Journal of Thought

Volume 55, Numbers 1 & 2

Spring/Summer 2021

Journal of Thought

Spring/Summer 2021, Volume 55, Numbers 1 & 2

Published Biannually by Caddo Gap Press
with Sponsorship
of the Society of Philosophy and History of Education

Publisher
Alan H. Jones, Caddo Gap Press

Website
www.journalofthought.com

3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118 U.S.A.
Telephone: 415/666-3012
E-mail: info@caddogap.com
Website www.caddogap.com

ISSN 0022-5231

Journal of Thought

A Journal of Critical Reflection on Educational Issues

The ***Journal of Thought*** is a biannual publication devoted to the reflective examination of educational issues and problems from the perspective of different disciplines and interdisciplinary lenses. The ***Journal*** welcomes scholar's work that represent varied viewpoints, methodologies, disciplines, cultures, and nationalities as it seeks to treat the most comprehensive issues and problems confronting education throughout the world. Essays that develop a reasoned and supported argument, that offer insightful analysis and critiques of other's arguments, or that report on significant research of interest to the field are welcomed. The editorial goal is to stimulate a warranted synthesis of diverse viewpoints and to encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dialogue. The ***Journal*** is published by Caddo Gap Press, San Francisco, California, and sponsored by the Society of Philosophy and History of Education. Editorial correspondence and inquiries should be addressed to Vyacheslav Khrapak, Editor, ***Journal of Thought***, Holberton School Tulsa, vkhrapak@gmail.com.

All manuscripts should be submitted electronically to **vkhrapak@gmail.com**. The proposed article and notes or references should not ordinarily exceed 20 double-spaced pages. Manuscripts must be original and not have appeared in print previously. Since the ***Journal of Thought*** is a refereed, peer-reviewed publication, manuscripts are submitted for blind review to two or more reviewers. When sending materials, two files are needed: (1) the title page with author identifying information, email and regular addresses, and telephone number and (2) the manuscript itself. Complete, formatted references, text citations, and notes should be provided according to the ***Chicago Manual of Style*** (17th Edition) or the ***Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*** (7th Edition).

Subscription rates to ***Journal of Thought*** are $50 annually for individuals and $100 annually for institutions and libraries. Subscribers outside of the United States must add $60 per year to cover additional postage. Back issues are $25 per copy. All subscriptions and single-copy orders should be addressed and payable to Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118, U.S.A. (telephone 415/666-3012; e-mail info@caddogap.com; website www.caddogap.com. Each issue is mailed to subscribers in PDF format on disk.

Contents

Intersectionality, Decolonization, and Educating for Critical Consciousness

Rethinking Praxis and Resistance in Education

Jennifer Gale de Saxe & Bonnie-Estelle Trotter-Simons
Te Whare Wänanga o Te Ûpoko o Te Ika A Mâui
(Victoria University of Wellington)

Abstract

We are living in a time when scholar and student activists are siphoned within a hegemonic and colonizing university structure that maintains and upholds neoliberalism and whiteness as an ideology. The need to reimagine such spaces has never been more dire. We argue that by interconnecting and complicating the philosophical and conceptual tenets of intersectionality and decolonization, therein lies the potential for university students to grapple with such notions as cognitive dissonance, the dialectics of consciousness, as well as understanding the importance of seeing themselves as being with and within the world. All of these elements encompass praxis and educating for critical consciousness. We discuss that by grounding students' thinking within an interconnected epistemological framework and radical philosophy of educating for critical consciousness, they will be better equipped to challenge their own education, as well as leave the university as agents of resistance and transformation.

Keywords: intersectionality, decolonization, critical education, educating for critical consciousness, whiteness as an ideology

Introduction

History well-confirms democracy is never guaranteed, even during great movements of people. As such, we are reminded that democracy is never a given, but rather entails an ongoing emancipatory struggle for political voice, participation, and social action. With this in mind,

> *higher education continues to exist as a formative contested terrain of struggle, given the potential of public education to serve as a democratizing force for the evolution of critical consciousness and democratic pubic life*. (Darder, 2012, p. 424)

We are living in a time when scholar and student activists are siphoned within a hegemonic and colonizing university structure that prioritizes self-meritocracy and politically neutral education. Instead of centering teaching and learning that prepares students to actively challenge societal inequities and oppressions, the university[1] maintains the status quo of hegemony, neoliberalism, and whiteness as an ideology.[2] According to Bargh (2007, p. 13) "neoliberalism demonstrates a translation of many older colonial beliefs, once expressed explicitly, now expressed implicitly, into language and practices which are far more covert about their civilizing mission." In essence, a neoliberal ideology seeks to colonize, suppress, and reinforce the fear that any form of critical thinking within the university might disrupt and challenge the status quo of complacency and individualism.

Importantly, the tenets of both neoliberalism and hegemonic whiteness work in tandem to uphold and "normalize" the university as a colonizing structure by undermining "diversity politics" and radical voices from the margins (cultural, racialized, economic, gendered, and sexual borderlands). In as much, the language surrounding diversity itself needs to be traced to the political historical journeys in which the aims for increasing representation were shaped because, as Ahmed and Swan (2006, p. 96) argue, the simultaneous neoliberal push back on and co-option of "diversity politics" require academics to agitate for more than just diverse representation within universities. Furthermore, not only do many universities still inadequately retain and hire Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) students and staff, the neoliberal conditions of spaces within universities can be experienced as fundamentally exclusionary, unsafe, and unwelcoming (McAllister et al., 2019, p. 237).

Notably, there is a connective tissue within universities that is continually being forged between ideologies, intentions, and the formation of policies and practices (Picower & Mayorga, 2015). This must be understood as an amalgamation of the insidious ways of thinking about the world that directly interconnect and dehumanize elements of race, class, gender, among other identifiers. Within such thinking, the university monitors humanity, destroys and delegitimizes community, whilst demeaning the importance of the public good (Giroux, 2001; 2012). As a result, too many students leave the university unprepared to challenge the many facets of white supremacy and other forms of oppression both

within education and society. In fact, so little attention is paid to directly challenging whiteness and racism that many students can spend their entire tenure at university sidestepping such content altogether.

Speaking to this, Brunsma, Brown, and Placier (2012) note,

> White students can enter the doors as fresh-persons and exit as seniors virtually unchanged in terms of their assumptions about white supremacy, and that this is both expected and structured into what we do in universities. Thus, education further solidifies the colonization of the white mind when what needs to occur is decolonization. (p. 720)

In other words, whiteness (as a default and/or norm) takes up space and is reinforced as the normalized version of living comfortably with and within the world. By glossing over the insidious ways that white supremacy traverses throughout the university structure, racial awareness is accommodated, whilst evading systems of power that have the potential to alter the larger system of racism and racial ideology (Burke, 2017).

Significantly, transformation from the oppressive and dehumanizing structures of academia are possible and already in action within critical, transgressive work that takes place across many colleges and universities around the world, including (among many others) in Aotearoa, New Zealand[3] (hooks, 1994; McAllister et al., 2019). Throughout this article, we contribute to this body of work and praxis by arguing that by interconnecting and complicating the philosophical and conceptual tenets of intersectionality and decolonization, therein lies the potential for university students to grapple with such notions as cognitive dissonance, the dialectics of consciousness, as well as understanding the importance of seeing themselves as being with and within the world (Freire, 1970; 1974). All of these elements encompass praxis and educating for critical consciousness.

Within this framework, we write this article self-identifying as white, European, Jewish-American, cisgender, able-bodied, middle-class heterosexual woman, and as white, European New Zealander, cisgender, able-bodied, middle-class heterosexual woman. By critically reflecting upon our individual and collective experiences and actions, there is an awareness for how we either reinforce or challenge power.

This article will be broken up into three main sections. The first section discusses intersectionality as both a theoretical framework and an element of praxis. The second part contextualizes decolonization. Specifically, we address the following questions: What is decolonization and what is not? How is this connected to resistance and resilience? The final section pulls together the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and decolonization, arguing that by grounding students' thinking

within an interconnected epistemological framework and philosophy of educating for critical consciousness, they will be better equipped to leave university as proactive agents of resistance and transformation.

Understanding Intersectionality

At its core, intersectionality, coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, served as a base in which to directly critique and challenge the patriarchy within the legal community and society, as well as the whiteness of second wave feminism writ large. It is helpful to think of the following metaphor when unpacking the duelling forces of oppression that underpin the need for an intersectional analysis:

> Whose roads are these? Who designed the grid, and then who built them? Whose land is the entire structure on? How does the grid itself marginalize people, transforming some people into so-called "minorities" in the imperial gaze while supposedly being able to serve the interests of the 'majority'? For me these are the most productive questions that arise as we try to think about the relationship between intersectionality and marginality. (Khatun, p.18, as cited in Silverstein, 2017)

Notably, when thinking about intersectionality in our contemporary moment, the aim is to shift the conversation from thinking about feminism as a white, liberal, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle/upper-class movement, to one that must be rearticulated so as to interrogate the historical and present "norm" of what defines a feminist. Furthermore, it reinforces the notion that discrimination, marginalizations, and oppressions remain because of "the stubborn endurance of the structures of white dominance" (Crenshaw as cited in Coaston, 2019).

Moreover, an intersectional analysis and interpretation should be rooted in recognizing and analyzing social inequalities. In particular, it should "explore the interaction between different identity markers, such as race, and gender, that underpin social, political, and economic formal rules and informal norms and cultures" (Evans, 2016, p. 68). In as much, intersectionality moves away from seeing people as a homogenous, undifferentiated mass, and instead, provides a framework for explaining how social divisions of race, gender, age, and citizenship status (just to name a few) position people differently in the world (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Within this nuanced and context specific analysis, intersectionality has the potential to effectively challenge a single story of oppression, marginalization, and power.

Intersectionality as a Theoretical Framework

Building on this definition and understanding of intersectionality, it makes sense to situate its tenets within a nuanced theoretical framework so as to avoid essentialist narratives about whom or what intersectionality is referring to. Within the context of teaching and learning, an intersectional framework provides a platform to recognize one's standpoint[4] (both as educators and students) so as to challenge the dominant ideologies of traditional educational practices, as well as tease apart hegemonic understandings of identity, oppression, and resistance. As hooks (1986) reminds us, "women must learn to accept responsibility for fighting oppressions that may not directly affect us as individuals. When we show our concern for the collective, we strengthen our solidarity" (p. 137). To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs, and goals around which to unite to build Sisterhood.

Further, Lorde (1984) wrote for the need to welcome difference, not to "merely tolerate" people who are different. We must embrace difference because it is that which provides a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity has the opportunity to spark like a dialectic. Khatun as cited in Silverstein (2017) builds on this stating, "rather than buying this story that theorises humans as deviations from a white, male, propertied, heterosexual, Protestant-but secular individual, I want to look at how the colonial production of these categories continues to see the very terms in which we talk about difference" (p. 16).

An intersectional analysis also provides a framework in which to critique the often-times unchallenged nature of traditional western schooling. Understood as multilogicality, Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) see this practice as simply the need for humans to encounter multiple perspectives in all dimensions of their lives. This idea underscores the importance of recognizing and drawing on indigenous knowledges and perspectives, as well as situating oneself with and within the world (Freire, 1974). Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) understand multilogicality as a process that has the potential to shape social analyses, political perspectives, knowledge production, and action (all elements of understanding praxis). Thus, by incorporating multiple viewpoints through an intersectional framework, "multilogical teachers begin to look at lessons from the perspectives of individuals from different race, class, gender, and sexual orientations. They are dedicated to search for new perspectives" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 139). As such, a multifaceted interpretation of intersectionality as a theoretical framework is what allows it move from a theory to a form of praxis and resistance.

Intersectionality as Praxis: Challenging an Ideology of Whiteness

Arguably, engaging with intersectionality as a form of praxis (or tool) requires a commitment to understanding how its theoretical interpretation is constantly under construction, malleable, and context specific. In other words, seeing intersectionality as an element of praxis requires that one pay close attention to historical, intellectual, and political contexts so that engaging with it as a tool is nuanced and deliberate.

Sandoval (2000) builds on this argument through her discussion of differential consciousness, or an alternative way in which to reassess one's current understandings of oppositional praxis and resistance. In essence, Sandoval recognizes the various ways in which race, gender, and class intersect, and why it is imperative for an interconnectivity of all forms of marginalization so that true transformation can take place. Although Sandoval does recognize and honor oppositional methods and forms of resistance, she advocates for a dynamic process of moving forward, aiming towards expanding and incorporating many diverse forms of opposition and modes of resistance.

We also draw on Collins and Bilge's (2016) discussion of "relationality," as it speaks to the necessary commitment of developing coalitions and/or relations across social divisions. Collins and Bilge state, "relational thinking rejects either/or binary thinking, for example, opposing theory to practice, scholarship to activism, or blacks to whites" (p. 27). This view of relationality informs the way we engage with literature on decolonization, and resistance and resilience in this article. It also synthesises well with Freire's (1970) view of student-teachers and teacher-students, where he deliberately seeks to disrupt the hierarchy through people supposedly occupying one role and never the other. Relationality is a central component of the multifaceted ways that scholar and student activists can engage in decolonial, anti-racist, and collective resistance in universities.

To reiterate, one of the central tenets of an intersectional analysis is to challenge and confront the omnipresent racism and white supremacy found both within education and society. Within this realm, we look to a few theorists whose work builds on intersectionality as praxis and resistance, whilst centering critical race theory and critical philosophies of whiteness.

A major characteristic within critical philosophies of whiteness is that there must be a re-articulation and re-conceptualization of whiteness. Through this reframing, resistance comes with a comprehensive understanding for the explicit and implicit ways that unexamined

whiteness reinforces the inherent oppression found within our educational institutions and communities. As is often the case, talking about whiteness tends to focus on the invisibility of the privilege and power in a very surfaced manner. Instead, the aim should be to deeply examine and interrogate whiteness as a pervasive ideology, whilst conceptualizing and problematizing it as more nuanced, structural, and institutional, as opposed to an "individual" problem (Haviland, 2008; McIntyre, 2002; Pollock et. al, 2009).

Additionally, we draw on Matias and Mackey, (2016) who argue for a pedagogization of critical whiteness studies. Building on the self-reflexivity that undergirds critical feminist and critical education theories, a pedagogy of critical whiteness becomes an active framework which "deconstructs the material, physical, emotional, and political power of whiteness. Used in conjunction with other critical theories of race, critical whiteness studies provides a ying to the yang studies of race" (Matias & Mackey, 2016, p. 35). Matias and Mackey further emphasise that a true commitment to racial justice cannot be fully actualized by choosing to ignore how the exertions of whiteness create a violent condition for survival. Thus, by unpacking hegemonic and structural whiteness, therein lies an opportunity to penetrate a wider lens through which to understand how an ideology of whiteness and sustained racial domination permeate educational and societal structures. Perceiving educational and societal structures in this way necessitates a critical engagement with the context of colonization and ongoing colonial realities through neoliberal values (Bargh, 2007). Working to interrupt an ideology of whiteness, in education and more generally, therefore cannot be separated from engaging with decolonization work and movements.

Complicating Decolonization

Decolonial work happening in education around the world is conceptualized in a range of different ways. We enter this part of the discussion by situating how decolonization, resistance, and resilience can be understood in our local neoliberal colonial context. Writing about subversive ontologies for Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand, Penehira et al. (2014) consider resistance to be defined by collectively-driven, substantive actions which proactively stop "further colonizing forces such as the neoliberal agenda" (Penehira et al. 2014, p. 103; Bargh, 2007). In their work, they seek to demarcate how the terms 'resilience' and 'resistance' are distinct, yet can work in tandem to have useful import for conceptualizing Māori ontologies in a colonised society. Noting that Māori world views are obviously not homogenous, Penehira et al. (2014)

posit that in general for indigenous peoples, resistance is understood as visible within the actions of indigenous people who share a desire to be proactive, rather than merely reactive to colonizing legacies (Penehira et al., 2014, pp. 103-104). Resistance (like praxis) is action based, and requires a collective outlook and implication to enable resistant action to affect real change.

For example, alternatives to a colonized status quo are actively incorporated and made tangible in the tireless work done to claim back stolen land and to grow decolonizing movements. It must be noted that decolonization and resistance are not inherently the same thing, and therefore, according to Tuck and Yang (2012), decolonization does not stand in as a metaphor for a broad application of the term resistance. This is vital to note because of the ways in which the term *decolonization* gets routinely misappropriated to serve hegemonic (white, colonial) academic purposes—rather than being used directly in relation to reclaiming stolen lands. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, although it is essential, committing oneself to the work of decolonization is not easy because it necessarily requires the relinquishing of colonial power and privilege for non-indigenous peoples, as well as conversations with other white[5] people that are necessarily confrontational because of this.

Further to this point, the multifaceted ways in which indigenous women in particular are affected by colonization (the stealing or confiscating of land) continues to be marginalized in such conversations. Simmonds (2011) and Hutchings (2005), each writing about mana wāhine (translating approximately to a Māori feminism) and Māori women, contend that colonization and patriarchy are intertwined in their oppression of Māori women. Heterosexist gender roles shape Aotearoa New Zealand's colonial legacy to a larger degree than what is often acknowledged in local critical public discourse about colonization (James & Saville-Smith, 1994).

The redefining of gender roles, and the ways in which gender predominantly organized New Zealand colonial society, served to dually displace Māori women: from their homeland and from their connection to Papatūānuku (earth mother) (Hutchings, 2005). In tikanga Māori understanding of women's wairua (spirit, spiritual ontology) in relation to Papatūānuku, maintaining care of land and its ecological diversity is essential for Māori women as kaitiaki (guardians of the land) where lives and lineages of whakapapa (ancestry, genealogy) and mokopuna (grandchildren, or children of a future generation) are protected, affirmed and cherished through giving and nurturing life via sacred knowledge and practice of growing and preparing Māori food and medicine. In as much, we support Tuck and Yang's (2012) critique of the limits of discourse

around decolonizing the mind because indigenous women continue to be even further disadvantaged in this way. The lack of action and focus on land reclamation implicit in over-emphasising conscientization as all-encompassing radical action that education can offer is a gendered issue, as well as a colonial issue.

Drawing on Hutchings (2005) and Simmonds (2011) mana wāhine literature about the gendered and sexualised component of colonization is helpful for illustrating our argument that deepening our understanding of and commitment to the work of decolonization is key in intersectional feminist praxis. The crossover of these two frameworks provides a rich and nuanced set of conceptual tools for informing liberatory teaching praxis. There are ways in which Tuck and Yang's (2012) rigorous work on defining decolonization can be drawn on for invaluable insights which strengthen our understanding of Penehira et al.'s (2014) distinguishing between resistance and resilience, in order to specify how they are simultaneously referring to different things that are connected.

Resistance and Resilience

A resilient ontology is a powerful ontology, even though it has limits to individual, rather than collective, experience. Notably, resilience has the potential to enable those who can operate within the dominant syntax to take the reins and transform dialogue in their own lives, thereby impacting the lives of those around them (Freire, 1974). Resilience can enable the engagement of these individuals in more collective-focused efforts to resist further threats of colonization. The ways in which groups of indigenous peoples engage with the term differs and is context dependent. Accordingly, it must be noted that these concepts are not homogenously agreed upon by all indigenous peoples, nor all people within one ethnic group. Writing about the usefulness of the term 'resilience' for the Anishinaabe people of Lake Nipigon in Northern Ontario, Canada, McGuire (2010) proposes that resilience is most useful for indigenous peoples when it actively contributes to community strength, a similar view shared by Penehira et al. who describe how it can benefit Māori. McGuire (2010) draws on Durie (2006) to propose that indigenous peoples reclaim the word 'resilience' to work for them: resilience describes a positive lens for self-empowerment and affirmation as an indigenous person, and by extension instilling a determination to "succeed" beyond racist, colonial expectations (McGuire, 2010, p. 121).

Extending on McGuire's (2010) argument that the term does not adequately offer scope for theorizing collective movement and action of indigenous folk, Penehira et al (2014, p. 100) urge scholars' and educa-

tors' use of the word 'resilience' to be meaningful and critical when referring to Māori, because the term still has roots in Eurocentric ideas of survival of the fittest and individualist, capitalist notions of adaptability and stamina (ie: neoliberalism). It is obviously inappropriate to simply insert Māori into such pre-existing frameworks, without interrogating the origins of these and the relationships they have with colonization. This is particularly because definitions and understandings of 'resilience' undoubtedly differ for different indigenous peoples, and to a large degree these conceptualizations of resilience are still not widely known or accepted in colonized societies.

Tuck and Yang (2012) further critique the limits of over-emphasising resilience through the popular discourse in critical education studies around 'decolonizing' the mind, rather than focusing on the fundamentals that decolonizing work must do: join efforts to have all stolen land repatriated. They maintain that Freire's notion of critical consciousness is often all too conveniently taken by academics to stand in for acts of doing, which as Tuck and Yang (2012) point out and Lorde (1984) contends constitutes fundamental conditions for real, lived freedom. Freeing the mind, or conscientization, can only take displaced indigenous people so far when their land remains stolen and the material inequalities related to this land displacement persist.

Conceptualizing decolonization in a critical and specific way also ties into understanding the interrelated yet distinct work taking place locally and internationally, between seeking diversity in academia, as well as moving "beyond" it (Ahmed & Swan, 2006, pp. 97-98). Increasing BIPOC diversity is essential, because the number of Māori and Pasifika students and staff within New Zealand universities are important indicators for how well the institution is progressing in terms of valuing indigenous knowledge and people (McAllister et al., 2019, p. 237). Māori and Pasifika graduate students themselves have and are pushing for diverse faculty and syllabi, and calling on universities to re-think their processes for hiring and supporting BIPOC staff so that the learning space is always already anti-racist and actively geared to critique and resist colonial structures (Funaki & Naepi, 2020; McAllister et al., 2019). McAllister et al. (2019, pp. 243-244) argue that a diverse workplace is not necessarily a decolonized one, and is not in itself a marker of how well the institution has disentangled itself from neoliberal logic which embeds hegemonic whiteness akin to colonialism. If neoliberal frameworks for organizing academic spaces are not themselves unravelled and radically re-thought, then the same fundamental issues will remain.

Critical Consciousness and Educational Relationalities

Arguably, the merging together of intersectionality and educating for critical consciousness is not a linear nor a one-dimensional process. We highlight the importance of thinking deliberately about the content and context specific manner in which these frameworks interconnect. As such, it is helpful to think about the role of Freire's concept of educating for critical consciousness when considering these theories in relation to educational praxis.

Freire (1970) argued for the importance of locating critical consciousness as a set of linguistic tools as they have a foundation within the social and political visions of various revolutionary, intersectional, and critical race thinkers (see for example hooks, 1986; 1994; 2000; Lorde, 1984; Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 1983; Young, 1997; 1990). Importantly, linguistic tools help us to name problems which were previously unnamed, and to develop a moving language for talking about them in the context of the wider institution and society which the classroom is located. Critically, this language must then shape the direction of subsequent action (Lorde, 1984, pp. 36-37). In our teaching, we must seek to create liberatory learning spaces which resist an individualization of education and instead honor an "ontological vocation to become more fully human" (Freire, 1970, p. 47; hooks, 2000).

Additionally, Penehira et al. (2014) note that we must seek to deepen our understandings of resilience as distinct from, yet connected to resistance in order to move away from dichotomising the two terms. We must strengthen how we construct frameworks around the personal and collective so that they may be interpreted more meaningfully for informing the social action that so many students envision and are drawn towards. It is this process that provides a space for students to engage with the dialectics of consciousness.

Au (2012) discusses a dialectical conception of consciousness as "how we are simultaneously with and within the world" (p. 16). It is what intertwines and connects the world and community both inside and outside of our educational communities; "we come to know things vis-à-vis our inseparable relationships with the totality of our environments" (Au, 2012, p. 19). The dialectics of consciousness support the notion that our educational institutions and classroom cultures are simply just a microcosm of society. The interconnectedness between the two spaces is fluid in nature, evolving, and moving together. We are both in the classroom, and in the world, simultaneously.

Additionally, as we think about this dialogue and its relationship to sociological theory, Hays (1994, p. 61) argues that sociologists and

critical scholars should not dichotomise structure and agency in understanding social change, but rather see them as inextricably interlinked. This is imperative not only in being attuned to the complexity of lived experiences of oppression, discrimination and empowerment, but also in framing how we must encourage students to think about the scope of educational and social change. Overemphasising the power of neoliberal individualizing discourses as being equipped to explain every nuance of social agency can mean we risk losing sight of individuals as still connected to and influenced by communitie—albeit in increasingly fragmented, liquid ways (Hays, 1994; Bauman, 2007).

In the context of this discussion, there are also risks of reifying what it means to be oppressed, as well as the ways in which people experience oppression. This is unhelpful because the inherent stagnation of the neoliberal characterization of deficit individuals can take focus away from liberatory work and everyday practice which is already being undertaken by individuals and the communities of which they are a part. Hays (1994, p. 61) maintains that structures are fundamental for facilitating our understanding of individuals, and structurally focused change provides, in her words, "the tools for creative and transformative action, [which] thereby make[s] human freedom possible." In this respect, we can move beyond neoliberal characterizations of "the individual" and instead perceive the student person as a non-universal category, yet also situated in and shaped by wider societal norms, institutions, and as holding membership of various groups. It is our hope that teaching radical frameworks and theory as the building blocks for social change can give both educators and students personal and political tools for transformation.

Intersectionality as Liberatory Praxis

These transformative building blocks are where we see intersectionality playing a crucial role. Understanding intersectionality as praxis (Sandoval, 2000) is to understand a theory which is active, alive, and constantly expanding. Grounding one's thinking and teaching in the works of radical intersectional thinkers such as bell hooks (1994) is integral to transforming students' preconceived ideas around the purpose and usefulness of learning theory and what counts as "T"ruth. hooks' writing is geared toward liberation through education and knowledge creation, which fundamentally has the most significant import beyond the classroom. When learning about feminism, for example, one can look to the expertise of Black and indigenous feminist activists and authors working outside of academia for guidance on where and how

transformation can take place (Davis, 1983; Young, 1998; Lorde, 1984; Simmonds, 2011; Smith, 2012). This is not only necessary for the obvious acknowledgement of one's standpoint and positionalities, but also for students to see and better understand in a more tangible way hooks' (2000) views that critical feminism should reach and impact our communities outside of academic spaces:

> Literature that helps inform masses of people, that helps individuals understand feminist thinking and feminist politics, needs to be written in a range of styles and formats. We need work that is essentially geared towards youth culture. No one produces this work in academic settings. Without abandoning women's studies programs which are already at risk in universities...we need feminist studies that are community-based. Imagine a mass-based feminist movement where folks go door to door passing out literature, taking the time...to explain to people what feminism is all about. (hooks, 2000, p. 23)

Student engagement with this work is vital for transformative envisioning of this theory to reckon with the embedded hegemonies in the everyday spaces which each student navigates in differing, yet somewhat similar ways.

Intersectional theory is necessarily equipped to be liberatory beyond the confines of the classroom, because it pushes back on the homogenizing and hierarchical ways that students can be taught to conceptualize epistemologies in the neoliberal university for the sake of valuing individual self-improvement, efficiency, job market viability and quantifiability (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Labaree, 1997). Further, the most meaningful theory is rooted in making sense of experience in its' uniqueness of character yet likeness in the face of collective marginalization (hooks, 1994, p. 70; Davis, 2007). Theory as drawing from lived experience in this way is socially, politically, and materially useful for shaping transformative action, as well as for being able to recognize radical practise that's already happening.

Additionally, Freire (1970; 1974) notes that educating for critical consciousness enables a process of the learner becoming more fully human to expand the role they perceive education playing in their lives. If we want to conceive of education as liberatory and meaningful beyond the confines of academic boundaries, then embracing cognitive dissonance is essential. Cognitive dissonance within this discussion refers to the learning of something that goes against what has always been deemed or thought of as "T"ruth (Storch & Storch, 2003). For example, learning about the insidious nature of whiteness as an ideology produces a cognitive state of internal conflict, thus a dissonance in one's understanding of the world.

Freire further argues for the importance of developing a liberatory praxis, which connecting to embracing cognitive dissonance, involves a continuous process of unlearning and relearning for educators and students. It is helpful to think about this in terms of Freire's notion of teacher-students and student-teachers, whereby through dialogue, the traditional distinction between who teaches and who is taught is blurred (Freire, 1970, p. 53). It is possible to imagine a teacher-student relationship where both simultaneously teach and are taught, consolidating Freire's (1970, pp. 53-54) premise that nobody is self-taught, and that people teach each other. Breaking down traditional conceptions of authority in this way, this unlearning and relearning is pertinent to realizing the term 'liberatory' in action. 'Liberatory' could also be understood as emancipatory teaching in this respect, underpinned by a continuously deepening commitment to anti-oppression in its many facets and conceptualizations.

Finally, liberatory praxis is collaborative. This is visible not merely as an end goal, but as a process which requires the engagement and commitment of all students and teachers, taking into account Freire's (1970, pp. 53-54) concept of the ever-shifting capacity and simultaneity of these roles within each person. It necessarily involves re-imagining learning spaces as having radical orientation. Liberatory learning can be conceptualized as taking place within spaces which, through dialogue, can in some way resist the constraints of hegemonic institutional boundaries and therefore have the potential for educating for critical consciousness (Penehira et al., 2014; Freire, 1974). The co-construction of these re-imagined learning spaces with students involves a liberatory praxis because there must be a necessary recognition of the ways in which the neoliberal university both legitimizes and hides its oppression of marginalised groups by generating colonial knowledge around incompetent or destitute individuals as default and normal (Bargh, 2007; Collins, 2000; de Saxe, 2019, p. 23). To critically interrogate the source of these supposedly foundational, taken for granted forms of knowledge, and to question the very definitions of common sense that they produce, is by extension, necessarily disruptive of the status quo.

Conclusion

It is this active engagement (often discomforted) with the aforementioned critical content, that we argue has the potential to reframe the ways in which we move about with and within the world. We draw on the work of Apple and Buras (2006) who state, "Consciousness of relations of subordination and domination is the first step in moving toward

the critical sensibility needed to build counterhegemonic movements in education and elsewhere" (p. 282). There is an intimate interconnectivity between education, dialectics, and the cognitive dissonance that often occurs when engaging with content that asks one to challenge a 'common sense' understanding of the world in which we live. It is precisely through a domain of praxis that we are asked to interweave the theoretical and critical content with the resistance work that aims to rupture an ideology of whiteness, white supremacy, and colonization.

The process of sparking this dialogue, even with the difficulties when teaching a wide range of students, is integral to a collaborative co-construction of a radical learning space. This praxis not only enables the formation of a learning community with lasting impact that helps to nurture and stimulate student-teachers (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970) through their wider university experience and after graduating, but also provide integral foundations for doing activist work which challenges oppressive systems in various forms. The ways in which these challenges take hold are numerous, but what we focus on—in partially addressing dichotomies that often can frame theoretical conversations in the university classroom—is how we conceptualize spaces as having both resilient and resistant potential (Penehira et al., 2014).

Finally, we must proactively engage with this work with an open mind and heart if we are to aim towards authentic transformation. Importantly, this is not a prescription for any specific pedagogy for liberation. Instead, drawing on the nuanced tenets of intersectionality, decolonization, and educating for critical consciousness, we are asked to be open to changing and challenging our minds, bodies, and senses of being. With this inherently political project of reimagining and complicating praxis and resistance, we must take ownership of our political voices, engage in actions and discourses of solidarity, and strive for social change.

Notes

[1] We use the term 'university' broadly to describe higher education settings. Our intention is not to homogenize universities, but to critique universities that fail to interrupt and interrogate whiteness and white supremacy. As such, we recognize and build on HBCUs and TWIs that challenge whiteness, neoliberalism, and white supremacy within their universities.

[2] We follow Burke's (2017) definition of ideology as being always grounded in material realities, embedded in institutions and concrete social practices that give them meaning and produce real social outcomes… ideologies are racist to the degree that they maintain a "racialized social system."

[3] Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand, which we prefer to use both in this work and in general parlance. This is consistent with our focus on decoloniality as a part of intersectional feminism in education here.

[4] Racial standpoint often exists in opposition to dominant cultural systems such as whiteness as an ideology, white supremacy, and hegemonic epistemologies (Kinefuchi & Orbe, 2008).

[5] We use the term "white" to denote a racial identity, while "whiteness" refers to an ideology that stratifies humans and embodies racial power (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

References

Ahmed, S., & Swan, E. (2006). Doing diversity. *Policy Futures in Education, 4*(2), 96-100.

Apple, M. W., & Buras, K. (2006). *The subaltern speak: Curriculum, power, and educational struggles*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Au, W. (2012). *Critical curriculum studies: Education, consciousness and the politics of knowing*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bargh, M. (2007). *Resistance: An indigenous response to neoliberalism*. Wellington, New Zealand: Huia.

Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). "New racism," color-blind racism, and the future. In A. W. Doane and E. Boniall-Silva (eds.), *White out: The continuing significance of racism*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brunsma, D. L, Brown, E. S., & Placier, P. (2012). Teaching race at historically white colleges and Universities: Identifying and dismantling the walls of whiteness. *Critical Sociology, 39*(5), 717-738.

Burke M. A. (2017). Colorblind racism: Identities, ideologies, and shifting subjectivities. *Sociological Perspectives, 60*(5), 857-865

Coaston, J. (2019, May 28). The intersectionality wars. *Vox*. https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination

Collins, P., & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalising the intersections of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, Feminist theory and antiracist oolitics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1*(8), 139-167.

Darder, A. (2012). Neoliberalism in the academic borderlands: An on-going struggle for wquality and human rights. *Educational Studies, 48*(5), 412-426.

Davies, B., & Bansel, P. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 20*(3), 247-259.

Davis, A. (1983). *Women, race, & class*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Davis, K. (2007). *The making of our bodies ourselves: How feminism travels across borders*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

de Saxe. J. G. (2018). Resistance as a methodology: A counterhegemonic movement for praxis in education. In J. G. de Saxe and T. Y. Gourd (Eds), *Radical educators rearticulating education and social change: Teacher agency and resistance, early 20th Century to the present*. New York, NY: Routledge.

de Saxe, J. G. (2019). Complicating resistance: Intersectionality, liberation, and democracy. In G. Yancy (Ed.), *Educating for critical consciousness in the*

age of Trump. New York, NY: Routledge.
Durie, M. (2006). *Indigenous resilience: From disease to disadvantage to the realization of potential*. Unpublished paper.
Evans, E. (2016). Intersectionality as feminist praxis in the UK. *Women's Studies International Forum, 59*, 67-75.
Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
Freire, P. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York. NY: Seabury Press.
Funaki, H., & Naepi, S. (2020, October). Keynote—Talanoa. In L. Macdonald (Chair), How can more of our professors be Māori or Pasifika? An zction oriented workshop. Symposium conducted at the Waharoa of Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington New Zealand.
Giroux, H. (2001). *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
Giroux, H. (2012). *Disposable youth: Racialized memories and the culture of cruelty*. New York. NY: Routledge.
Haviland, V. S. (2008). "Things get glossed over": Rearticulating the silencing power of whiteness in education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(1), 40-54.
Hays, S. (1994). Structure and agency and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory, 12*(1), 57-72.
hooks, b. (1986). Sisterhood: Political solidarity between women. *Feminist Review, 23*(1), 125-138.
hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practise of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
Hutchings, J. (2005). Mana wahine me te raweke ira: Māori feminist thought and genetic modification. *Women's Studies Journal, 19*(1), 47-65.
James, K. & Saville-Smith, B. (1994). *Gender, culture & power*. Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.
Kincheloe, J. K., & Steinberg, S. R. (2008). Indigenous knowledges in education: Complexities, dangers, and profound benefits. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds), *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
Kinefuchi, E., & Orbe, M. P. (2008). Situating oneself in racialized world: Understanding student reactions to Crash through standpoint theory and context-positionality frame. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 1*(1), 70-90.
Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal, 34*, 39-81.
Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
Matias, C. E. & Mackey, J. (2016). Breakin' down whiteness in antiracist teaching: Introducing critical whiteness pedagogy. *Urban Review, 48*, 32-50.
McAllister, T. G., Kidman, J., Rowley, O., & Theodore, R. F. (2019). Why isn't my Professor Māori? A snapshot of the academic workforce in New Zealand universities. *MAI Journal, 8*(2), 235-249.

McGuire, P. (2010). Exploring resilience and indigenous ways of knowing. *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health, 8*(2), 117–131.

McIntyre, A. (2002). Exploring whiteness and multicultural education with prospective teachers. *Curriculum Inquiry, 32*(1), 32-49.

Penehira, M., Green, A., Smith, L. T., & Aspin, C. (2014). Māori and indigenous Views on R & R. *Mai Journal, 3*(2), 96-110.

Picower, B., & Mayorga, E. (2015). *What's race got to do with it? How current school reform policy maintains racial and economic inequality*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Pollock, M., Deckman, S., Mira, M. & Shalaby, C. (2009). "But what can I do?": Three necessary tensions in teaching teachers about race. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(3), 211-224.

Sandoval, C. (2000). *Methodology of the oppressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Simmonds, N. (2011). Mana wahine: Decolonising politics. *Women's Studies Journal, 25*(2), 11-25.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonising methodologies* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Zed Books.

Silverstein, J. (2017). Intersectionality, resistance, and history-making: A conversation between Carolyn D'Cruz, Ruth DeSouza, Samia Khatun, and Crystal McKinnon. *Lilith; A Feminist History Journal, 23*, 15-22.

Storch, E. A. & Storch, J. B (2003). Academic dishonesty and attitudes towards academic dishonest acts: Support for cognitive dissonance theory. *Psychological Reports, 92*, 174-176.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity Education & Society, 1*(1), 1-40.

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Young, I. M. (1997). *Intersecting voices: Dilemmas of gender, political philosophy, and policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Toward an Affective Critique of Educational Meritocracy

Charles Bingham
Simon Fraser University
Liz Jackson
University of Hong Kong

Abstract

This article investigates the affective structure of meritocracy in education. An analysis of meritocracy is carried out in terms of the feelings that surround academic success and failure as it is produced in educational settings. The article first offers a review of various educational perspectives on meritocracy including the Marxist critique highlighting 'legitimation.' Next, the limitations of these perspectives on merit is discussed. Thereafter, the affective theorizing of Sarah Ahmed is used in order to describe ways in which teachers and students might challenge meritocracy through transgressive, 'alien' performances of affect. Finally, an affective critique of educational meritocracy is provided in order to create empowering educational opportunities for both teachers and students.

Keywords: Meritocracy; Education; Affect; Feminism; Equity; Legitimation.

Introduction

Educational theorists have long critiqued the workings of meritocracy in schools and universities, and from various research perspectives. Yet, the merit structure of schools and universities has not diminished and has in fact flourished (Alon & Tienda, 2007, p.487; Milner, 2010, p. 118; Biesta, 2017, p. 316). Within such a context, it is helpful first to understand the nature of such critiques and then to ask: Have critiques of meritocracy been sequestered to academic research? Are such

critiques meant to engage with educational institutions? What can be done to bridge the gap between academic critiques of meritocracy, on the one hand and, on the other, ways that students and teachers might change their engagement with meritocratic practices? In this paper, we survey the landscape of educational research on meritocracy and we add to this landscape an affective dimension. We engage the way that feelings structure how students and teachers encounter merit ideology. By looking at affect, we offer a tangible means to counter detrimental aspects of meritocracy.

To set the stage for a consideration of affect and merit, consider the following scenario: Most North Americans have probably read bumper stickers saying something like this: *Proud Parent of an Honor Student at Westlake High School*. Some have read bumper stickers that answer with: *My Kid Kicked Your Honor Student's Ass*. To put these slogans in terms of merit, the former is a celebration of those who succeed in a meritocratic system, while the latter can be construed as a rejection or criticism of the same structure. But more than celebration and criticism of educational merit, one can also read in these phrases subtle statements about affect, a matter that is often overlooked in discussions of merit. The first statement is happy and proud while the second statement is angry to the point of violence. We take the affective sentiments of these bumper stickers—affect about merit—more seriously than might usually be done and ask the following question. What does affect have to do with merit in education?

The Problem of Merit and Its Educational Iterations

Meritocracy remains somewhat of an elephant in the living room in current educational discourse. This is to say, while most progressive, critical educators would no doubt condemn the inequities of meritocracy in schools and universities, the ideal of meritocracy seems to have a unique staying power (Cochran-Smith, 1995, p. 504; Bartolomé, 2007, p. 102; Milner, 2010, p. 123). So while critical educators carry on important practical and theoretical work to promote and sustain equity in education, one of the primary methods by which inequitable relations are sustained in education—namely meritocracy—is rarely taken to task.

We are reminded here of well-intentioned, critically-minded university colleagues who, while carrying out strong theoretical and practical work in social justice education, nevertheless fall back on a discourse of merit when talking about their own graduate students. We have repeatedly witnessed social-justice oriented colleagues who want to attract the "best and brightest" graduate students to their programs. Ironically, the

metric by which these "best and brightest" are gauged too often turns out to be a meritocratic metric. Thus even early scholars who are canvassed to ameliorate the inequities of meritocracy are judged by merit. Indeed, day-to-day exigencies of teaching in schools and universities are so deeply ensconced in meritocratic paradigms that it is sometimes difficult to imagine a way out. For example, teachers and professors are required to give grades even though the very requirement to give grades is loathsome to many critically minded educators. In our experience, some critical educators inflate grades as an act of resistance to meritocracy. Some critical educators advocate for non-competitive forms of education. Some critical educators try to work within a meritocratic system to make meritocracy more equitable. In all cases, the standard of meritocracy remains.

To underscore this ambivalent position of educators vis-à-vis meritocracy, one can look to the difference between sociological critiques of meritocracy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the critiques offered by sociologists of education. Sociologists such as Stephen McNamee and Robert Miller have long debunked the notion that any given society *can* or *should* function as a meritocracy (2004). Speaking from an American context about meritocracy, McNamee and Miller note (2004) that "Americans not only tend to think that is how the system should work, but most Americans also think that is how the system does work." The work of such sociologists aims to challenge the validity of commonly held assertions with regard to merit and meritocracy. Interestingly, sociologists consider educational institutions as one of the *barriers* to meritocracy. As McNamee and Miller put it, "There are a variety of social forces that tend to suppress, neutralize, or even negate the effects of merit in the race to get ahead" (2004). And education institutions are considered one of these 'nonmerit' forces.

Educational sociologists, on the other hand, tend to have what might be called an "ameliorative critique." Educational scholars validate meritocracy by working to ameliorate the circumstances of those who are not equally served by such a system. They tend to take the optimistic view that merit can be made better. As an example, consider Jonothan Kozol's important work exposing impoverished schools in the United States (2012). Kozol clearly demonstrates the need to restructure educational funding so that children from impoverished circumstances are afforded their constitutional right to equal protection under the law in the form of publicly funded education. The work of Kozol is cited by sociologists as proof that education is a nonmerit aspect of society (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Scholars of education, in contrast, interpret such work as proof that funding allotments must be redistributed in order for schools to ap-

proach the ideals of a meritocratic system (Ognibene, 2012). Educational scholars indeed validate meritocracy itself by working to ameliorate the circumstances of those who are not equitably served by such a system. They tend to take the optimistic view that merit can be made better. Educational sociologists tend to see meritocracy in education as a viable paradigm, albeit a thwarted one.

The Marxist Challenge to Meritocracy

One stark exception to the trend of ignoring the negative impacts of meritocratic ideology in educational sociology is the research of Bowles and Gintis, and the broader tradition of "reproduction theory" which is in line with Bowles and Gintis' analysis (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; Ginsburg, 1986). For the purposes of the present article, Bowles and Gintis provide the most in-depth and relevant analysis of meritocracy itself, while housed within the umbrella term of reproduction. Not only is meritocracy insightfully and accurately analyzed as an ideology in their work, but also, statistical data is incorporated to show that the meritocratic ideal does not, in reality, offer the pathways that it purports to offer. Meritocracy following this research can be best understood as an enactment of legitimation carried out by specific ideological practices.

Legitimation

Legitimation concerns the ways in which meritocracy covers up a number of societal inequalities, creating the idea that inequalities are both to be expected and are part of a natural order: "An efficient and impersonal [educational] bureaucracy, so the story goes, assesses the individual purely in terms of his or her expected contribution to production," note Bowles and Gintis (1976, p.105). As students progress through school, meritocracy as a system offers itself up as an efficient way to cull those who work hard and learn a lot from those who do not work as hard or learn so much. The apparent efficiency derives from large schools and large classrooms, and from bureaucratic systems that assign hierarchical roles to these variously achieving students. These roles purport to link with "an ostensibly meritocratic mechanism for assigning individuals to unequal economic positions after graduation" (Bowles & Gintis 1976, p. 103). Through legitimation, students, and adults including the families of students, rationalize that they got what they got because they either did or did not work hard enough. Further, since meritocracy and its results are based on individual results, the idea that social change might come from collectives—indeed must necessarily

come from collectives—is occluded. Legitimation fosters the "generalized consciousness among individuals which prevent the formation of the social bonds and critical understanding whereby existing social conditions might be transformed" (1976, p. 108).

In contrast to the messages promoted by legitimation, Bowles and Gintis prove that meritocratic practices do not serve the interests of economy *per se*, nor do they serve the interests of individuals (Rosenberg, 2003). In longitudinal studies extending over 20 years, it is shown that hierarchical attainment in schools and universities has very little effect on economic attainment compared to the simple act of attending school: "Only a minor portion of the substantial statistical association between schooling and economic success can be accounted for by the school's role in producing or screening cognitive skills" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 110). More, the intellectual skills needed for most workforce occupations are much less rigorous than the competitive regimes fostered in schools. Legitimation therefore covers up something else, in addition to insinuating that social conditions are natural and immutable. It covers, or hides, the fact that schools and universities create circumstances whereby elites benefit from a competitive oversupply of skilled-enough workers (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 114).

An Ideology of Practice

Bowles and Gintis further describe meritocracy as a complex ideology of practice (Rosenberg, 2003). In contrast to a number of social justice minded educators who are critical of the "myth" of ideology (McNamee & Miller, 2004), meritocracy is construed as a practice with lived consequences in this work: "The day-to-day contact of parents and children with the competitive, cognitively oriented school environment" provides a lived orientation to, a belief in, meritocracy (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 106). People attend school for many years. Such a long apprenticeship heightens "the apparent objectivity and achievement orientation of the stratification system" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 106). And educational attainment is "dependent not only on ability but also on motivation, drive to achieve, perseverance, and sacrifice," thus linking positive personal habits with an ideology that is not just a myth (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 106). Educational meritocracy "is largely symbolic," but it is not symbolic in the sense of being a false myth. It is symbolic in the sense that a symbol provides the basis for rituals and practices (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 103). Successes and failures alike are part of this symbol system, with the former affording evidence that meritocracy benefits the individual, and the latter proving that other individuals fail at the same enterprise.

We favor this element of practice in Bowles and Gintis's research, because it provides concrete data in support of the argument we make in the next section with regard to affect and meritocracy. Specifically, we argue that habits based in ideological practice and affect are lived, practiced elements of educational meritocracy. As such, it is not enough to know that meritocracy is wrong and that it is a myth. One must also be able act on such knowledge in specific ways, in relation to ideological and affective systems, if meritocracy is to be subject to social change. Aligned with this idea is meritocracy's status as an ideology. As Bowles and Gintis relate, "Ideologies and structures which serve to hide and preserve one form of injustice often provide the basis of an assault on another. The ideology of equal educational opportunity and meritocracy is precisely such a contradictory mechanism" (1976, p. 103).

In historically democratic countries equal educational opportunity is construed as a good. Ironically, this particular good is fervently accessed through a system—meritocracy—that serves as a form of injustice. This is what we observed above, noting instances when even early scholars who are canvassed to ameliorate the inequities of meritocracy are judged by merit. Meritocracy is an ideology insofar as it provides a common sense understanding, a set of common sense practices, that actually preclude their own interrogation. Meritocracy is a myth only insofar as it explains something erroneously. It is an ideology of practice, insofar as it hides its own explanation under a cloak of common sense. In the next section, we consider meritocracy as operating within the circulation of affect.

Affect and Its Relation to Meritocracy

In contrast to the above educational accounts of meritocracy, affective relations to meritocracy have been heretofore neglected in educational theory. We thus insert the lens of affect. This is with an understanding that affect informs the extended apprenticeship that students undergo in meritocracy, and with an understanding that affect is not the only, nor perhaps even the primary, place to intervene during the apprenticeship. Drawing on the work of Sara Ahmed, as well as that of Megan Boler, Herbert Kohl and others, we explore how affective relations structure and reinforce educational merit (Ahmed, 2004, p. 101; Boler, 1999; Kohl, 1992). While it is not our intention to blame educators for validating an unjust educational and social system (Hytten, 2017), our analysis calls for a deeper appreciation of affective relations within classrooms as distinctive, significant educational and sociological phenomena.

Examining feelings and affect, we find not an easy way to abandon the discourse of meritocracy in education, nor an easy solution to the

amelioration of non-merit inequities. Rather, by exploring affect we aim to gain some insight into how merit operates at the level of intersubjectivity to bind students, teachers, and academics to its powerful paradigm. How do affective relations of individuals sustain and reinforce educational optimism and support for meritocracy in schools and universities where there is abundant evidence of inequitable opportunity? How does meritocracy function through affective education—that is, through the way expectations around student affect reverberate, as instructors give subtle and unsubtle lessons about achievement and excellence in meritocracy?

To approach meritocracy from an affective perspective, it is useful to first offer a relational theory of affect. As scholars who theorize affect note, we feel emotions not simply "inside" ourselves as individuals, but we develop and experience them in relations to others in the world (Wetherell, 2012). That is, the experience of emotional feelings involves affective movement between a person and another person or object. This view contrasts with what Sara Ahmed calls the "dumb view" of emotions, where emotions are seen as being functional responses of individuals to experiences or events (Ahmed, 2004, p. 7). As Ahmed notes, in the dumb view if a child sees a bear she will feel fear, which tells her to run. She argues there is more to this story, however. It is not that the bear is essentially fearsome but it "is a matter of how child and bear come into contact…shaped by past histories of contact… Another child, another bear, and we might even have another story" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 7). Rather than simple cause and effect, emotions are shaped by experiences of individuals in particular relations. One might be happy to see a rarely spotted bear in a national park on the roadside from the safety of a moving vehicle, but less happy to see that same bear follow her into her tent that night.

Because particular relations of individuals with historical and culturally framed subject positions shape emotional experiences, Megan Boler argues that power relations impact how people feel (1999). In *Feeling Power*, she elaborates how schooling involves teaching of emotional self-discipline:

> For example, children are increasingly taught not to express anger, not to question authority, and not to resist those who have power. These rules are taught through differing forms of emotional discipline…depending on their gendered, raced, social class standing. (Boler, 1999, p. 32; see also Boler, 2013)

Psychological work on "emotional intelligence" in the 1990s has fueled a conflict resolution discourse particularly in schools serving disadvantaged

youth, that, Boler argues, individualizes and dumbs down understanding of how affect circulates dynamically. The discourse of emotional intelligence, as just one example of emotional theory in positive psychology, obscures important questions about power relations in education, and why some schoolchildren might want to express some (resistant) emotions deemed undesirable by their teachers (Boler, 1999).

Different kinds of emotional performances are often required by students in school settings. Today many schools have a version of what might be called an "emotional curriculum," where an attitude of teamwork, friendliness, caring, sympathetic behavior, acceptance of failure without anger or sadness, positivity and optimism, and impulse control are encouraged, monitored, and positively recognized by teachers. Yet as Barbara Applebaum points out in examining Judith Butler's work on performativity, within relations, performances of self are not voluntarily and autonomously authored, but are rather shaped and restricted by social norms and conventions (Applebaum, 2005). Whether or not we can uncover a "transcendental, prediscursive subject," a child typically learns very quickly how to perform affectively as a student (or as a daughter or son, etc.), and learns as well how to respond emotionally to events and interactions that touch the surface of himself or herself, based on reactions by others to his or her expressions (Applebaum, 2005, p. 152). The child learns how and what to feel within specific identities and relations.

Meritocratic discourse is used in schools to encourage students to excel academically and to excel socially. For example, students receive awards for good citizenship, or for being the most caring student, or the friendliest student. Such discourse is also used to remind those who don't succeed to act in deference to those who do. Teachers who employ this discourse in this common way expect that students affectively perform acceptance if not enthusiasm in events that are designed to reflect meritocracy, such as when students receive grades, awards, or other forms of recognition. Honor students should feel proud of their achievements. They should not cry or feel ashamed, but they should smile and in others ways indicate that they feel happy and good to be recognized as hard working, talented, responsible, etc., by peers and their teacher. (And as our bumper sticker suggests, the honor student's parents should feel equally happy and proud.)

The other students who stand beside those recognized are also expected to accept the meritocracy of their school or classroom community. They should neither cry, sulk, and show angry feelings, nor demonstrate a kind of carefree nonchalance or elation as their achievements are deemed unexceptional or worse. Any of these expressions could be policed by a well-meaning teacher as detrimental to sustaining the culturally

and socially appropriate affective atmosphere of the occasion. After a grueling football game, all players must shake hands across teams, the losers treading a line between honoring the significance of the winners' victory, on the one hand, and, on the other, feeling angry and resentful by rehashing close calls and chance plays.

The Affect Alien

The bully who beats up the honor student, as in the bumper sticker, takes on the role of what Ahmed calls an "affect alien" in an educational environment that cultivates meritocratic discourse and its anticipated affective relations (2010, p. 167). The affect alien is a person who does not feel in an easy or natural way the feelings that are normally attributed to objects or events. The sad bride on her wedding day, or the bride who even feels a bit uneasy, that she doesn't feel as happy as it seems she should, and Ahmed's more oft-cited "feminist killjoy," are affect aliens. The feminist killjoy, for example, is an affect alien insofar as she does not affectively acquiesce to happiness in the face of sexist remarks or sexist actions. Affect aliens do not feel the way that others expect them to feel (or how they perceive they ought to feel). And this mis-match risks disturbing others. It risks emotionally upsetting others.

When it comes to educational meritocracy, the affect alien is the student who feels an uncanny sense of loss even as she is seen broadly as earning positive recognition. Or it is the successful scholar who is hurt because scholarship is not fulfilling to him or her. It is the unexceptional or failing student who mocks another's award out of rage, jealously, envy, self-pity or ambivalence, or who shows a complete lack of interest. As Ahmed points out, the affect alien threatens the mood and sense of affective and ideological security of the group and thus appears to others as a "sore point" of the community. As she puts it, it is not easy to be the affect alien, for "to become conscious of alienation is to become conscious of how one's being has been stolen…alienation is already, as it were, in the world" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 167). Yet Ahmed also sees this as the start of what she calls revolutionary consciousness, a transition that occurs as one moves from "false consciousness [that] sustains an affective situation" to "feeling at odds with the world, or feeling that the world is odd" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 168).

Not-Learning and the Affect Alien Student

A timeless example of the affect alien student can be found in the work of Herbert Kohl (1992). As Kohl convincingly argues, there are myriad intelligent, capable students who, for various reasons, choose not

to participate in the requirements laid out by educational institutions. They "act out" instead. Kohl puts it this way: "I have encountered willed not-learning throughout my 30 years of teaching, and believe that such not-learning is often and disastrously mistaken for failure to learn or the inability to learn" (1992). His experience with those who act out, who "not-learn," leads Kohl to the accurate assessment that a refusal to learn is not necessarily connected to an inability to learn. We have had the same experience after many years of teaching in public schools. It is not unreasonable to say that most students who "not-learn" have social reasons for not doing so—rather than intellectual reasons for not being able to do so. These students, while perhaps incomprehensible to an educational institution believing that everyone "of course" desires to learn, are acting in rational, agentive ways (Garner, 1998, p.228).

For Kohl, the student who not-learns is an individual who senses, and defies, the biases and inequities of educational institutions that continue to underserve groups of students because of endemic racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. As Kohl puts it,

> not-learning was a strategy that made it possible for them to function on the margins of society without falling into madness or total despair. It helped them to build a small safe world in which their feelings of being rejected by family and society could be softened. Not-learning played a positive role and enabled them to take control of their lives and get through difficult times. (1992)

We would like to argue here that it is possible, and essential, to augment Kohl's understanding of the not-learner to include a social model of affect. For Kohl, the not-learner is an individual who responds to learning in a negative way. As Kohl points out, many students feel that their dignity is threatened in institutions such as schools that are classist, racist, sexist, and homophobic. As Kohl notes with regard to student dignity, the concept of not-learning, "helped me understand the essential role will and free choice play in learning and taught me the importance of considering people's stand towards learning in the larger context of choices they make as they create lives and identities for themselves" (1992).

With Ahmed's social model of affect in mind, we must not simply question the individual's affective response, according to the "dumb view," that people have feelings and react to certain events in light of those feelings. Instead, we must ask whether such feelings aren't primarily lodged in the social circumstances that set precedent for them. The system we are particularly interested in is meritocracy. This system, as noted above, has been critiqued repeatedly by social scientists who point out the extent to which meritocracy continues to fail because of factors

such as classism, sexism, homophobia, racism, and related material inequities. At the same time, observations such as Kohl's remind us that individual students often perform affective responses to repudiate the workings of merit. It is possible, then, to identify an affective register for merit that implies a deeper critique than educational solutions based on affirmative action and school funding (for example). Student actions such as not-learning are not only a phenomenon to be understood in order to help students learn. They are as well an "affect alien" phenomena. They signal dynamic inter-subjective relations within meritocratic regimes. They are affective articulations as to how students can be agentive in the world.

Those Who Act Out, and Those Who Experience Shame

There is a dual structure of affect situated within educational regimes of meritocracy. On the one hand, there are students (and parents) who purport to be happy and cheerful with the results of meritocracy. This includes the proud parents of an honor student and the honor student herself or himself. Then there are others whom meritocracy does not benefit in such a direct way. These educational recipients, too, can be expected to act in ways that are deemed affectively appropriate. Indeed, the meritocracy myth in educational institutions is shored up by "losers" as well as "winners." When losers act happy for winners—for example when all students are asked to show school pride even when not all students benefit from goods allotted at school—it is loser affect just as much as winner affect that upholds the guise of fairness. Or, looking to a non-educational example: The success of a billionaire US president from 2016 to 2020 drew largely on a base of supporters who were not as "successful" as the president, but who, nevertheless, leant cheerful support to his success. Thus the supporters of a billionaire president were more important than the cheers of merit-successful individuals to solidify the misplaced notion that anyone can become rich with enough hard work.

In contrast to those who acquiesce to normative affective expectations associated with the ideal of meritocracy, the affect alien student such as Kohl's not-learner, or the kid who beats up an honor student—those who are affectively deviant with regard to meritocracy—offer a heuristic for critique of meritocracy. Importantly, this critique is neither the dismissive theoretical stance of the general sociologist nor is it the idealistic ameliorative recommendation offered by the sociologist of education. As decades of academic research offer few solutions to rectify educational meritocracy, students continue to act out in ways that, as Kohl astutely points out, foster agency and dignity.

There is, of course, more to meritocratic affect than the tidiness of losers who acquiesce versus losers who act out. While Kohl's analysis highlights the acting out of those who "not-learn," an affective analysis of merit also sheds light on the affect alien who succeeds in a meritocratic system. Richard Rodriguez in his autobiography, Hunger of Memory, describes the shame he experienced being the recipient of an affirmative action scholarship (1983). Describing himself as what he calls a "scholarship boy," Rodriguez notes:

> To many persons around him [the scholarship boy], he appears too much an academic. There may be some things about him that recall his beginnings—his shabby clothes; his persistent poverty; or his dark skin… but they only make clear how far he has moved from his past. (1983, p. 65)

In his trenchant autobiography, Rodriguez identifies himself as an affect alien who has a third perspective on the happy/angry binary resulting from merit. Rodriguez is successful yet experiences shame nevertheless.

Ahmed notes that shame requires a negative kind of recognition of oneself in relation to another "whose view 'matters' to me" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 105). Regret, which Ahmed describes as a kind of polite shame, a disappointment regarding the past that deemphasizes any personal responsibility, is typically insufficient. Shame requires that one see oneself in a negative light in relation to others, that one take personal responsibility for the shameful feeling and its associated interpersonal or social relation or event (what might normally be called its "cause"). Shame thus circulates to discourage and punish particular behaviors. A teacher may reasonably teach or expect students to express or feel shame if they cheated or were deceptive in a harmful way, for example.

In Rodriguez's case, however, shame derives from positive recognition deriving from a legitimate program that ostensibly aims to rectify the social inequity of meritocracy. Importantly, here, the affective circumstances for shame describe once again a blind spot in both the sociologist's wholesale condemnation and the educationalist's optimism. Reconsider Ahmed's bear: Let meritocracy be the bear. It is possible to be disturbed by the bear and to act out in order to drive the bear away. That is what a not-learner does. It is also possible to enjoy the bear because one feels as if the bear is safe and exists for the benefit of the onlooker. That is what the honor student and his or her parents do. It is further possible to realize that the bear is safe and exists for the benefit of the onlooker, but also feel shame because of the way an institution such as a zoo actually separates human beings from nature rather than bringing them closer to nature.

All of these analogies are strained of course. But the point is not that a bear is like merit. It is rather that meritocracy elicits various affective positions. The educationalist especially can learn much from Rodriguez's feelings of shame and misrecognition. Namely, even supposed remedies like affirmative action and socially cognizant scholarships entail complex affective resonances given the historical exclusivity of institutions that have aspired to give reward based on merit. As Ahmed notes, blind happiness often leads to a lack of criticality: "to see happily is not to see violence, asymmetry, or force"—that something historically mournful remains in the present, despite justified steps to ameliorate deep inequities (2010, p. 132).

Conclusion: The Alien in Ourselves

In this paper we have argued that since meritocracy is alive and well in education, critically minded educators have a precarious relation to merit. Working in an educational institution puts one in a position to both loathe and kowtow to educational meritocracy. Loathe, because, as sociologists rightly point out, meritocracy is not equitably viable nor *will it likely ever be* equitably viable. Kowtow, because schools and universities are by and large governed by policies that reinforce and indeed celebrate merit. It is important as a conclusion to acknowledge the important work in education that has already been done around merit and the problems with merit. Especially in the research on teacher education, merit has been problematized to a great extent. A number of teacher education researchers such as Richard Milner (2010), Lilian Bartolomé (2007), Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1995). And social-justice oriented researchers have pointed out important links between affect and social-justice teaching more broadly (Schutz and Zembylas, 2009).

This paper has offered an analysis of affect and meritocracy, particularizing the broader scope of research on affect in social-justice education. One must acknowledge that whatever this paper contributes will certainly not stop the ongoing inequity of meritocracy. This is precisely because merit has a steadfast quality that derives from its attendant affect. Students, parents, social-justice minded educators—all will continue to struggle with the affective expectations of merit until such a time when education is universally embraced as a non-competitive endeavor. This paper will thus not solve the problem of merit in education. It is rather an injunction for educators to acknowledge and to critically respond to the role affect plays in merit.

One possible implication of our analysis might be that educators should *do something* with enhanced awareness of how affect structures

experiences of meritocracy in the classroom. We should, as educators, support rather than reject affect aliens in our midst. Furthermore, we should reject merit as a structuring principle of affective relations in schools and universities. In other words, we should reject discourses that demand the happiness of all for the benefit of the few who excel at educational meritocracy. More, educators might encourage in educational spaces that there is never one right way for their students to feel in relation to merit. From happiness to pride to shame to anger, various merit feelings will continue to be performed. Teachers, rather than policing emotions, would do well to look for emotional cues especially in relation to merit. Kohl's example of teaching the not-learner is one such example of picking up on affect cues. A teacher who is aware of merit's affect will no doubt be more able to follow Kohl's important lead. Kohl does not police the affect of the not-learner. Nor does he simply celebrate the affect alien. Rather, he lets affect be a clue as to how to proceed. He lets affect unfold, waiting patiently for the possibility that affect will contribute to student agency.

And finally, it is essential to remember that the affective experiences of the teacher, too, are dynamic, complex, and relational. Teachers are also historical subjects caught up in affective structures of meritocracy (see Hytten, 2017). As meritocracy frames groups in terms of winners and losers, an educator inevitably must face affect aliens as well as students who affectively bolster the merit ideology—as students express joy or uncertainty in victory, and anger, shame, dismissal, and rejection of meritocratic discourse in failure. In a normal classroom the critically-minded teacher no doubt experiences a double-bind in supporting the affective experiences of students and expressing coherent views about meritocracy, in choosing whether to exuberantly celebrate or more plainly announce achievements, whether to stiffen one's upper lip, ignore, or give a thumbs up to the affect aliens in class.

Paying attention to the affective aspects of merit ideology enables a broader view of the moral and ethical challenges educators face today, as emotional educators, historical subjects, and representatives of complex social structures. To battle the power and problems of meritocratic discourse one should consider both its material-ideological and affective-relational dimensions. Recognizing merit's structure as not just material and ideological but also affective, educators can intervene when it comes to meritocracy in a different way, critically interacting with merit's affective circulation, while being cognizant of the affective challenges to retooling the system (as in the case of affirmative action shame). Rejecting meritocracy has affective implications for both teachers and students. In sum, educators demanding equity might buy the

scathing bumper sticker and nurture the affect alien in themselves and their students.

References

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

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburg, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.

Applebaum, B. (2005). On 'glass snakes,' white moral responsibility, and agency under complicity. In K. Howe (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 2005*. Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.

Alon, S., & Tienda, M. (2007). Diversity, opportunity, and the shifting meritocracy in higher education. *American Sociological Review, 72*(4), 487-511.

Bartolomé, L. (2007). Critical pedagogy and teacher education: radicalizing prospective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 31*(1), 97-122.

Biesta, G. (2017). Education, measurement and the professions: Reclaiming a space for democratic professionality in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49*, 315-330.

Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Boler, M. (2013). The need for a biopolitics of scientific discourses. In C. Mayo (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 2013*. Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1995). Color blindness and basket making are not the answers: Confronting the dilemmas of race, culture, and language diversity in teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 493-522.

Garner, R. (1998). Epilogue: choosing to learn or not-learn in school. *Educational Psychology Review, 10*(2), 227-237.

Ginsburg, M. (1986). Reproduction, contradictions, and conceptions of curriculum in preservice teacher education. *Curriculum Inquiry, 16*(3), 283-309.

Hytten, K. (2015). Changing systems or relationships? responding to neocolonial violence. In E. Duarte (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 2015*. Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.

Kohl, H. (1992). I won't learn from you: Thoughts on the role of assent in learning. *Rethinking Schools, 7*(1), http://wikieducator.org/images/5/59/Kohl_I_Won't_Learn_from_You.pdf

Kozol, J. (2012). *Savage inequalities*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

McNamee, S., & Miller, R. (2004). The meritocracy myth. *Sociation Today, 2*(1), http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/v21/merit.htm

Milner, R. (2010). What does teacher education have to do with teaching? implications for diversity studies. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 118-131.

Ognibene, R. (2012). *A persistent reformer: Jonathon Kozol's work to promote equality in America*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Rodriguez, R. (1983). *The hunger of memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York, NY: Bantam Press.

Rosenberg, S. (2003). Questioning assumptions about the role of education in American society: A review of schooling in capitalist America. *AIP Conference Proceedings 720, 23*. https://doi.org/10.1063/1.1807245

Schutz, P., & Zembylas, M. (Eds.) (2009). *Advances in teacher emotion research: The impact on teachers' lives*. New York, NY: Springer.

Wetherell, M. (2012). *Affect and emotion: A new social science understanding*. London, UK: Sage.

Graphic Instructional Pedagogy

Critical Literacy Skill Development Using Low Art

James O. Barbre III & Joshua B. L. Tolbert
Indiana University East

Abstract

The presence of graphic literature and novels in schools is commonplace. An area of instruction that is currently lacking across much of schooling is the concerted and focused use of graphic literature and novels in teaching a variety of subjects and content. Teaching with this kind of literature as a vehicle for inquiry and meaning-making can be highly effective when utilized in the right fashion. Incorporating a dimension of aesthetics and critical inquiry within graphic novels will yield a much more immersive learning experience. Borrowing from an art teacher's pedagogy, any subject can be invigorated or simply re-presented in a visual means. Graphic literature has the ability to connect the important concepts and ideas that students learn in school, but in a way that blends in the kinds of imagery that are commensurate with what students see outside of school. Combining critical inquiry with graphic literature will be argued to present a more appropriate level of intellectual and aesthetic engagement for teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning.

Keywords: graphic novel, pedagogy, assessment, critical inquiry, critical literacy

Introduction

Graphic novels and comic literature are no strangers to teaching settings. As a medium and an art form, both bring unique contributions to the student's reading experience and development of visual literacy

skills (Brenna, 2013). The nature of the reading transaction in a visual context develops a more complex understanding of the story because it occurs on numerous learning and meaning-making levels. While the nature of any literary medium serves to communicate a certain message or experience, it is both necessary and preferable that it be interesting.

In the 21st Century, and with the kinds of primarily digital visual messaging with which students continuously interact, it is natural to place a substantial amount of value on these visual messages and their level of influence as it applies to the student organizing and understanding what they learn or study. This connection of meaning should lend itself more readily to literacy instruction and the development of a modern critical literacy skillset. We will argue that incorporating graphic reading materials across any subject or curriculum will more closely approximate the nature of everyday information that modern students digest.

Citing Pinar's (1994) concept of a cumulative body of text, school subjects such as history are packaged and delivered in a normative way, as is literature. Expanding on the prose-heavy approach of textbooks and/or novels through the incorporation of graphic narratives adds an effective dimension and perspective to the information or content being presented to students. By the practice of incorporating a stronger visual element, students are better able to connect different bodies of knowledge and meaning. This applies to the interpretive value and aesthetic factors of the graphics. This instructional approach also models the kind of skills necessary for students to be critical thinkers. A modern literacy skillset is one that involves familiarity and ease of operation among a variety of different web-based social media and other communications platforms. As demonstrated by Bannert (2002) and Sparks (2015), images can be vital to communicating information in ways that can decrease the cognitive load required for processing, so long as students also possess the background necessary for deriving meaning and synthesizing new information with what has been previously learned. Understanding the instructional value of this presents the possibility for any teacher to substantially bolster their instruction's effectiveness through the correct incorporation of graphic and other materials that further develop visual literacy.

The instructional argument here is not one where there is a specific 'to do' list as it relates to the use of graphic narratives. Rather, we will argue that teachers in different grades and subjects will utilize this approach in unique ways. Therefore, we will suggest general guidelines to frame the instructional approach. Our assumption is that individual educators know their own educational standards, academic content, and

student bodies. Understanding the value and viability of this kind of graphic literature means that the teacher may look at the curriculum they teach and see where these may fit, rather than completely changing pedagogy or content in the pursuit of 'getting students to understand'.

Graphic Novels and Comic Literature

Developing a pedagogical framework utilizing this medium and focusing on this inquiry and student work in ways that develop critical literacy represent a natural extension for adapting graphic novels and similar materials for teaching (Jacobs and Low, 2017; Möller, 2016; Wang, 2017). This involves the use of a cross-disciplinary approach to curriculum planning and execution. Developing this framework demonstrates a focused and specialized treatment and interpretation of literary materials (Nappi, 2017). Readers unlock greater levels of meaning when they know what to look for and, perhaps, ask questions when they do not (Dallacqua, 2012).

Graphic novels enjoy a wide berth of creative interpretation and presentation as they present a new story or adapt an existing work. The infusion of imagery and the reader's experience in this kind of time and space expands the story's form, scope, and impact. Comic literature presents a similar impact, but is more strictly configured into the received form that comics must occupy in the present consumer market (Chute, 2008; Duncan, Smith, & Levitz, 2015). A unique feature to comic literature lies in the creative ways that authors and artists present a complex story within a prescribed number of pages and frames of illustration.

Both forms of graphic literature offer the teacher a considerable visual and information resource, either primary or secondary in nature (Rashid and Qaisar, 2016). A shortcoming to the present use of these mediums in education lies in the pedagogy through which they are conceived. Typically, titles from this genre tend towards fiction and are written for mass audience consumption, be it in K-12 or otherwise (Benson, 2016; Boatright, 2010; Irwin, 2014). As these kinds of mediums have never really enjoyed the focus of instructional or curriculum planning, the essential forms of pedagogy that support engaged learning through graphic narratives are not cohesive or focused as its own pedagogy. This form of teacher instruction certainly resides in art education areas, but the general pedagogy of visual analysis is not common across school subjects. A proper discussion of graphic instructional pedagogy requires the presence of teaching art instruction, as well (Acuff, 2015). The potential learning impact presented by both graphic forms deserves a more considered approach.

We assert that developing a cohesive pedagogical framework structured around supporting this genre of literature would add value to the instructional process, overall. This pedagogy is not relegated to a few classes or subjects in school. Instead, it stretches broadly over multiple areas and incorporates essential dimensions of critical thinking and analysis, aesthetic theory and appreciation, and subject-specific strategies which arise from the use of this literature. While different subjects or classes may have different outcomes, the student derives value from engaging with any information in a manner that is more visually striking.

Normative Literacies in Teaching and Learning

Traditional literacy instructional strategies are fairly common across schools as a normative means of teaching and learning. The methods remain rather constant, although the curriculum content may change over time (Mitchell, 2006). As a result, literacy practice is familiar to students, regardless of newer titles or content they may read. The mechanical nature of this experience is one that students and adults recognize when they are immersed in it. As a result of this teacher-centered approach, students are mostly receivers of information who are asked certain predictable kinds of comprehension questions which are oriented to some level of understanding and mastery. These instructional means are reinforced by the student's work and resulting assessment measures. As one moves up through the grade levels, these forms become less visual and more narrative-based, but remain largely the same in terms of their focus and purpose in teaching.

The shortcoming to this instructional approach lies in the assumptions it makes about what interests the reader in the first place (Mitchell, 2006). A majority of books read for the purposes of any class tend to be compulsory in nature. This is natural, as it relates to the function of both curriculum and assessment. An important role of teachers is to introduce students to concepts and purposefully facilitate students' continuing interactions with the curriculum. The complex and ongoing nature of literacy instruction is notable, and our intention is not to minimize or diminish this. However, the basic set of assumptions that would naturally guide the planning of any curriculum are largely absent in this situation.

Students, whether young or old, become used to the mechanical and repetitious routines that accompany this form of learning (Adams, 2012). To use a video game analogy, it's the same basic package, just in different skins. Routinized learning may have some staying power, but rarely leads to critical thinking. Whether students sit down to complete

a worksheet, some version of review questions, or explore an 'extension' exercise or activity, they recognize when a lesson or topic is canned. Any former school student can attest to those similar feelings when we arrive at the end of the chapter or section and then more to complete the review or other questions. These feelings come about through the sheer force of mechanical repetition.

This should not serve as any kind of excoriation of teachers and for the nature of how the curriculum works or how their students interact with and draw value from it. Modern professional educators operate in a very tight physical and professional space when it comes to the ability to be creative teaching professionals and ensuring that all of the assessment and other classroom responsibilities are met. They understand their students' avenues of interest since they hear about them most days in school. The ability to connect these areas of excitement and interest to academic subjects represents the goose with the golden egg and this represents a pedagogical imperative (Hassett & Schieble, 2007; Jacobs, 2007).

Eisner (1998) offered insight into the aesthetics aspect of learning and education when he observed those numerous traditions that have been employed by people to describe and interpret their constructed world(s). These include history, art, literature, dance, drama, poetry, and music as the most common forms. Numerous elements and principles converge in understanding the aesthetics of art, whether it is learning about a subject or topic initially, or simply experiencing it. Among these important elements are color, form, line, shape, texture, and value. The convergence of these elements creates a lasting value and image to the viewer, or more precisely the student of the image(s). The purposeful integration of visual stimuli into instructional experiences can help to create stronger constructs that can overcome limitations in working memory and promote the processing of information into long-term memory for richer exploration and application (Sweller, 2005). These images form the graphic text that serves as something symbolic or real or both to people who hold those same images as extensions of their own sense of identity or cultural experience.

The Enjoyment and Experience of Literacy

Educators know that real and dynamic learning represents a deeply held commitment. Effective teachers recognize that students can become heavily invested in learning new topics, and that interfacing with new material can engage diverse perspective and spark meaningful connections. Harnessing this engagement and interest from students neces-

sarily involves the use of effective criteria in making these curriculum planning decisions (Boerman, 2015; Brenna, 2013). Understanding this relationship between learners, content, and pedagogy within the parameters of the curriculum and resources that one has to operate with often necessitates doing the best one can with the resources one has.

A more material and content-related approach represents only a narrowed range of possibilities in relation to the potential learning impact. Another way to approach this would be through the construction of a framework of critical lenses for use in better understanding the subject area and its breadth (Mitchell, 2006; Wang, 2017). This generalized, but critical, skillset then applies to a range of different situations where 'compulsory' is not part of the flavor. It also addresses important process-oriented components of educational standards. This medium is proven in its ability to present the perspective and experience of other groups and sets of experiences (Connors, 2015; Hii and Fong, 2015; Schwarz, 2010).

A Pedagogical Framework for Visual Critical Literacy Skills

Critical thinking, teaching, and analysis are not new to classrooms, though the manner of its form is often dictated by the subject or discipline and what it is intended to achieve. The advantage of a critical thinking framework lies in its ability be readily applicable across a range of disciplines and subjects (Duron et al., 2006; Wilson, 2014). A normal response to this would be to say that this is the point of literacy instruction in the first place. The shortcoming inherent to this sentiment lies in the assumptions of student interest and engagement about the subject matter, and whether this is the same thing, just wrapped up in a different skin.

Numerous perspectives and strategies for critical thinking exist, and Duron et al. (2006) emphasized that the essence of critical thinking lies in learners analyzing information and evaluating ideas. This self-actualization is a key element to enduring critical thinking and a centerpiece of a learner-based theory of critical thinking promoted by Elder and Paul (1994). Paul and Elder (2009) have more recently described the stages of critical thinking development as having six general levels: 1) the unreflective thinker, 2) challenged thinker, 3) beginning thinker, 4) practicing thinker, 5) advanced thinker, and 6) the accomplished thinker. The primary thrust of the modern literacy curriculum lies in addressing the first four (4) levels. However, the domain of advanced thinkers and accomplished thinker lies at the cusp of this learning experience. The breadth and depth to be troved by the learner is heavily influenced by the information presented.

Graphic Literature's Potential Contribution

The use of graphic literature in literacy instruction is most effective when it is a structured experience, but facilitated as an aesthetic one. A core component of for any reading experience lies in the value given the text by the reader. When reading a text to acquire information, students are more likely to connect deeply when a text provides information they need or want. The transactive tspace where the deeper and more intimate meanings take root and become embedded require unique materials and circumstances. In the ways that students both remember this exploratory aesthetic experience or use it as a lens through which to view a future problem or situation, the value is derived from their interaction and subsequent meaning-making associated with the particular literary medium. This subsequent value may manifest in any number of ways through writing or other means of composition (Calo, 2011; Dallacqua, 2018).

Graphic literature has a number of instructional and pedagogical strengths, but chief among them is the addition of imagery and perspective onto an already complex story or plot (Schieble, 2014). In this space, the reader has a panoply of ways they may explore the text. Some readers will read for imagery, while others read for the connection between dialogue, with characters still present, but situated more in the background and helping to convey the story along. Guthrie and Wigfield (1999) asserted that text comprehension is innately tied to motivation and a learner attending to and interpreting key elements on the page.

Graphic Instructional Pedagogy: A Framework in Critical Literacy

The transactive space between the teacher's methods, the materials presented, and the subsequent value drawn by the reader is partly built on fueling the necessity or urgency to explore further and understand more. Students in classes where critical thinking and reasoning are employed become readily aware of the difference between a basic versus advanced understanding of a topic (Wilson, 2014). According to Paul and Elder (2009) the most advanced order of critical thinking both requires and simultaneously develops the skills and dispositions necessary to directly engage in transformative reading and understanding. This level of skill, reflection, and consistency in fairness in how any student approaches the study of a topic is the goal for every academic subject. In cultivating this, students develop a critical literacy that enables them to better navigate and make meaning through the volumes of information in their lives.

The pedagogy behind graphic instruction is built on the framework of critical literacy. Further, it incorporates the standards and goals of more than one academic subject, namely through the addition of pedagogy in art instruction and inquiry. The academic subject incorporates a tiered framework of instructional resource and support. These tiers are: 1) art theory, aesthetic education and inquiry, 2) critical pedagogy through facilitation of analysis, writing, and reflection, and 3) creation of meaning through assessment.

Incorporating Art Theory and Inquiry

In order to teach with an aesthetic in mind, the teacher must approach the topic in ways that would mimic parts of the pedagogy of an art teacher. The tiers of aesthetic education and art theory are necessary so that the text or narrative topic of study has an expansive and engaging dimension to it, rather than being based on recall or surface application, as is common in most mastery-based learning settings. Aesthetic education relates to the character and form upon which a particular practice or orientation is founded. Hamblen (1984) explained how the process of art criticism incorporated the higher-order thinking and questioning of Bloom's Taxonomy; Broome et al. (2017) later explored how artistic critical thinking illuminated a path for critical exploration of issues related to social justice. As both a metaphor and instructional practice, art has a useful and descriptive quality in understanding the culture and how it is reproduced and disseminated in the context of people who experience it. Across various groups of diverse people, different images hold sway. This means that certain images hold greater currency in representing particular aspects of the human experience.

Principles of art include balance, contrast, emphasis, proportion, pattern, rhythm, unity, and variety. Through the convergence of these elements and principles, different styles emerge. Through an individual or group's affinity or kinship to certain forms of imagery, and so to one another, the value of this common symbolic representation holds its most significant influence. From the perspective of art as education, styles such as abstract, baroque, neo-classist, surrealism, luminist, pre- and post-impressionism emerge and are disseminated to those who would view them, hence consuming the images they present. The observer and student of art will likely fancy several different available styles, but their tastes inevitably find some preferences over others. The ultimate and resulting preferences are then oriented around the acceptance of certain genres and the rejection of others, which they may find aesthetically unfavorable for any number of reasons.

The stylistic elements and dimensions of art converge to provide means of communicating to the observing participant the intent behind the efforts and results of the artist(s) or author(s). One need only observe modern advertising or popular culture examples to observe the kinds of currency that these images are attempting to create in the mind of the recipient observer. The recipient observer is presented with this work where some interpretation occurs. Agreement, rejection, curiosity, or disinterests are all facets of possible results to this interaction, but there is a resulting and value-added interaction when planned and guided properly.

Normative Modes of Discussion in Art Class

Whether a class serves the purposes of student-produced works of art, or studying history, the art instructor often provides the vocabulary and conceptual development that enables the learning process. Through teaching, students learn important concepts and a vocabulary in representation and interpretation. The pedagogy that teaches these concepts readily applies outside the classroom in much of what the students see. Students naturally make these connections, whether explicitly addressed by the teacher or not.

The movement to discipline-based arts education (henceforth referred to as DBAE) in the late 1980s signaled a shift from focus on art production, to a more critical and comprehensive approach that also emphasized aesthetics, art history, and art criticism (Delacruz & Dunn, 1996). Although the days of DBAE being heavily promoted or explicitly taught in educator preparation programs may have passed, some of the fundamentals of DBAE have been absorbed into the contemporary approach to teaching art in a pluralistic, technology-rich environment. Gude (2007) argues that a tangible relationship between art education and the larger social context in which students live represents a natural and required facet of human understanding. They must naturally and simultaneously hone their perceptions of both the visual elements of art and an ability to recognize or analyze the environment in which art has been created.

In many ways, a legacy of DBAE is that art educators integrate history (or social context), criticism, and aesthetics as part of a dialogic process; educators informally prompt students to consider these dimensions, and formally pose questions to students during structured critiques of the work of both peers and professional artists. As a result, teachers of art must be adept at utilizing a model conducive to flowing naturally between questions related to visual form and more critical or exploratory questions.

As an example, an art teacher might ask students to engage in a critical discussion of a highly stylized painting, such as Joan Miro's El Sol (https://www.moma.org/collection/works/67005). With respect to visual literacy, the teacher could naturally ask students to describe the use of balance, rhythm, or primary colors. Along similar lines, the teacher might prompt students to determine whether the various shapes or symbols serve to represent people and real-world objects, or if they serve more idiosyncratic or abstract purposes. Along more critical lines, it would not be uncommon for an art teacher to ask students to explain who they believe the creator was, when they made this painting, or perhaps what the intent or purpose of the work was for the artist. This latter line of questioning is not carried out with the expectation of students knowing exact factual information, but more to gauge perceptions and formulate connections. In essence, this activity's results further refine the student's natural ability or inclination to ask further questions, but of a critically-focused nature.

This general model of visual inquiry holds formidable implications for graphic literature, as learning to appreciate graphic literature often hinges upon similar understandings which lead to formal and critical analysis. Any given panel or page of graphic literature can be described or critiqued, concerning how formal elements and principles of design are incorporated and married to text. Exploring the perspective of the author/artist of graphic literature can be analogous to a structured critique of visual art, as well as a tool for developing skills for critical textual and conceptual analysis. Ultimately, similar processes or questioning can be used with texts across disciplines and content areas. This would facilitate the exploration of policies or proposals, the evaluation of scientific/mathematical models, and any number of other discipline-specific skills with which students are ultimately asked to demonstrate proficiency. A key result is a better ability to communicate and exchange ideas. As supported by Campbell (2011), the ability to engage in dialogue is crucial to combatting the compartmentalization of different subjects, disciplines, and modernist misconceptions. That might prioritize mathematics and the hard sciences as bastions of the rational while largely positioning the arts as emotional or trivial.

The experienced art teacher plans for this transactive moment of interpretation between the materials they select and their student's reactions to them. They are comfortable with the idea that there is no one way of interpreting a work of art, regardless of the artist's intent or the framework of interpretation used by the recipient observer. The point in the exercise is to elicit further discussion, exploration, and the construction of meaning. It would be wrong to assume that a fleeting

set of images were all that any student ever learned about a topic. From an instructional perspective, the teacher is facilitating a longer-running process of discovery and learning on the part of the student (Hamblen, 1984; Milbrandt et al., 2004). Classes may end, but students will encounter similar information in the future. Their later interactions with such material will be grounded in the methods they encountered and used to explore this information in school. In this particular context, learning and understanding is tied to the inherent aesthetic connection between a graphic image and the person who sees it. The critical thinking teacher outside the subject of art plans for the same process and outcomes, albeit through different means.

Inquiry Through the Use of the Aesthetic Lens

Through the convergence of these factors of aesthetics, the individual or group will likely develop a multi-faceted lens through which they interpret and subsequently navigate the world of images before them. Milbrandt et al. (2004) fostered students' use of a constructivist approach to support their independent exploration of the visual arts, and Lemoni et al. (2013) asserted that a constructionist method empowered students to interact with the content in science textbooks in richer ways. It is important to readily observe this argument's limitations because it is impossibly complex to predict as to which genre or form may be preferred by the observer; there are simply too many variables. However, this does come about as a result of interacting with these images or other symbolic representations. An interpretive lens is important because of the comfort, familiarity, and sense that people derive from it. How else to explain how we decorate the places in which we live?

Graphic Instructional Pedagogy Across Disciplines

A pedagogy for graphic narrative instruction has common elements and features that necessarily cross traditional subject boundaries. The necessity to question and actively construct meaning naturally means that the academic subjects and sources will be far more intertwined and often allowed for direct instruction. This represents an important landing point for a critical literacy framework. Several example titles in this section will illustrate this point.

English

Graphic novel adaptations of classic literary works have existed for decades, and sometimes have been used in classrooms as either supple-

ments or substitutes for the reading of novels (Boerman-Cornell, 2013; Brenna, 2013). This practice has often been employed by students with dyslexia or other reading challenges, as a way to compensate for difficulties in reading fluency or reading comprehension (Smetana & Grisham, 2012; Smith et al., 2019). Visual texts ostensibly use illustrated forms to improve the odds of struggling students absorbing plot points, recognizing emotional states of characters, or heightening the interpretation of dialogue. Although this method can be well-intentioned and beneficial, graphic literature possesses wider possibilities and should be open to a broader spectrum of students as a means of challenging or changing their relationship with literature.

One possibility would be to have students read a chapter or portion of a classic text, such as Shakespeare's Macbeth, then to contrast this with a reading of the same section of a graphic novel version of Macbeth. Discussion or analysis would ideally center on whether the graphic adaptation captured the spirit of Shakespeare's work, whether illustration enhanced the experience, or the degree to which the combination of both versions created a deeper construct for understanding. This general comparative exercise would also be a foundation for integration of other media or disciplines.

For example, viewing part of Kurosawa's adaptation of Macbeth, the 1957 film Throne of Blood, would permit discussion of how Shakespeare's themes and craft translate across different media and cultures. Pursuing a more critical direction, the above would also facilitate the discussion of whether the Macbeth graphic novel and Throne of Blood are really even adaptations of Shakespeare's work, instead of being creative works that reference Shakespeare. Using an analogy from popular music, this analysis would be like making the distinction between an artist playing a cover version of a well-known song versus an artist using a sample from an existing song as the framework for a new piece of music.

Social Studies

Graphic literature can be an effective tool for presenting complex concepts from the social sciences in accessible ways. Goodwin (2012) demonstrated the power of graphic novels as a medium by collaborating with an illustrator to craft a comprehensive and appealing text covering principles of the field of economics. Similar to what was described in the section on English, the work of Goodwin (2012) could readily serve as a supplement to more traditional instruction on a topic or historical period in economics. A critical evaluation of Goodwin's Economix would also offer rich possibilities, including discussing the extent to which

the book's illustrator Dan E. Burr impacted the presentation of the content, or having students take a position on whether or not Economix accurately or effectively presents an explanation of a particular aspect of economics. The last line of discussion could be incredibly productive. It would require students to have a firm grasp on the content and use higher-order skills in taking a position and providing a rationale.

A key to social studies education is that students have opportunities to access and appreciate different perspectives. The use of graphic literature as a component of teaching history could lend itself richly to the experience of deeply exploring multiple views of events in the past. For example, students in the United States are certain to learn about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The creation of graphic literature for this historical event would promote differentiation by product, in which students would illustrate the experience of the bombing of Pearl Harbor from two different perspectives (a Japanese dive bomber, U.S. sailor, civilian living in Hawaii, etc.). This activity could be further enriched by teaching students about the Japanese bombing of Darwin in 1942, which stands as the largest attack on Australia by another nation. In particular, this region's aboriginal Australians had a radically different view of the Japanese attack, based in their unique cosmology/mythology and perception of the world around them. Contrasting the different ways in which soldiers in Hawaii and aborigines in Darwin processed and responded to attacks by Japanese aircraft through graphic literature and discussion would add depth and dimensionality to the study of this period of history. Otherwise, readers are only left with the standardized textbook-based curriculum, which presents information in ways that do not always promote critical literacy or inquiry (Adams, 2012).

Science

Scientific phenomena can be both directly observable and profoundly theoretical in nature. Radoff et al. (2012) described the use of discussion about toy cars as a way to responsively teach third grade students about energy and motion. The approach employed in the research of Radoff et al. (2012) clearly incorporated inquiry and stimulated students to think critically and creatively as they developed new understanding of fundamental concepts in physical science. Still, it is not difficult to imagine that incorporating graphic literature as part of this instructional strategy could provide new opportunities. Science Comics is a longer-running series that introduce a variety of complex science information and concepts visually and in non-technical terms, so students understand foundational concepts. For the students, the inclusion of both images

and written information would allow the use of multiple modes to represent what they were observing, as well as to work through the process of developing hypotheses. Collecting and reviewing these artifacts from students would be a vital cornerstone of formative assessment for the teacher. This is because they allow for a general impression of what students were perceiving from the subjects being studied and a clear pathway to providing feedback or clarifying misconceptions.

For older students, the use of graphic literature could aid in understanding, analyzing, or creating models. Given that atoms are too small to see in detail without the use of a quantum microscope, atomic structure is typically taught to students using a simplified visual model. One avenue to pursue could be prompting students to understand that this is a model, not an exact representation of what atoms actually look like. The simplicity of the model itself bears similarities to accepted forms of graphic literature. Characters are depicted with simple elegance to be more relatable or convey information more precisely (McCloud, 1994). This analogy could serve as the foundation for critiquing a model like the accepted version of atomic structure, in order to debate whether it could be improved or whether it sufficiently captures the information it is intended to convey.

Mathematics

Mathematics understanding is indelibly tied to an effective command of certain symbols and the larger language they are part of. Duval (2006) noted that there is frequent tension between mathematical symbols and their referents; as students advance to more complex understandings in mathematics, there may be essentially no clear or tangible referent for students to utilize. Titles such as Introducing Mathematics: A Graphic Guide (2015) present a descriptive and applied quality to the concepts presented. This referent represents an important strand of understanding. An example of this would be the frequently baffling concept of an imaginary number, representing the square root of -1. Although imaginary numbers do have practical value, such as calculations related to electricity, students may respond with confusion or dismissiveness to introducing this form of complex number into a discipline that can condition students for precise or tangible solutions.

Graphic literature in the field of mathematics could serve both descriptive and exploratory purposes when applied to the topic of imaginary numbers. David and Tomaz (2012) stated that the teaching of mathematical content with teacher-led visual aids or instructions does not equate to students developing stronger visualization skills or

deeper understanding of mathematical content. However, visual aids that are more detailed and engaging represent a natural manifestation of what can be presented through graphic literature. One possibility would be to develop and implement instructional materials which use graphic literature as the primary mode for conveying the essential concept and application of imaginary numbers. A richer possibility would be to have students employ graphic literature as a way to explain their understanding of imaginary numbers and the possible uses of these complex numbers. Doing so would provide an opportunity for critical dialogue, problem solving, and formative assessment of students' emerging understanding of a challenging mathematical concept.

Other Subjects

Much like English and Social Studies, the field of music already has volumes of graphic literature available to serve as texts for exploring crucial content. Ed Piskor's multi-volume Hip-Hop Family Tree series stands as an intersectional work. It is simultaneously a work of storytelling, a historical account, and inextricably linked to a unique form of American popular music. Additionally, Piskor borrowed the design principles of oversized anthologies published by Marvel in the 1970s, which has a foot in both the rich history of graphic literature and the sampling which has been a staple of hip-hop music itself. The opportunities for students to discuss these different Hip-Hop Family Tree elements are numerous. Students might be inspired to embrace the language of graphic literature to create biographies of musicians, compare musical styles, or document the process of composition.

McVicker (2007) endorsed the use of comic strips for teaching literacy skills, particularly the teaching of vocabulary. This utility of the graphic medium presumably extends to acquisition of vocabulary when learning a new language, as students may internalize new vocabulary more effectively when using their native language and images associatively to create a more elaborate and memorable construct. Graphic literature would be a welcome antidote to the often repetitive drills students complete through learning another language. Incorporating graphic literature in the target language for students to read would present many of the possible advantages discussed regarding text comprehension in the section above on English.

Although students certainly need practice hearing and speaking in the target language, rich experience with printed text is essential and can promote more individualized explorations with a new language. Using text and illustrations in tandem could be a practical way for students to practice outside the classroom so that designated instructional time

might be allotted for more structured practice and more exposure to the target language in a social context. Students might also harness graphic literature tools themselves to explore and contrast essential elements of a second language, such as the imperfect and preterit past tenses in Spanish, or even the differences between the indicative and subjunctive moods. Again, this would provide students another mode to engage with complex concepts, while directly fulfilling content area standards like Comparisons and Connections as outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

An Instructional Structure

For the teacher who would utilize graphic novels with this form of pedagogy, the assessment and support framework become crucial. While any assessment structure's purpose is to add value to the other learning experience, it is equally easy to 'get lost in the weeds' with regard to evaluation and assessment. A more productive approach to this instructional component would be to focus on the exercise or experience goals. In this, Wiggins and McTigue's (2005) framework of Understanding by Design (UBD) presents such a desirable approach. Within this approach, the utility of backward design serves this purpose well. Teachers focusing on this form of instructional planning will look to their goals for presenting the graphic novel or other work. From this, planning backwards means that one must more fully examine the ways that aesthetic learning (i.e. graphic works) and subject matter intersect with each other. In doing this, the teacher will find natural connection or bridging points between both bodies of information (i.e., the textbook v. graphic materials).

Focusing on a smaller number of broader, but more interwoven concepts will connect greater areas of understanding. The essential questions of UBD provide a natural place from which to build and support critical thinking. The nature of critical understanding means that there is extensive communication and interaction between members of the class or learning setting. This mutually constructed process brings about the necessity of asking further questions, thus the group draws strength from within itself.

Regardless of the academic subject, teachers utilizing graphic materials would be wise to approach this from an aesthetic perspective, not strictly informational. Through an aesthetic perspective, the teacher is free to set any manner of holistic goals for the results of the exercise. These holistic or other goals may certainly mirror or be drawn from existing educational standards. It is important to note that these two are not exclusive of one another.

The use of descriptive rubrics for discussion, peer evaluation, Socratic discussion, and media use in the formative part of the process. Discussion like these can and should involve the students in better understanding the varying elements of a message and what they are looking for. This is an important component of modern literacy, given the image-rich culture we live in.

Conclusion

The process and experience of visual literacy are much more complicated and multidimensional for the value that people place on it. The subjects a student learns in school should be commensurate with the kinds of everyday media experiences and imagery they encounter across their lives. The nature of studying and understanding artistic representation and intent presents an interpretive exercise for the intention behind any message. This represents a deeper level of learning and understanding, and that is the goal. Combining the rigor of academic study with an appreciation for the impact of the aesthetic. Aesthetics and imagery permeate most aspects of the daily lives of students. Graphic instructional pedagogy represents a means to teaching and learning that may not lie on the usual instructional path across schools, but all the resources needed for this expansive form of critical literacy and understanding are already in schools. They need only be collected, organized, and executed.

References

Acuff, J. B. (2015). Failure to operationalize: Investing in critical multicultural art education. *The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education (Online), 35*, 30-43. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1715675895?accountid=11648

Adams, J. (2012). Make learning matter for the multitasking generation. *Middle School Journal, 43*(3), 6-12. Retrieved from doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2012.11461806

Bannert, M. (2002). Commentary: Managing cognitive load: recent trends in cognitive load theory. *Learning and Instruction, 12*(1), 139–146.

Benson, K. (2016). Graphic novel histories: Women's organized resistance to slum clearance in crossroads, south africa, 1975-2015. *African Studies Review, 59*(1), 199-214. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/10.1017/asr.2016.10

Boatright, M. D. (2010). Graphic journeys: Graphic novels' representations of immigrant experiences. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53*(6), 468-476. doi: http://dx.doi.org.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/10.1598/JAAL.53.6.3

Boerman-Cornell, B. (2013). More than comic books. *Educational Leadership, 70*(6), 73-77. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-

leadership/mar13/vol70/num06/More-Than-Comic-Books.aspx

Boerman-Cornell, W. (2015). Using historical graphic novels in high school history classes: Potential for contextualization, sourcing, and corroborating. *The History Teacher, 48*(2), 209-224. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/43264401

Brenna, B. (2013). How graphic novels support reading comprehension strategy development in children. *Literacy, 47*(2), 88–94. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4369.2011.00655.x

Broome, J., Pereira, A., & Anderson, T. (2018), Critical thinking: Art criticism as a tool for analysing and evaluating art, instructional practice and social justice issues. *International Journal of Art & Design Education, 37*, 265-276. https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12111

Calo, K. M. (2011). Comprehending, composing, and celebrating graphic poetry. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(5), 351-357. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.64.5.6

Campbell, L. H. (2011). Holistic art education: A transformative approach to teaching art.*Art Education, 64*(2), 18-24. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2011.11519116

Chute, H. (2008). Comics as literature? Reading graphic narrative. *PMLA, 123*(2), 452-465. doi: https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.2.452

Connors, S. P. (2015). Expanding students' analytical frameworks through the study of graphic novels. *Journal of Children's Literature, 41*(2), 5-15. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1734735898?accountid=11648

David, M. M., & Tomaz, V. S. (2012). The role of visual representations for structuring classroom mathematical activity. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 80*(3), 413-431. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-011-9358-6

Dallacqua, A. K. (2012). Exploring literary devices in graphic novels. *Language Arts, 89*(6), 365-378. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1022627004?accountid=11648

Dallacqua, A. K. (2018). "When I write, I picture it in my head": Graphic narratives as inspiration for multimodal compositions. *Language Arts, 95*(5), 273-286. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/2036727517?accountid=11648

Delacruz, E. M., & Dunn, P. C. (1996). The evolution of discipline-based art education. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 30*(3), 67-82. Doi: https://doi.org/10.2307/3333322

Duncan, R., Smith, M., & Levitz, P. (2015). *The power of comics: History, form, and culture* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Bloomsbury. doi: 10.5860/choice.47-4236

Duron, R., Limbach, B., & Waugh, W. (2006). Critical thinking framework for any discipline. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 17*(2), 160-166.

Duval, R. (2006). A cognitive analysis of problems of comprehension in a learning of mathematics. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 61*, 103-131. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-006-0400-z

Elder, L., & Paul, R. (1994, Fall). Critical thinking: Why we must transform our teaching. *Journal of Developmental Education, 18*(1), 34-35.

Goodwin, M. (2012). *Economix : How and why our economy works (and doesn't work) in words and picture*s. New York, NY: Abrams ComicArts.

Gregory, L., & Higgins, S. (2017). Critical information literacy in practice: A bibliographic review essay of critical information literacy, critical library pedagogy handbook, and critical literacy for information professionals. *Communications in Information Literacy, 11*(2), 390-403. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1990799342?accountid=11648

Gude, O. (2007). Principles of possibility: Considerations for a 21st-Century art & culture curriculum. *Art Education, 60*(1), 6-17. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2007.11651621

Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (1999). How motivation fits into a science of reading. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 3*(3), 199-205.

Hamblen, K. A. (1984). An art criticism questioning strategy within the framework of Bloom's taxonomy. *Studies in Art Education, 26*, 41– 50. doi:10.2307/1320799.

Hassett, D., & Schieble, M. (2007). Finding space and time for the visual in K-12 literacy instruction. *The English Journal, 97*(1), 62-68. doi:10.2307/30047210

Hii, S. C., & Fong, S. F. O. O. K. (2013). Effects of multimedia-based graphic novel presentation on critical thinking among students of different learning approaches. *TOJET : The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 12*(4) Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1492503337?accountid=11648

Irwin, K. (2014). Graphic nonfiction: A survey of nonfiction comics. *Collection Building, 33*(4), 106-120. https://doi.org/10.1108/CB-07-2014-0037.

Jacobs, D. (2007). More than words: Comics as a means of teaching multiple literacies. *The English Journal, 96*(3), 19-25. doi:10.2307/30047289

Jacobs, K. B., & Low, D. E. (2017). Critical questioning in and beyond the margins: Teacher preparation students' multimodal inquiries into literacy assessment. *English Education, 49*(3), 226-264. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1884771737?accountid=11648

Lemoni, R., Lefkaditou, A., Stamou, A., Schizas, D., & Stamou, G. (2013). Views of nature and human-nature relations: An analysis of pictures' visual syntax about the environment in Greek primary school textbooks-diachronic considerations. *Research in Science Education, 43*(1), 117-140.

McCloud, S. (1994). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

McVicker, C. J. (2007). Comic strips as a text structure for learning to read. *The Reading Teacher, 61*(1), 85-88. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.61.1.9.

Michell, M. (2006). Teaching for critical literacy: An ongoing necessity to look deeper and beyond. *The English Journal, 96*(2), 41-46. doi:10.2307/30047126

Milbrandt, M. K., Felts, J., Richards, B., & Abghari, N. (2004). Teaching-to-learn: A constructivist approach to shared responsibility. *Art Education, 57*(5), 19-24,33.

Möller, K.,J. (2016). Engaging middle-grades readers through graphic nonfiction trade books: A critical perspective on selected titles recommended for

classroom use. *Journal of Children's Literature, 42*(1), 63-70. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1837539369?accountid=11648

Nappi, J. S. (2017). The importance of questioning in developing critical thinking skills. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 84*(1), 30-41. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1942155616?accountid=11648

Öner, S. (2017). The effect of a selected graphic novel on reading comprehension. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences, 10*(2), 525-539. Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/2057337804?accountid=11648

Radoff, J., Goldberg, F., Hammer, D. & Fargason, S. (2010). The beginnings of energy in third graders' reasoning. In C. Singh, M. Sabella & S. Rebello (eds) *2010 Physics Education Research Conference* (pp. 269-272). Portland OR: American Institute of Physics. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1063/1.3515220

Rashid, S., & Qaisar, S. (2016). Developing critical thinking through questioning strategy among fourth grade students. *Bulletin of Education and Research, 38*(2) Retrieved from http://proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/docview/1878767121?accountid=11648

Sardar, Z., Ravetz, J., Van Loon, B. (2015). *Introducing mathematics: A graphic guide* (4th ed). London, UK: Icon Books.

Schieble, M. (2014). Reading images in "American Born Chinese" through critical visual literacy. *The English Journal, 103*(5), 47-52. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484245

Schwarz, G. (2010). Graphic novels, new literacies, and good old social justice. *ALAN Review, 37*(3), 71-75. Doi: https://doi.org/10.21061/alan.v37i3.a.10

Smetana, L., & Grisham, D. L. (2012). Revitalizing Tier 2 intervention with graphic novels. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts, 51* (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol51/iss3/3

Smith, P. L., Goodmon, L. B., Howard, J. R., Hancock, R., Hartzell, K. A., & Hilbert, S. E. (2019) Graphic novelisation effects on recognition abilities in students with dyslexia, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comic*s. DOI: 10.1080/21504857.2019.1635175'

Sparks, S. D. (2015). Researchers target ways to design better mathematics text materials. *Education Week, 34*(29), 8.

Sweller, J. (2005). Implications of Cognitive Load Theory for multimedia learning. In R. E. Mayer (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning* (pp. 19–30). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816819.003

Wang, S. (2017). An exploration into research on critical thinking and its cultivation: An overview. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 7*(12), 1266-1280. doi:http://dx.doi.org.proxyeast.uits.iu.edu/10.17507/tpls.0712.14

Wiggins, G., & McTigue, G. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wilson, B. (2014). Teach the how: Critical lenses and critical literacy. *The English Journal, 103*(4), 68-75. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484223

Cultural Kudzu

The Creep of an Invasive Culture Upon the Cherokee

Heath R. Robertson
Cherokee High School, Cherokee, North Carolina

Abstract

Kudzu, a vine originating in East Asia, is notorious in the South for its invasive nature and destruction of the environment. This article describes the impact of Western European culture on Cherokee culture brought about by sustained exposure to one another. Kudzu is employed as a metaphor to describe the destructive, invasive impact of Western European values at the expense of the Cherokee people. The creep of Western European culture upon the Cherokee culture started subtly, but over time and through stealth, Cherokee culture has not only been overtaken but torn apart in a way that was unnoticed until it was too late to fully recover.

This essay serves as a warning to not only the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (ECBI) but to Americans in general. The lessons of encroachment by cultural kudzu must be learned and understood by all. In the current state of American society, we are on fertile political ground for the expansion of cultural kudzu. Much like the planting of kudzu, it only takes one cultural seed, dropped in fertile soil, to propel the invasive creep that can infest and destroy other cultures in America.

Keywords: Cherokee, culture, Indigenous education, colonialism, kudzu

Introduction

There are many things that people born and raised in the southwestern mountains of North Carolina "just know about." Kudzu is one of these things. Those of us who originate from this area are well aware

of the devastating effects of this invasive vine that starts innocently enough, maybe one or two here and there, but if left unchecked, can cover everything in sight. Many old homes and structures are brought down, not by fire or demolition, but by this vine that becomes all-consuming in a matter of weeks. This article is not merely about the kudzu vine, rather, it is used as an analogy for the impact of European culture and influence on the Indigenous Cherokee people who once occupied land that today includes eight southern states.

I was born and raised on the Qualla Boundary. This is what remains of the land holdings of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) in North Carolina. I, like my father, never learned the true history of our tribe and people as a young man. Simply living on "Indian" land did not afford us, like many others that were born and raised here, the knowledge of our ancestors or what happened to them. Nor did it allow us to see the reality of our people, our language, and our culture. These things were hidden… covered by a kind of cultural kudzu.

Kudzu is native to parts of Southeast Asia, particularly, China and Japan. There, kudzu is kept in check by competing flora and insects, such as the bean plataspid (Roney, 2011). However, introduced in the United States during the late 1870s, where similar natural checks were absent, kudzu has continued to grow at exponential rates. Kudzu was

originally hailed as a wonder plant. Its main use was for soil erosion, while other uses included textiles, feed for livestock, medicinal tea for various ailments, and simply as an ornamental plant (Alderman, 2015). Yet, because there were no natural checks on kudzu in the American southeast, it has been able to run rampant and become the noxious weed that now covers over eight million acres of land (Suszkiw, 2009).

There are efforts currently underway to control and even possibly eliminate kudzu, but they are limited. The most common attempts at eradication have involved long tedious processes involving defoliant sprays, grazing, mowing and burning. Yet despite such processes that require much time and continuous work, the march of kudzu continues unabated (Everest et al., 1999).

Much like kudzu, the impact upon and devastation of Cherokee culture began innocently enough. A trade agreement here and there, the union of a young Cherokee woman and a European trader; along with the eventual spread of ideas, things were about to change. When the first trade agreement between the Cherokee and a Spaniard by the name of Juan Pardo was settled, the seeds for this "cultural kudzu" were planted (Conley, 2005). These seeds would be cultivated by the continued interactions between the Cherokee and the French and British throughout the 1600s. Eventually, these seeds would grow, spreading throughout Cherokee culture. Ultimately, like the old sheds and barns littered throughout the southwestern North Carolina mountains, Cherokee culture would be torn to pieces by this invasive entity, and nothing could be done to cull it back.

The planting of cultural kudzu was methodical and executed with the care and precision of a seasoned farmer planting crops. It was not carelessly tossed about, like the Christian proverb of the sower. These seeds were purposely planted in good soil and produced (Matthew 13: 8, KJV). The initial agreement with Pardo was, in itself, the planting of a cultural seed (Kickler, 2016). It was an introduction to the way the Europeans dealt with other nations, cultures and people, exemplified by the signing of a document, a handshake and the establishment of a border, as well as the introduction of the idea that this land is now ours and you can only come when asked. The Cherokee were also introduced to how the Europeans would use the land—to build forts to defend themselves from those with whom they had just made an agreement. In many ways, this was a sign of things to come. This should have been a sign of the contempt that Europeans have for "others" whose cultures are different. The English would time and time again repeat their actions, sign agreements, then fortify and point their guns in the direction of those with whom they claimed to be friends.

The Cherokee themselves would soon adopt this attitude towards Europeans. Turnabout was fair play. At Joara, the Cherokee and the Catawba would expel Pardo and his men from the area after only a few years (Spurr, 2013). The actions of the Spanish, though attempting to not follow the same pattern of De Soto and the other famous Conquistadors, would ultimately lead them into a conflict that, unlike in Central and South America, they could not win. The only consolation for their expulsion was that there wasn't anything they were looking for in the Southeast anyway.

The English would constantly sign agreements establishing new borders, taking away more and more each time, with the promise that this time would be the last. It never was. Eventually the American government would finish this job in 1838. The Cherokee would learn that the papers they signed meant that only they must keep their word, but not the Europeans or Americans. They could violate these agreements and it was ok. These cultural vines infiltrated and changed the Cherokee, who had always been a trusting people. Over time, they would become increasingly untrusting (Conley, 2005). This contradiction to cultural norms was developed out of continued exposure to cultural kudzu and by necessity. Learning to not trust the Europeans was a hard lesson and has remained forever ingrained in the Cherokee psyche. These cultural vines have developed deep roots in the minds of the Cherokee, which have yet to relinquish their hold, allowing them to pervade Cherokee culture today.

This mistrust is illustrated by the modern blood quantum requirement for enrollment. Federally recognized tribes have or maintain a blood quantum requirement for every enrolled member. "Each tribe establishes their own requirements for enrollment in the tribe" (U.S. Department of the Interior-Indian Affairs, n.d.). Indigenous people essentially track how much Indian blood they have. This is a literal tracking of blood quantum and made official with the distribution of, what is called an "Indian Card" or enrollment card. It is nothing more than a pedigree. Like animals, the Cherokee are further separated from other racial groups by a pedigree of blood and carry the proof in their pocket (Indian papers).

Many Native people are fully invested in the thinking that only real Natives have this much Indian blood, or that much Indian blood. It doesn't matter if you were raised in the community and everyone in your family is an enrolled member; if you don't meet the blood quantum requirement, then you aren't Indian. Consequently, you are not privy to certain teachings or even acceptance by the community. Tragically, this practice creates an alternative form of Hell for those unfortunate enough to be categorized as too White to be Indian, too Indian to be White.

Seeds were planted every time a good was traded. When the traders came, other lessons would be taught and learned. When the Europeans came looking for skins, guns would be traded; more animals would die than would normally need to be killed. A want grew into a demand. The skins would grow in number, as would the number of Cherokee hands with guns used to kill more deer and bear. The hands that made the bows, arrows, blowguns and darts would decrease more and more. Artisan skills that had been passed down from generation to generation would dissipate at a rapid rate (Conley, 2005). The loss of many of these skills would not even be noticed until sometime later. In the late 1800s, Arizona Swayney Blankenship revived the basket making and pottery crafts that were once widely practiced by the Cherokee. She was able to do this by convincing the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) that this was not cultural, but entrepreneurial in its goals. It would be a trade that would fill a demand for a good and allow the students to make money (Carney, 2005). Though it allowed a traditional practice to be resumed, it eventually became part of the skeletal structure of cultural kudzu.

Resistance to degradation of Cherokee culture has indeed occurred from time to time. During the Pre-removal era (Post-contact to 1838) many Cherokee people tried to warn against the destruction of the culture. Ironically, they would advance the degradation by creating and developing factionalism within the Cherokee. Those that wanted to continue the traditional ways became known, with some disdain, as Traditionalists (Conley, 2005). They tried valiantly to preserve the "old ways," but were not as successful as they had hoped to be.

Today, the EBCI continues to fight cultural kudzu by implementing language programs geared towards revitalizing the Cherokee language. There are also attempts to continue the teachings of our ancestors and the preservation of our cultural traditions. Though these programs and efforts are present, there is still much work to do. Our living resources also diminish by the day. The number of fluent Cherokee speakers is only getting smaller. The number of people that know our history and culture also dwindle. A timer has been placed on the EBCI and everything that makes us culturally Cherokee. The timer was set a long time ago and it is getting near and nearer to its end.

With every treaty, with every trade, the practices of the Cherokee would become more infested with the sprouts of Western European practices, until some were completely overtaken. Eventually, the vines of European culture would overcome Cherokee culture in a way more effective than war ever could. There are many examples, but I will focus on three: religion, language, and education.

Religion

When looking at the "Old World" religions, a commonality is that the first man and woman were expelled from Paradise. Humans had a good thing going, established by the deity or deities that they claimed to worship, and they blew it. In the big three (Christianity, Judaism and Islam), God gave Adam and Eve everything they could possibly need and charged them with looking after the animals and plants. All they had to do was not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (no, it wasn't an apple)! This proved to be too difficult a task and ultimately man and woman were cast out, never being allowed to reenter Paradise, resulting in the curse of original sin (Genesis 3:1-24, KJV).

In the end, this led to the vilification of Eve and by default, all women. Mankind was punished and the result was the loss of Paradise and equal status for men and women. Why does this matter? It's simple really. This is one of the many vines that have crept into Cherokee culture. The Cherokee originally believed in the concept of Paradise and that an all-powerful Creator placed the first man and woman there (Mooney, 1992). Yet, the idea of being expelled from Paradise was not even entertained until the final theft of Cherokee land resulting from the Treaty of New Echota. That treaty is highly controversial in its own right, but that's a story for another day.

The Cherokee, much like many of the other 567 federally recognized Indigenous nations, were always in their Paradise. For the Cherokee, Kanati and Selu were the first man and woman. And neither of them was responsible for the "fall" of man. It was actually their children, two boys, which were the cause of man's fall from grace (Mooney, 1992). Consequently, the guilt about expulsion from Paradise did not originally exist because the Cherokee were living in their Paradise. The guilt of original sin was non-existent. That sin belonged to the two boys in the story, not Kanati and Selu (Mooney, 1992). Therefore, there was no animosity towards Selu or women because they played no role in what happened; at least, not a negative one.

Why is this important? European culture, based on Christian teachings and values, was unwilling to accept that people might disagree with its concept of Paradise and the fall of man. It was also unwilling to accept that women were considered as equals by Indigenous people. So, the Western seeds of inequality between men and women were planted and then cultivated over a long period of time.

Today, there are numerous churches on the main EBCI land holding, known as the Qualla Boundary. Why? Roughly one third of the people living on the Qualla Boundary are Christian. More than half have no

declared religion or religious affiliation (Cherokee, North Carolina (NC 28719, 28789) Profile, 2018). Few still hold on to the old religion, if that is even what you can call it? The cultural kudzu ravaged traditional religious beliefs and was able to do so because of the many similarities that it shared with Christianity, especially the concept of the trinity. These similarities allowed the infiltration to be so effective that today the idea that our old stories can be taken at the same value as those in the Bible is laughable to many Cherokee. There are not many who follow the old or ancient practices. However, there has been a small resurgence of Eastern Cherokee (a larger number of Cherokee in Oklahoma) that either continue or have begun to practice what is called "Stomp" on the Qualla Boundary. This is a gathering of Cherokee people who practice traditional dances, singing and ritual and is not accessible to outsiders. This number is still small, but is showing some promising growth (C. Tiger, personal communication, March 14, 2019).

Language

The language is also another casualty in this invasion of culture. Today in Cherokee, North Carolina and the surrounding areas, there are less than 200 fluent Cherokee language speakers left (McKie, 2019). Why is there such a shortage of speakers? The U.S. government's assimilation program was relentless in making sure the language was beaten and scrubbed (literally and figuratively) from the mouths of the children that spoke it. These methods were quite successful under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and its Boarding School policy (Reyhner, 2018). "Kill the Indian, save the man" was their mantra (Carney, 2005). And kill it they did, with an efficiency that soldiers and bullets could never do.

Even now, with desperate attempts to try to save the language from certain death, the Western kudzu has found its way into the language. The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), part of the BIA, has spearheaded initiatives to try to help save that which it originally had tried to destroy. However, the efforts that on the surface appear to be genuine are themselves part of the creep of the vines. In an interview with an elder, Bullet Standingdeer (personal communication, April 20, 2018), I have learned that our words have meanings beyond those that are simply translations. The focus of current language preservation efforts has been on finding how to say English words, old and new, in Cherokee. According to him, this is not understanding the language and keeping it alive; it is translation. If the true meanings and values of our words are lost, then the Cherokee language simply becomes another dialect

of English. If the language no longer contains these meanings then it is effectively dead—the Cherokee language becomes English.

Education

Finally, education is yet another cultural vine. Native education, for the Cherokee people and Native Americans in general, has a dark and disturbing history. Well before the BIA boarding schools, established on EBCI landholdings known as the Qualla Boundary opened in 1890 and closed for boarding in 1953, there were the missionary schools (Finger, 1984). These schools were developed with the understanding that a school was to be built first and then a church. Trying to convert people was fine to the Cherokee, but it was not to be forced on them. In regard to the missionaries, they claimed that the Natives had the option to accept or reject Biblical teachings. Education was considered to be the primary focus not religious teachings. Unfortunately, the missionaries almost always built the church first and would eventually build a school only after being under threat of being removed from Cherokee country. This was indeed the case with the Moravian missionaries. The Cherokee sent Sour Mush, a staunch traditionalist, to the Moravian mission to declare that the missionaries had roughly one year to build the school and start teaching, or leave. The missionaries would comply and were allowed to stay (Schwarze, 1923).

These schools dealt with many of the same issues that contemporary educators face today. Truancy and little or no support at home are examples (McClinton, 2010). Yet, students were educated, and they did learn, but they were slowly stripped of what made them Cherokee—their culture. EBCI elder and educator Freeman Owl, along with many survivors of the Cherokee BIA school, confirms what is considered common knowledge to all with EBCI lineage: the one consistency between the mission schools and the BIA school in Cherokee, North Carolina was the severe punishments inflicted on Cherokee children for any conduct that even closely resembled traditional practice.

The development of the Cherokee syllabary would help to usher in a Golden Age for the Cherokee for a time. However, even with a literacy rate in the 90 percent range, it was not enough (Conley, 2005). Yes, the Cherokee had a written language. Yes, the Cherokee were literate in that language and had a thriving society. Though, in the end, it did not matter. In many ways, the success of the Cherokee mocked Western society and its attempts to "civilize" them and eliminate what made them Cherokee. The Cherokee attempted to adapt their already thriving civilization to "modern" standards without completely abandoning

their culture. Unfortunately, although they were able to successfully fight back the vines of cultural kudzu, it was only to be for a while.

History books barely mention the Cherokee and their struggle against the United States under the guise of *Manifest Destiny*. In modern textbooks, the most that is discussed about the Cherokee is a brief paragraph about the "Trail of Tears." Some texts even go as far as to claim that the land was willingly given up. They definitely do not mention that the Cherokee fought in every way possible to keep what was rightfully theirs. They rarely mention the importance of the United States Supreme Court case of *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) that determined that the Cherokee were a sovereign nation and were not subject to the laws of the United States. They do not tell students that the Cherokee developed their own government and established a constitution, heavily influenced by the U.S. Constitution. They certainly do not tell students that the written language, developed by Sequoyah, was so quickly adopted and learned that literacy rates far exceeded that of the United States (Conley, 2005). They definitely do not reveal that when the Cherokee were removed from their homes, at gun point, that there were white families waiting to take their land and their place. They never write of the stockades that these people were confined in, like criminals or even worse, animals. They do not tell of the families that had to watch their past (elders) and futures (children) die in their arms. They do not tell you of the conditions that allowed an eighth of the Cherokee population to die, were essentially concentration camps. They do not tell of the other 1/8 of the Cherokee nation that would die on the forced march to what is now Oklahoma (Conley, 2005).

The American history that is taught to children today is a lie. It is a lie because it only tells part of the story. We owe it to our children, our ancestors, and ourselves to know the truth. What is taught today is merely the foliage, the top leaves of the cultural kudzu that covers the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). Sadly, as many that have to deal with kudzu know all too well, it is relentless. Many measures have been used to fight off the creep of the vine, and some appear to work, but never do. Cherokee society and its advancements have never been held in the positive light that they had hoped (Conley, 2005). Instead, they have always been seen as an immediate threat that needed to be stamped out with extreme prejudice. The Western cultural creep has repeatedly returned with a vengeance and repeatedly destroyed chances for a new more "Civilized" Cherokee Society. Today, cultural kudzu has infiltrated every crack and crevasse of the Cherokee culture.

Conclusion

There is something missing from the knowledge of the people in the mountains of southwestern North Carolina. Here, people know about kudzu. However, many are unaware of the cultural kudzu that has infested this region since the early 1500s. They are unaware of a process which allowed the cultural landscape to completely change in the area. Most are unaware of the intricate and methodical way that the Cherokee people were not only cast out, but systematically stripped of every aspect that made them a thriving culture and power in pre-contact North America.

The purpose of bringing this history to light is preventative in nature. It is to prevent those of us that still call these mountains our home from losing what does remain of our culture and ancestral teachings. It is to remind the EBCI that we have a long way to go when it comes to regaining our former glory and standing as an influence in not only North Carolina, but the United States as a whole. We have come a long way from removal and the boarding schools, but similar threats remain. In order to combat those threats, we must understand how they were developed and how they were able to be effective.

Planting mistrust amongst the Cherokee was the key to infiltrating Cherokee Culture. Once mistrust was able to blossom, further infiltration was almost inevitable. The cultural kudzu that would overtake Cherokee culture would use the apparatus of religion, language, and education in order to continue its infestation. Once the vines of cultural kudzu were able to establish their position in these structures, its creep and takeover would become almost complete.

It's hard to discern a single force that brought the Cherokee culture down, but we do know the process over time involved many things such as greed (gold, and land), jealousy (literacy rate and quality of life), and the idea of racial superiority.

This is a warning. The methods described in this article can be used with adaptations today. Our current American society is not immune to this type of attack. What made the methods of cultural kudzu so effective was its stealth, its ability to remain hidden over time. America today is subjected to so many distractions, it is quite possible that our thinking can be coopted by nefarious forces through time and subtlety. In today's political environment, saturated with sensationalized news geared towards ratings and polarization, we as a nation are fertile ground for cultural kudzu. Much like the kudzu plant, all that cultural kudzu needs to be able to grow is for one seed to take root in fertile ground. If that occurs, inevitably, it will become entangled in every aspect of culture.

Americans should not think that they are impervious to a cultural attack of their own. In a global world that is increasingly economically bound together by economic and geopolitical interests, it is inevitable that there will be many future clashes of cultures. The process of cultural consumption is cyclical and constant. The irony behind the destruction of Cherokee society by Western European "Civilization" is that, like the Cherokee nearly 200 years ago, America is now primed for a similar battle against the same entity. Cultural kudzu is always relentless, never ceasing, always creeping. George Mason famously stated at the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, "Nations cannot be punished in the next life, so they must be punished in this one" (Johnson, 1989).

When people drive in the southwestern mountains of North Carolina today, they are unaware of all that was taken from the original inhabitants. They do notice, however, through a twist of irony, a vine that seems to grow at exponential rates. They see the old sheds and barns covered by the big, heavy vines. They see those same vines reaching into the roads on the brightest, hottest days. They watch the mowers cut through the vines on top of the grass, cleared for a day, only to see them return the next. They witness the fight to keep those vines from gardens, lawns and driveways, just to have a day or two of peace. All the while, they do not realize that just two hundred years ago, the native inhabitants of this area repeatedly fought a similar battle—one that would cease for a day or two, but ultimately be never ending. Cosmic karma has clearly decided to act; the land of the people overtaken by *cultural* kudzu is now close to becoming one massive patch of *Pueraria Lobata*.

References

Alderman, D. H. (2015). When an exotic becomes native taming, naming, and kudzu as regional symbolic capital. *Southeastern Geographer, 55*(1), 32.

Carney, V. M. (2005). *Eastern Band Cherokee women: Cultural persistence in their letters and speeches*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Cherokee, North Carolina (NC 28719, 28789) profile. (2018). Cherokee, NC. http://www.city-data.com/city/Cherokee-North-Carolina.html

Conley, R. J. (2005). *The Cherokee Nation: A history*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Everest, J. W., Miller, J. H., Ball, D. M., & Patterson, M. (1999). *Kudzu in Alabama: History, uses, and control* [PDF]. Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture. https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/2341

Finger, J. R. (1984). *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Johnson, P. N. (1989). *A more perfect union*. Malta, ID: National Center for Constitutional Studies.

Kickler, T. L. (2016). *Juan Pardo expeditions*. North Carolina History Project.

https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/juan-pardo-expeditions/
McClinton, R. (Ed.). (2010). *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees* (Abr. ed.). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
McKie, S. (2019, June 27). Tri-council declares state of emergency for Cherokee language. *The Cherokee One Feather*. https://www.theonefeather.com/2019/06/tri-council-declares-state-of-emergency-for-cherokee-language/
Mooney, J. (1992). *James Mooney's history, myths, and sacred formulas of the Cherokees*. Fairview, NC: Bright Mountain Books.
Reyhner, J. (2018, April). American Indian boarding schools: What went wrong? What is going right? *Journal of American Indian Education, 57*(1), 58-78.
Roney, M. (2011, September 26). Kudzu-eating beetle: Good news or bad?; Insect nibbling on nuisance vine, and Southern tradition. *USA Today*, 3A.
Schwarze, E. (1923). *History of the Moravian missions among the southern indian tribes of the United States*. St. Petersburg, FL: Times Publishing Company.
Spurr, K. (2013, September 16). *Exploring Joara: Excavating the past, shaping the future in western* North Carolina College of Arts & Sciences. https://college.unc.edu/2013/09/joara2/
Suszkiw, J. (2009). Kudzu. *Agricultural Research, 57*(6), 4–5.
United States Department of the Interior-Indian Affairs. (n.d.). *Genealogy*. https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/tgs/genealogy
Wilkins, T. (1989). *Cherokee tragedy: The Ridge family and the decimation of a people*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. 515 (1832). https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/31/515/

Contributing Authors

James O. Barbre III is an associate professor in the School of Education at Indiana University East, Richmond, Indiana. E-mail: jbarbre@iue.edu

Charles Bingham is a professor of philosophy of education in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. E-mail: cwb@sfu.ca

Jennifer Gale de Saxe is a senior lecturer in sociology at Te Whare Wananga o Te Upoko o Te Ika A Maui (Victoria University of Wellington), Aotearoa, New Zealand. Email: jennifer.desaxe@vuw.ac.nz

Liz Jackson is Professor of International Education at the Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China. E-mail: lizjackson@eduhk.hk

Heath R. Robertson is a history and technology teacher at Cherokee High School, Cherokee, North Carolina. E-mail: GWYteach@gmail.com

Joshua B. L. Tolbert is an associate professor in the School of Education at Indiana University East, Richmond, Indiana. E-mail: jbtolber@iue.edu

Bonnie-Estelle Trotter-Simons is a Ph.D. candidate and teaching fellow in sociology at Te Whare Wananga o Te Upoko o Te Ika A Maui (Victoria University of Wellington), Aotearoa, New Zealand. E-mail: bonnie.trottersimons@vuw.ac.nz

Frequently Asked Questions about Journal of Thought

What kinds of articles are suitable for the *Journal of Thought*?

The *Journal* welcomes scholar's work that represents varied viewpoints, methodologies, disciplines, cultures, and nationalities as it seeks to treat the most comprehensive issues and problems confronting education throughout the world. Essays that develop a reasoned and supported argument, that offer insightful analysis and critiques of other's arguments, or that report on significant research of interest to the field are welcomed. The editorial goal is to stimulate a warranted synthesis of diverse viewpoints and to encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dialogue.

What manual of style should be used?

Complete, formatted references, text citations, and notes should be provided according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th Editio) or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA 7th Edition). See Submission Guidelines in this issue for details.

How long does it take for the editors and reviewers to make a decision about a manuscript?

During the academic year, the response time is approximately fourteen to sixteen weeks. Manuscripts submitted in the late spring and summer may take additional time.

How long does it take for a manuscript to be published after it is accepted for publication?

The time frame for publication after a manuscript has been accepted varies depending upon a variety of variables. For example, thematic and guest editor issues are often published at a slower pace than are

non-thematic issues. Generally, however, manuscripts are published within twelve months after the time an author is notified that her or his manuscript has been accepted for publication.

May an article that was initially not accepted be submitted to the journal again after revisions?

Yes, however it is recommended that authors do not resubmit manuscripts if the reviewers' feedback indicates that the research is inappropriate for the *Journal of Thought* and its readership.

Can an article that has already been published, but that has been updated, be considered for publication?

Ordinarily, no. Conversely, studies that are based upon prior research but which are substantively different in a current article draft are welcomed. To be *substantively different*, the current research study must be significantly different in methodology, findings, and/or conclusions.

How can I get a back issue of the *Journal of Thought*?

Please contact Caddo Gap Press. See Subscription Information on page 85 for details.

Subscription Form for Journal of Thought

Please enter my subscription to Journal of Thought.

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

E-Mail Address _____

One Year subscription (four issues):

- ❑ $50 (individuals)
- ❑ $100 (institutions & libraries)

(Please add $60 for subscriptions outside the United States)

❑ Check enclosed (payable to Caddo Gap Press)

Each issue is distributed in PDF format.
Please indicate preferred method of delivery:
❑ Mail file to me on disk to above address.
❑ E-mail file to me at the e-mail address above.

Mail completed form to:

Caddo Gap Press
3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275
San Francisco, California 94118 U.S.A.
Telephone 415/666-3012
E-Mail info@caddogap.com
Website www.caddogap.com