion of the self looked at, and rationally appealed to, from the so called top down approach of the macroperspective of theory; instead Deleuze recognizes the micropolitical dimension of culture as a contextual and circumstantial site where subjects are situated and produced. As a qualitative multiplicity, subjectivity does not presuppose identity but is being produced in a process of individuation which is always already collective.... (p. 3).

In addition to subject desirings, the multiplicities in Honan’s research illustrated the micropolitics of desiring subjects when *affective lines competed with each other and competed within themselves*. For example, a teacher’s feelings of becoming inadequate competed with feelings of being adequate – teacher-becoming-in-adequate. And, a teacher’s strong feelings about being independent (often signaled in teaching literatures as being ‘autonomous’) competed with feelings of becoming dependent on curriculum policy – teacher-becoming-in-dependent. In this sense, affective lines competed with themselves for expression. Further, affective lines of inadequacy mixed with, and competed against, lines of independence, producing additional lines of denial and confusion. Affective lines were intersecting vectors that both combined and sheared teachers’ feelings regarding contested notions of effective beings. Teacher-becomings, then, were micropolitical *within* each affective line and *between* other affective lines. Semetsky (2006) noted that,

the unconscious perceptions are implicated as minute, or microperceptions...they are part of the cartographic microanalysis of establishing ‘an unconscious psychic mechanisms that engenders the perceived in consciousness’ (Deleuze, 1993, p. 95).

I have tried to illustrate the micropolitics *within* affects by separating the prefix from the root, as in the case of in-adequate. Readers should note how language is coded with notions of being, i.e., “prefix” and “root”, contributing to the complexity of discussing the idea of becoming. The micropolitics *between* affects in the multiplicity of independence-inadequacy-denial could be illustrated like: *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in*, indicating how messy becomings are and indicating an absence of language regarding this process of unconscious

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perceptions. *Nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in*, then, is just one way of denoting a particular teacher-becoming.

SECOND PLATEAU: RHIZOME

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.

– Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 25

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) provided four principles of rhizomes as a way for understanding the micropolitics involved with teacher-becomings (pp. 3–25). One, rhizomes, and hence becoming, are not arborescent (rooted, fixed); instead, rhizomes have the potential for unlimited growth through its own transformation. Two, rhizomes are characterized by the movement between and through points rather than to points that they connect – “a becoming is always in the middle; one can only get it by the middle” (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 294). Three, rhizomes are difficult to destroy because they are constantly in motion and constantly fleeing attempts at being fixed. Last, rhizomes are cartographical and able to describe becomings spatially. The cartographical principle is a deliberate attempt to avoid describing formations of the self with arborescent explanations (e.g., narrative, voice). Instead, rhizomatic cartographies attempt to map becomings in movement and do not engage with (in fact, eschew) genetic analyses of the self designed to fix, or root, being. Semetsky (2006) provided a wonderful summary of the rhizome when she stated,

The rhizome, as embedded in the perplexity of the situation, goes in diverse directions instead of a single path, multiplying its own lines and establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended smooth space of its growth. In short, it lives. It does not represent, but only maps our ways, paths and movements together with, as Deleuze says, “their coefficients of probability and danger” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 3). The situation is problematic not due to subjective uncertainty but because such uncertainty arises out of the conflicting experiences [the micropolitical] constituting this very situation. (p. 73)

Honan (2004) argued that the rhizo-textual process was evidence of teachers becoming professional. Teacher-becoming-professional then sought to reterritorialize the striated (and deleterious) semiotics of ‘ineffective teachers’ or ‘teacher deficit’ found throughout the curriculum policy. These “professional” teachers *were* the micropolitical sites that confronted subject desires of *being effective*, and the micropolitical sites that attempted to escape this particular governmental desire. Even though the rhetoric of “effectiveness” is hopelessly contested term, for now, the idea of a rhizome provides a way to talk about teacher-becoming as *micropolitical sites confronted with attempts at fixing a particular identity*. Somewhat like Foucault (2005), Honan implicitly argued that teacher-becomings were creative ways to care for the self amidst a powerful

semiotic that desired “effective beings”. Teacher-becomings sought smooth spaces of creative autonomy, professionalization, and expert when teachers literally re-wrote the curriculum policy based on an alternative definitions of being effective and becoming professional.

While Honan’s research indicated some resistance at attempts to fix or root teacher beings that were ‘effective’, it remains to be seen whether or not teachers are ready to experiment with the micropolitics of the multiplicity of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in*. Are teachers prepared to, borrowing from Semetsky (2006) above, to “multiply its own lines and establish the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended smooth space of its growth” (p. 73)? The persistent semiotics of ‘teacher deficit’ and ‘ineffective teacher’ articulated in so many curricular policies creates a deleterious atmosphere. However, and more importantly, the persistent semiotics of deficit cements ideas of teacher-*being* and completely avoids ideas of teacher-*becoming*.

Honan’s research illustrated that teachers responded differently to characterizations of being ineffective; but in so doing, these more professional responses similarly articulated ideas of being - as in *being* professional. Again, being. What is different between *being* ineffective and *being* professional? Are the differences in *being* the same state described differently? Or, are these different states characterized differently? I know when I taught elementary school I was both ineffective and effective. Did I have two beings, or was I different from myself over a period of time? To compound matters, I was often independent and dependent when I taught and these multiplicities were connected (or what I will discuss as ‘assembled’) with feeling ineffective and effective. Did I have four beings? Oh my, that is a crowd! In order to answer some of these questions it is helpful to understand the idea of difference and to understand some of the immanent possibilities in becoming. It seems to me that teacher preparation, curriculum, and policy might work with the immanence of teacher-becomings, like *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in*, rather than trying to control such a multiplicity or characterize it as broken or flawed and attempt to fix a particular being out of it.

THIRD PLATEAU: DIFFERENCE

May (2005) provided a helpful explanation of difference and identity when he stated,

Duration is not identity. It is difference, difference that may actualize itself into specific identities, but that remains difference even within those identities. There is not being here, at least not in the traditional sense. Or, to put the point another way, if there is being, if there is a constant, it is becoming itself: the folding and unfolding of substance, the actualization of duration. If we have a taste for paradox, which Deleuze does, we might say that the only being is the being of becoming. (p. 60)

Difference is an idea that can be useful when talking about teacher-becoming and curriculum policy. Difference is often discussed as an idea that makes distinctions between things that are the same; or, difference illustrates distinctions of the same over a period of time. Above, May (2005) discussed difference in just this way and in relation to being and becoming. Interestingly, curriculum policy often attempts to take the difference between things and produce a state of equivalence over time (e.g., test scores). But as May (2005) indicated, we should not be duped into thinking that duration is identity or being. In general, difference is concerned with the variations between two states, and in what follows, I examine the research of Roy (2003) to illustrate the idea of difference in teacher-becomings.

Like Honan (2004), Roy observed that teachers were fluent in a reading of the rhizomatic-semiotics of curriculum policy. However, his research indicated that teachers did not achieve a state of being professional when engaging with curriculum policy. Even though teachers responded to being ineffective, teachers sought solace from the micropolitics of becoming by attempting to control and suppress difference. The state of teacher-becoming-in-out-control was simply too great and teachers in Roy's (2003) study regulated or controlled their different becomings.

For instance, Roy (2003) identified teacher-becomings related to multiplicities of stress. Subject desires produced so much stress that teachers described themselves as becoming numb – “I do not know my own feelings anymore” (p. 162). Unrecognized affects pushed teachers to repress multiplicities rather than explore and experiment with these (anesthetized) affects. The affective differences were too great, and teachers did not explore their becomings because they were not prepared for encounters with different multiplicities. Becoming- numb left teachers seeking repression of their multiplicities within the available signs provided to them by subject desirings (i.e., curriculum policy).

In this sense, teachers in Roy's (2003) study were constantly in flux and responded by trying to control or fix these constant changes of the self. Difference was everywhere, as May (2005) observed,

Here is a way of seeing the world: it is composed not of identities that form and reform themselves, but of swarms of difference that actualise themselves into specific forms of identity. Those swarms are not outside the world; they are not transcendent creators. They are of the world, as material as the identities formed from them. And they continue to exist even within the identities they form, not as identities but as difference. From their place within identities, these swarms of difference assure that the future will be open to novelty, to new identities and new relationships among them. (p. 114)

Roy (2003) noted that teachers suppressed difference by developing acceptable or preferred identities (i.e., conformity). In Roy's (2003) research, teacher-beings were created through the readily available “despotic signifiers”

repeated in pedagogy, curricula, and policy (p. 12). These ‘truths’ determined how teachers understood their becomings and provided the preferable way to articulate themselves within a swarm of multiplicities and the intense micropolitics of the school. What is interesting in Roy’s (2003) research are the numerous teacher-becomings - indeed swarms - that were translated or actualized into particular, preferred teacher-beings over a period of time. As Roy noted, the

...grand schemes of reform and change are rapidly taken over by territorializing forces, but an imperceptible rupture remains the hidden, unnoticed fault line that can allow what Britzman and Dipppo (2000) have called “awful thoughts” or dissident movements to surface. ...What this signifies is that the grand-scale reforms and large structural initiatives [policy], although they may look impressive, are less important from the point of view of real change than the minor movements of disorientation and dissidence at the micropolitical level.

Arguably, the work of a controlled becoming is extremely complex and the risks of a schisis very real. But even so, Roy (2003) noted that teachers were not prepared for the work and practices of becoming. Instead, teachers reterritorialized their becomings within the despotic signifiers that maintained particular arrangements of the school and of teachers themselves. Difference in the multiplicities produced by curriculum policy, then, was feared. Teachers in Roy’s research repressed these multiplicities in order to be the same. In other words, teachers conformed to the wishes of the curriculum policy because “awful thoughts” and dissidence at the micropolitical level were too great.

Taken together, multiplicity, rhizome, and difference are helpful ideas that assist a discussion about teacher-becomings rather than perpetuating a discussion about what teachers ought to be. It might be the case that teachers overcome repetitive (and repressive) forms of identity - for instance, “ineffective” - to explore a creative process of becoming and transformation. To my mind, this sounds a lot like what education could be - an experiment in difference rather than an adherence to the same. I suppose this is what distinguishes education from training, or worse, indoctrination. Nevertheless, teachers in Roy’s (2003) study wrote themselves as particular beings through the available semiotic systems and subject desirings within their immediate work. This is certainly some of the power of curriculum policy. In the next section, I examine the final plateau of assemblage in relation to teacher-being and teacher-becoming.

FOURTH PLATEAU: ASSEMBLAGE

...the only assemblages are machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation.

– Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 22

The idea of *assemblage* is central to understanding teacher-becomings. In its most straightforward sense, assemblage denotes the arranging and fitting together of multiplicities during becoming. Earlier, I illustrated the idea of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* as one way to understand this assemblage. In a more elaborate sense, assemblage is the fitting together or arranging of multiplicities with semiotic elements (i.e., signs) in the production of subjectivity (Stivale, 1998). Assemblage, then, denotes a process of teacher-becomings that is not entirely “within the self” but is produced within different registers and signs of curriculum policy. This is what Deleuze and Guattari mean by a collective assemblage of enunciation. Collective assemblages of enunciation are semiotic systems that express, refer, denote, connote, allude, or otherwise signify machinic assemblages; and these assemblages often signify the semiotic system itself (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 504). Assemblage also denotes a process of teacher-becomings that are multiplicitious and different, and developed in a rhizomatic fashion (i.e., not linear and not arborescent or rooted like in many conceptions of being).

For the purposes of this chapter, I have used curriculum policy as the key system of semiotic desires that write teachers. Roy (2003) discussed these systems as “despotic” (p. 12) and Honan (2004) described curriculum policy as “managerial” (p. 267). Semiotic systems are ways to develop meaning, and are involved with discourses, words, actions, thoughts, and practices. Of course, I have paid close attention to some of the meanings associated with ‘best practices’. Assemblages, then, are imbued with semiotics: understanding, learning, meaning-making, interpretation, performance, coding, decoding, and over-coding of different signs. In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss how teachers sense or ‘read’ some of the signs with the help of Masny and Cole (2009). As such, teacher-becomings must be understood as both assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation. More importantly, teacher-becomings are assembled through the desires, signs, curricula, policies, and enunciations of others and do not stand apart from these heterogeneous elements.

In my own research, I noted how teachers developed semiotic systems in response to accountability policy that sought to determine ineffective teachers, much like the semiotic systems found in Honan (2004). And, like Honan (2004), teachers in my study wrestled with difference in the multiplicity of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* when accountability policy sought specific curricular performances from teachers. In other words, accountability policy sought specific test scores from teachers and this particular semiotic system produced swarms of difference for teachers.

Interestingly, teachers created curricular fabrications to respond to the accountability policy that was used to control them (Webb, 2009). Teachers knew that performances represented their professional status and therefore could be used as political capital to shape evaluations of their practice. In my work, I called these performances “fabrications” and teachers mutated curriculum into fabrications for viewing and circulated images of these fabrications into the

semiotic system of the school. For instance, a teacher in my study described how he fabricated portfolios to manage his principal's impressions of him as a teacher.

I keep portfolios of the kids' work and I assess quite frequently and so the principal assumes that I'm a good teacher. She's popped into my classroom [unannounced] and asked me 'how are you going to teach this-and-this' and 'how are you going to assess it.' Kind of this bullshit thing we do. And you know, I'm prepared now. I show her the portfolios. Mind you, I don't have to show *what's in* the portfolio – just the idea that I have a portfolio [indicates to her that] I'm on the ball. I don't take out the [evidence] to show, for instance 'here are the writing pieces and here's evidence for reading and math.' No, just the idea that I've got the portfolio and it looks official – it's got the kid's name on it, it's got my name on and it's got the principal's name on it. She assumes that I'm on top of things. She said to me one time, 'Well good, I don't have to worry about you.'

Portfolios were assembled as a heuristic to explain student performances *and* as a particular sign of being a 'good' teacher in the school. Another teacher discussed how she circulated signs into the prevailing semiotic system of the school that determined what a good teacher was. She stated,

Teachers use 'walking in the hallways' to make judgments about other teachers. As a new teacher, I was much more concerned about it than I am now [six years later] because I was concerned about what other teachers would think of me by how my kids walked in the hallway. I'm not nearly as concerned about that anymore, although I believe they need to walk quietly in the hallway because they are going to disturb other classes – not so much what other teachers think [about my teaching]. I wouldn't argue that walking in a straight line is quality teaching. It's just a kind of teaching. It's a kind of quiet teaching. Just because there is noise going on in a classroom doesn't mean its chaos.

As I noted earlier, teacher-becomings are assembled through the desires and enunciations of others and do not stand apart from these heterogeneous elements. What this means is that teachers certainly developed signs to circulate within established semiotic systems of the school, but only in relation to the semiotic system already in place. Difference was not an option. I guess I'm overly partial, but wouldn't it be great to see teachers and students singing and dancing in hallways? Nevertheless, portfolios and walking students down hallways were assembled in relation to an accountability policy that sought these very specific kinds of performances.

More importantly, however, the accountability policy assembled teachers-becomings. Much like Roy (2003), my work indicated that teachers sought a fixed being rather than explore the multiplicities produced through curriculum policy. The most significant evidence supporting this claim was the fact that

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teachers maintained signs for their colleagues to monitor. Accountability policy created a semiotic systems wherein teachers produced objects, practices, and ideas that communicated ideas within the school. These practices and objects (i.e., walking and portfolios) became assembled onto the external accountability system. But what about teacher-becomings? Unfortunately, teachers mentioned that trying so hard to be the same left them exhausted. Well, actually, teachers stated that becoming within a despotic, managerial, and accountable system of signs made them feel “paralyzed,” “ineffectual,” “wallowing,” and “something of a drain.” For instance, a teacher in my research noted that,

My personal goal of trying to help all kids become excited lifelong learners can't be fulfilled for many different reasons...There are days that you go home and you think, “Why am I doing this? Should I be doing this?” It's becoming something of a drain.

And another,

the more they [administrators] emphasize something that I don't believe in, the more I become paralyzed and ineffectual. I'm teaching something I don't agree with. I'm being forced to teach in a certain way [a fabrication]. I try to do the other one [authentic teaching] in a way that's not drawing the attention of the administrators too much, but it becomes paralyzing. You find yourself wallowing instead of teaching.

The assemblage of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* is a powerful way to understand teacher-becomings. However, *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* only hints at the kinds of signs that are produced, that is, the collective assemblage of enunciations. Assemblage assists understanding teacher-becomings not just as psychological effects, but as powerful combinations of the self expressing itself in particular ways and for particular reasons (i.e., to conform, to avoid, to resist, etc.). *Nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* is also a complex set of signs that is produced within complex semiotic systems of the school and in relation to the complex subject desirings of curriculum policy. I have provided a few examples of the kinds of signs that are circulated in schools, but I imagine there are many more signs that teachers develop in schools to express the multiplicitious difference in their work and with themselves. Next, I end by discussing how Multiple Literacies Theory (MLT) assists understanding how teacher-becomings can be transformative at micropolitical levels. MLT can be a very valuable asset for teachers to understand the multiplicitious difference in their work and as a way to sense the many different subject desirings of themselves.

CONCLUSION: TEACHER-BECOMINGS AND BECOMING TEACHERS

Fail to know what everyone else knows and you have a chance to create something interesting.

– Todd May (2005), p. 149

On one hand, it is understandable that the multiplicities, rhizomes, differences, and assemblages of becoming *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* are discounted and ignored. As I noted earlier, there is not a well developed language in teacher preparation and curriculum policy to understand teacher-becomings. Of course, this has much to do with the overwhelming subject desirings invested in and around teachers' bodies. On the other hand, the multiplicity of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* is also ignored due to the preferred trajectory of understanding the teacher with ideas of being rather than becoming. In fact, and unfortunately, *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* is too often portrayed as teachers not knowing what they are doing rather than as the important signification of surviving an overwhelming set of despotic, managerial, and accountable signs. And, any sign that is produced from *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* seems to be immediately castigated as "cheating" rather than as surviving. Teachers are all-too-often characterized as unaccountable in so many ways. In the end, the multiplicity of *nial-a-pend-de-quacy-in* is further assembled with feelings of guilt within the prescriptions of producing "effective" teacher-beings.

Fortunately, Multiple Literacies Theory (MLT) assists understanding how teaching and learning can be transformative at micropolitical levels (Masny, 2006; Masny and Cole, 2009; Masny, 2011). MLT provides ways to 'read the self' when becoming – cartographies in self semiotics. When we feel, encounter, or 'read' an emotion, we have entered a space of becoming. It will take us somewhere (it has direction and speed) even if we don't know where it will take us at the moment. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) note that becomings are haptic in the sense of perceptual but likely not optic or tactile (p. 479). MLT assists teachers 'read' the semiotic systems that are often handed to them. MLT provides an alternative to reading policy for meaning – MLT provides teachers opportunities to 'read' policy in relation to becoming and embrace becoming rather than avoiding it. MLT highlights teacher-becomings as affective lines – multiplicities – assembled into a semiotic rhizome, and thus, one possibility of teacher-becomings is that they may become powerful tools for educators in ways that assist in the accomplishment of their work rather than as, and only as, standardized prescriptions developed to regulate educational difference.

MLT insists on a creative approach to teacher-becomings, whereas "local knowledge" is used "to produce moments of inspiration, experimentation, critique and art" (p. 5). Semiotic assemblages of the body, then, are the creative intermezzos – the in-betweens – of teachers and curriculum policy and not independent ontologies vying for "teachers' souls" in the production of teacher-beings (Ball, 2003). Rather, MLT assists teachers embrace the affects of "otherness, strangeness and alienation" that accompanies teacher-becomings (p. 5). Admittedly, this is hard work. It's always easier to follow a recipe than create one. In this spirit, I've always enjoyed the following quote by Michel Foucault, even if its use of a gendered object is not representative of the large number of women teaching in schools. Foucault (1994) stated,

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Modern man...is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not “liberate man in his own being”; it compels him to face the task of producing himself. (p. 312)

Similarly, Conley (2005) noted that “the struggle for subjectivity is a battle to win the right to have access to difference, variation, and metamorphosis” (p. 172).

To end, I think Conley (2005) is correct that teacher-becomings are a battle. I imagine this isn't a particularly pleasant way to frame this idea for those teaching or working with teachers. Nevertheless, we may indeed have to face the task of producing ourselves but do so in very different ways and in relation to a range of unequal “despotic signs”. In this sense, MLT can assist teacher-becomings resist preordained end points of their bodies through a reinterpretation of the concept of power. In MLT, power is understood to operate at the micro-levels of the body, rather than operate just at the macro-levels of government and articulated through curriculum policy. In this sense, power is not used to hold teachers “accountable” to particular kinds of being. Instead, power is linked to different kinds of transformations endemic to the processes of teaching and education. Of course, it's not always clear how and what will be produced through becomings. However, I'm inclined to think like Todd May in that my not-knowing is likely to produce something interesting. I would at least like the opportunity to not know how to deal with my becomings. And, given what policy and curriculum have produced for us so far, I think education and teaching could use a lot more of not-knowing today.

NOTES

- ¹ This paragraph is approximated from my previous (2009), pages 125-126. In what follows, I pick up where I left off discussing teachers' subjectivities but now with the explicit frame of understanding ways to 'read' these becomings through Multiple Literacies Theory (Masny and Cole, 2009).
- ² While my examples privilege curriculum policy texts, I do not mean to exclude other pedagogical semiotics, like events, actions, and thoughts. My selection of curriculum policy is designed to amplify the subject desirings and to amplify the ways teachers 'author' themselves as desiring subjects. In this sense, curriculum and policy also warrant a review that doesn't characterize them as entirely pernicious. However, that is beyond the scope and intent of this chapter.

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